

Minutes of the Select Board Meeting, February 28, 2017

Howard Bronstein, Leslie Rule, and Winton Pitcoff were present. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. The minutes of February 14, 2017 were accepted as amended.

345/347 Main Street Auction

Howard entertained a motion to appoint the Select Board as Tax Title Custodian for the purposes of this auction only. The motion, moved by Leslie and seconded by Winton, was unanimously approved.

Two sealed bids for the 345/347 Main Street property were opened at 7:01 p.m. Shelby Howland enclosed the required \$750.00 with his bid of \$25,000.00; Todd Gerry bid 1,001.00 and did not enclose the required \$750.00. Howard entertained a motion to accept Shelby Howland's \$25,000.00 bid. The motion, moved by Leslie and seconded by Winton, was unanimously approved.

Highway Superintendent

Highway Superintendent Mert Taylor, Jr. informed the Board the new dump truck may be delivered at the end of the week. The air bag on the wing plow side of the truck was not installed; The truck has been sent to Vermont for the installation.. Mert, Jr. is planning the purchase of another truck, something between a 1 ton and a larger truck, with Chapter 90 funds. He did note this would mean Chapter 90 funds would not be spent on roads in FY'18.

After current Machinery Upkeep bills are paid the account will have an \$11,000.00 balance. Mert, Jr. anticipates the need for additional funds for Machinery Upkeep before June 30th. An article to transfer funds from the Highway Department Salaries account on the May Town Meeting warrant was discussed.

Mert, Jr. also noted he hopes to keep the Winter Roads overdraft to a minimum, if possible.

Plainfield did not sustain any damage from the storm on February 25th.

Broadband Update

Brian Hawthorne stated the State legislative delegation met on February 27th, passing on the demand that MBI make the full amount of allocated grant money available to towns. The MBI Board supported the legislative consensus that

Westfield Gas & Electric can oversee design and engineering.
A meeting of seven “northern tier” towns is slated for March 6th.
It was noted MBI may be re-purposed as a granting authority.
As MLP manager, Leslie recused herself from the following motion and vote.
Winton moved to endorse the Broadband Committee’s recommendation as written in the February 14, 2017 document addressed to the Select Board. The motion, seconded by Howard, was approved. (It was also noted the Select Board need not write a letter to Peter Larkin at this time.)
Brian suggested the Select Board should consider the appointment of an MLP manager who is not a member of the Select Board and later establish an elected MLP Board. Because Plainfield is still in the investigative stage Kimberly Longey suggested not establishing an elected MLP Board at this time. It was noted the MLP Manager may eventually become a paid position which may be shared with other towns. Brian recommended Leslie recuse herself from any votes taken by the MLP.

Health Insurance

The eligibility of elected officials to obtain group health insurance through the town was raised. Research has indicated the Select Board may vote to allow elected officials to participate in group health insurance. However, doing so would open the opportunity to all elected officials and expand the insurance pool. Howard stated, the cost being immaterial, he strongly believes there is a difference between an elected official receiving a stipend and compensated employees working at least twenty hours. Both Howard and Winton stated they would not vote in favor of allowing elected officials to obtain group health insurance through the town.

Resignation/Appointment

The Board accepted Lew Robbins resignation from the Broadband Committee with regret and appreciation.

Howard entertained a motion to appoint Rebecca Coletta to the Broadband Committee through June 30, 2017. The motion, moved by Winton and seconded by Leslie, was unanimously approved.

The appointment of an alternate member of the Broadband Committee was discussed. The Board will consider the position if a letter of interest is received.

Other Business

FY’18 Budgets were discussed. Paula suggested new line items for website (\$500.00) and IT expenses (\$775.00). The MRTSD FY’18 assessments are: Operating \$719,185.00 and Capital Assessment \$19,310.00. The Highland Ambulance Assessments for FY’18 are: Operating \$24,430.00 and Capital

\$3,368.00. Ed Morann, Plainfield Highland Board Member, is willing to meet with the Select Board to explain the Highland budget. Howard is willing to meet with Highland member towns, as well.

The vocational transportation invoice for December, January, and February is \$1,651.71.

Notice of the FY'18 PVPC assessment of \$102.02 was received.

Leslie moved to consent to KP Law's request to provide legal services with respect to amending the Mohawk Trail School District Regional Agreement to address the closure of Heath Elementary School. The motion, seconded by Winton, was unanimously approved. (Approval is required from towns using KP Law as counsel.)

The assistant treasurer's bond was signed.

The Board received certified mailings concerning the March 16, 2017 ZBA Public Hearing regarding the application of a Large Scale Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installation on the property owned by Thomas Kusek, 29 Union Street. Howard distributed copies of NEXAMP's agreement with the Town of Hadley for payment in lieu of taxes. If the ZBA approves the NEXAMP solar proposal for 29 Union Street, an article on the town meeting warrant, if approved, would enable the Select Board to pursue payment in lieu of personal property taxes. The Board supported Howard's proposal to contact KP Law concerning draft warrant articles.

It was brought to the attention of the Board that the copier in the Town Hall is being used by those who are not members of town boards or committees. It was suggested a receptacle for contributions be placed beside the copier to offset the cost of ink and paper.

Howard reported the recent problems of the Swift River Addiction Campus have been taken care of by the Department of Public Health.

Winton reported the results of his research concerning our responsibilities when considering a marijuana facility in Plainfield.

The Board asked Paula to obtain information on Don Hall's recommendations for solutions for the town offices in writing. The Board discussed the potential for special meetings to establish and work on a goal oriented approach to town government.

John P. O'Rourke of Conway has been elected to the MMA Board of Directors in January.

The Massachusetts D.P.U. has issued a "Notice of Filing, Procedural Conference and Public Hearings" in regard to the NSTAR and WMECO d/b/a Eversource petition for approval of general rate increases.

Other mail was reviewed.

Warrants were signed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King
Administrative Secretary