

Minutes of the Select Board meeting, June 9, 2020

Howard Bronstein, Winton Pitcoff, and Hilary Weeks were present. Also, in attendance were: Paula King, Chief David Alvord, Chief Justin Litchfield, Highway Superintendent Merton Taylor, Jr., Board of Health Chair Ellen Dupont, MLP Manager Kimberly Longey, James Meehan, Rebecca Coletta, Joe Schneider, Steve Bushway, Ed Morann, Erik Burcroff, Pleun Bouricius, and Bruce Davidson. The meeting, held via conference call consistent with Governor Baker's temporary modifications to the Open Meeting Law, was called to order at 7:07 p.m. The minutes of May 26, 2020 were accepted as amended: Howard, yes; Winton, yes; Hilary, yes.

An opening statement about our community's Police Department prepared and read by Chairman Bronstein is attached. The Chief of Police attends the second monthly meeting of the Select Board thereby maintaining Police Department transparency through the Board at public meetings.

West Street

Howard opened the discussion by stating considerable work has been done on West Street. FY'21 Chapter 90 funds have not yet been approved by the legislature. Superintendent Mert Taylor, Jr. reported hot mix has been applied with an application of an additional 6 ton planned for Wednesday which exhausts FY'20 funds until Chapter 90 are released for FY'21. Joe Schneider asked if Chapter 90 funds include drainage. He added every job begins with drainage and noted the stumps and trees in West Street drainage ditches. He suggested removal of stumps and trees prior to the finish work. Mert, Jr. responded the road surface needs to be raised in order to allow water to drain off. Drainage will also be addressed.

Reopening Plainfield

Plainfield Pond: On May 26th the Board voted to close the beach at Plainfield Pond in part because the Town does not have the resources to clean and sanitize a portable restroom. Howard would like to reopen the discussion on the beach closure after learning the restrooms and other amenities do not have to be provided if staff and funds are not available. He suggested opening the beach and rescinding

the no parking ban with the following conditions: masks are to worn on the beach, but not in the water, and beach patrons are responsible for practicing social distancing. The “no more than groups of 10” restriction was discussed. Howard moved to open the beach and rescind the no parking ban with the posting of a sign requiring the public to wear masks and practice social distancing. The motion, seconded by Hilary, prompted further discussion concerning beach rules, boats, fishing, etc. (Bruce Davidson referred to the sign indicating rules provided by his family. During the past week he noted disregard for the rules and people not wearing masks. He asked if there is a way to coordinate the Recreation Committee, Board of Health, Police Department, and Environmental Police to make sure rules are respected. Chief Litchfield stated they are rules, not state laws or local by-laws, and therefore cannot be enforced. Northampton Dispatch may be contacted at the non-emergency number if necessary. Ed Morann stated unless state laws have changed boating or fishing are not allowed within swimming areas. In response to Mr. Davidson’s question, Howard will contact the Environmental Police regarding the water. Mr. Davidson also asked if the beach sign can be placed higher. Pleun Bouricious suggested publishing the beach rules in the Plainfield Post.) The motion on the floor was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Winton, yes; Hilary, yes. Library: The Board received information on reopening libraries from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The library has is open for curbside service.

Fire Truck

Chief David Alvord reported on the theft of Plainfield’s brush truck on May 25, 2020 by a former firefighter who still had the code access to the Public Safety Building. The vehicle was driven through New York City to Allentown, PA where the driver was stopped by Allentown police. Chief Alvord confirmed the vehicle belonged to Plainfield. The driver was arrested and the vehicle was impounded. Plainfield police officers did an excellent job providing pertinent information to the Allentown police. The was driven back to town on May 28th by Plainfield personnel. There was no damage to the vehicle and no equipment was missing. The vehicle is back in service. Chief Alvord extended his thanks to the Plainfield police officers and noted access codes to the Public Safety Building have been updated. The Department of Defense has been notified of the incident as the vehicle was acquired through Federal Surplus Property.

ABCC Extension of Premises Regulations and Pub 116 Application

An ABCC “Advisory Regarding Restaurants Commencing Outdoor Table Service of Alcohol” allows Local Licensing Authorities to grant outdoor seated service to on-premises licensees, provided food is prepared on-site under a retail food permit

issued by a municipal authority (indoor service remains prohibited.) The owners of Pub 116 have submitted an application for the same. Board of Health Chair Ellen Dupont noted a major flaw in the application; Customers cannot go inside the building to place orders, but may enter to use restrooms only. Howard moved to approve Pub 116's application to provide outside seating and service in accordance with ABCC regulations once the application is amended to the following conditions: Patrons are only allowed to enter the building one at a time to use the restrooms. Required posters and a checklist are to be posted. The motion, seconded by Hilary, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Winton, yes; Hilary, yes. MLP Manager Kimberly Longey mentioned the need to check the status of commercial broadband customers before issuing permits. Winton noted the reminder that COVID-19 restrictions have created hardships for business owners.

Loan Documents

Loan documents in the amount of \$445,000 were submitted for signing by Treasurer Allan Kidston. The amount of \$175,000 is to retire the short-term loan issued June 26, 2019 and issue new short-term notes in the amount of \$445,000 for broadband construction. The Town is still below the original \$1,130,000 authorization and subsequent \$400,000 authorization for the broadband network. Kimberly stated this is consistent with the borrowing plan. Construction is expected to be completed in September. Howard moved to sign the \$445,000 note per request of the treasurer. The motion, seconded by Winton, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Winton, yes; Hilary, yes.

Vocational transportation Settlement

Paula reported on the Vocational Education Advisory Committee's (VEAC) approval of a 55% settlement with F. M. Kuzmeskus for transportation to Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School April through June which includes an adjustment for March. Howard move to approve the 55% settlement with F.M. Kuzmeskus per recommendation of VEAC. The motion, seconded by Hilary, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Winton, yes; Hilary, yes.

Broadband Network Insurance

Quotes for the Plainfield Broadband Network insurance were received from MIIA. (It was previously reported insurance through PURMA was not feasible.) In order to bind the coverage, the amount of the \$6,681 premium must be submitted with the application. Discussion centered around the fiscal year issue and available funds in remaining in the Enterprise Budget without increasing the deficit for FY'20. Research on the matter will continue.

Kimberly noted the need for building a reserve for handling deductibles and

upgrades/repairs to the network. Howard move to approve the MIIA \$6,681 premium for the Plainfield Broadband Network. The motion, seconded by Hilary, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Winton, yes; Hilary, yes.

Town Meeting/Election/FY'21 Budget

The Annual Election will take place on June 20, 2020 from 12 noon-4:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. The Annual Town Meeting will take place on June 20, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. at the pavilion behind the library, weather permitting. A sound system, safe distancing, and parking will be available.

The Finance Committee has posted the FY'21 budget on the town website. Howard moved to approve the FY'21 budget as proposed by the Finance Committee. The motion, seconded by Hilary, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Hilary, yes, Winton abstained.

Other Business

The Board discussed Brian Hawthorne's interest in serving on the Master Street List Guide Committee. The Board agreed to wait until the FY'21 appointments are made in July.

Use of the pavilion behind the library for the July 4th reading of the Constitution was discussed. The plan submitted is acceptable with the Select Board and the Board of Health. Pleun Bouricius stated ten people plan to put on the program, social distancing will be practiced, and confirmed the group will not share reading materials.

The solid waste contract with Waste Management has been signed.

A waiver that would allow for the Green Communities project to proceed has been signed. (Eversource has suspended all energy efficient services that require on-premises visits due to COVID-19.)

The request to extend the deadline for completion of the MVP Action Grant has been approved. A reimbursement request for FY'20 expenses has been submitted.

Correspondence

The FY'21 tuition for Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School is \$18,400. Five students are scheduled for the 2020-2021 school year.

PVPC has notified the Board of the implementation of a Domestic Violence Program due to problems arising from COVID-19 Pandemic. The program will offer services to both victims and perpetrators. Howard signed on to the program after discussing its merits with Chief Litchfield.

Final valuations for State -Owned Land were received.

Being his last meeting, Winton was thanked for his tenure on the Board by

Howard, Hilary, and Paula.

Other mail was reviewed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m. Howard, yes; Winton, yes; Hilary, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King
Administrative Secretary