

Minutes of the Select Board Meeting, June 23, 2020

Howard Bronstein, Hilary Weeks, and Rebecca Coletta were present. Also, in attendance were Paula King, Police Chief Justin Litchfield, MLP Manager Kimberly Longey, David Kramer, and Chris Stockman. The meeting, held via conference call consistent with Governor Baker's temporary modifications to the Open Meeting Law, was called to order at 7:01 p.m. The minutes of June 9, 2020 were accepted as submitted.

Rebecca Coletta was formally welcomed to the Board.

Police Chief

Chief Litchfield acknowledged Sgt. Miazga's donation of a cruiser to be used for off-duty detail.

The department has had a busy month. Responses to calls include armed robbery, a citizen brandishing a weapon, domestic disturbances, and a stolen Plainfield fire truck.

Chief Litchfield has attended the 2nd monthly Select Board meetings since December in an effort to promote transparency of departmental happenings in a public forum. There has been discussion of reporting PPD news in the Plainfield Post. However, a correspondent has not yet been found. Chris Stockman stated the community needs more information and is willing to help with a public forum. Chief Litchfield stated citizens can always call with questions. Chris inquired about the number of responses to the Swift River Addiction Campus to which Justin replied, "Every call is answered. It is busy there." The number of calls at Swift River is a drain on the community. Howard added it took a year and a half to negotiate an agreement with Swift River so Plainfield EMS isn't required to respond to all medical calls. Due to turnovers in personnel, Select Board and Police Chief have been unable to meet with Swift River management in regard to the number of disturbances and how to best handle them.

To clarify the comments at the June 20th ATM, Kimberly Longey stated her support of an adequately funded and paid police department. She added it is not clear what officers are being paid and noted the dramatic growth over the past three years. Questions include priorities and answers to what the community wants. Chief Litchfield noted the drive by parades for children's birthdays during the

COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of armed officers at the ATM was mentioned.

Rationalizing growth with the intake of fees was questioned. Grant awards and back-up officers are excellent. Off-duty detail, while revenue producing, generates expense. There is a need to understand wages, benefits, and off-duty compensation. Howard stated being a steward of a process and though the process exists he is hearing that process is not enough for the public. The chief has attended the second monthly Select Board meetings since December.

Four officers were paid to assist with parking on Saturday for the Annual Town meeting; the chief was not.

A Special Town Meeting was suggested by Finance Committee Chair David Kramer with a proposal on the agenda about what the community wants for policing and what is a fair wage. Departmental employees have been working without benefits.

Hilary stated people need to speak up. Talking behind closed doors doesn't help. There was discussion concerning public awareness of meetings, informational articles, etc.

Reopening Plainfield

Pub 116 has submitted a revised seating plan to their application for outdoor service. The LLA approval is valid until November 1, 2020 unless rescinded by ABCC. Indoor service for all licensees for on-premises consumption of food and alcoholic beverages can be resumed as of June 22, 2020 so long as they comply with the Governor's Safety Standards and Checklist for Restaurants.

The beach at Plainfield Pond is open. The Town owns the beach, but has no control over the water and the boat ramp. Chief Litchfield stated the police cannot enforce the beach or Board of Health rules.

MLP Update

MLP Manager Kimberly Longey noted the blending of capital and operating during FY'20. Both revenues and expenses were below projection. As of May 29th, 49 customers were behind in payments for a total of \$8,000. Delinquent payments have been reduced to \$3,000 with only 10 customers in arrears. A buffer for non-payment should be established. Going forward, customers will be shut off for non-payment.

Broadband construction and connections will continue throughout the fall.

The broadband network is insured through FY'21.

There is a planned transition of the broadband team from a 5 person staff to 2 for various reasons. Kimberly will put forth a staffing proposal.

Plainfield met the revenue threshold for the \$139,000 EOHEd Grant amendment to cover drop costs for the broadband infrastructure. Howard moved to approve the EOHEd contract amendment for \$139,000. The motion, seconded by Hilary, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes.

Other Business

Howard has approached KP Law Attorney David Doneski seeking a definitive answer as to whether the ZBA or Planning Board is responsible for past permits issued by the ZBA following the Zoning By-Law revision passed last year.

Two computers have been purchased with FY'20 funds with additional computers to be purchased with FY'21 funds. IT Grant funds cannot be used for hardware. The FY'20 report for the MVP Action Grant will be prepared and submitted by Howard.

The Town will retain membership in the Pioneer Valley Municipal IT Collaborative for FY'21.

Director of Accounts Mary Jane Handy has approved Plainfield's request to deficit spend in FY'20 for COVID-19 emergency expenditures.

Hilary will be available for remote participation at July Select Board meetings. The Board will reorganize, assign tasks, and make FY'21 appointments at their meeting of July 14th.

Miscellaneous mail was reviewed.

Howard moved to adjourn 8:00 p.m. The motion, seconded by Hilary was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King
Administrative Secretary