

Minutes of the Select Board Meeting, July 14, 2020

Howard Bronstein, Hilary Weeks, and Rebecca Coletta were present. Also in attendance were Paula King, Chief Justin Litchfield, MLP Manager Kimberly Longey, Hwy. Superintendent Merton Taylor, Jr., ACO Kate Nevins, Finance Committee Chair David Kramer, Judy Gowdy, Bob Mellstrom, and Matt Stowell. 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 23, 2020 were accepted as submitted.

Howard read a statement (attached) detailing the reason for his resignation citing a paragraph from Kimberly Longey's email of June 23, 2020 expressing reasons the public is not comfortable sharing their concerns about the police department.

Select Board Reorganization

Hilary moved to nominate Howard Bronstein as chair through November 4, 2020. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes. Howard moved to nominate Rebecca Coletta as clerk. The motion, seconded by Hilary, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes. Howard moved to nominate Hilary Weeks as procurement officer. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Rebecca, yes; Hilary, yes. Rebecca also agreed to serve as the Board's MLP representative.

West Street Concerns

West Street resident Judy Gowdy approached the Board with concerns about the increase in elevation of the road surface with planned repairs. Over the years the resurfacing of West Street has elevated the road causing water to runoff into her driveway. Highway Superintendent Mert Taylor, Jr. explained that the road needs to be crowned allowing water to drain off so it won't pool on the road surface. He met with Judy saying he will put in an apron and swales to redirect water runoff from her driveway. FY'21 Chapter 90 funds have been approved and will be used to resurface 1.7 miles of West Street from Rte. 116 to Judy Gowdy's. The project request will be completed, signed by the Select Board Chair, Highway

Superintendent, and the Town Accountant. Bob Mellstrom stated he was in attendance as Judy's engineering consultant.

Highway Department Update

Duane Meehan is leaving his position on the Highway Department. Superintendent Taylor has hired Justin Litchfield in accordance with the hiring policy contained in the Personnel Manual; the position was posted internally. Justin will work 40 hours for the Highway Department in addition to 20 hours in his position as Police Chief.

Animal Control

ACO Kate Nevins reported the animal control vehicle is out of service and not worth repairing. Paula noted the plate needs to be returned so the vehicle can be removed from the insurance fleet schedule. The vehicle can be advertised as surplus. Kate noted the Animal Control budget is insufficient as is the ACO's stipend. Some equipment was purchased with FY'20 funds. She mentioned the fee for the Franklin County Regional Shelter is determined by a town's population. Kate has consulted with Finance Committee Chair David Kramer about budgetary concerns as well as an animal control vehicle. (The police department pickup truck is needed by the highway department once the new police pickup truck is in service.) There was discussion of merging animal control with the police department. Kate is also the ACO for Cummington and Goshen as well as a special police officer for Plainfield and will attend the Police Academy beginning next week. Hilary asked if budgets might be merged with that of the police department or kept separate in the future. Kate answered that needs to be discussed. Hilary asked if ACO's will have to attend the police academy in the future to which Kate replied yes.

The FY'21 Animal Control Expense budget was discussed. Kate said she can work with it for this year. She noted the Plainfield stipend is lower than that of other towns. The Finance Committee will work on it for the next fiscal year.

MLP Update

MLP Manager Kimberly Longey updated the Board on MLP happenings. The yearend report, recommendations, and priorities is attached. While the department is wrapping up construction, three of the working staff are exiting due to various reasons leaving in a staff of two. Both Brian and Kimberly are willing to serve. Howard moved to reappoint Kimberly Longey as MLP Manager and Brian Hawthorne as MLP Assistant Manager. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Rebecca, yes; Hilary, yes. Howard asked Kimberly to post the MLP report on the town website.

Select Board Schedule

The Board will not meet July 28, 2020.

Special meetings will take place on August 19th and September 16th at 10:00 a.m. to go over the list of job descriptions in preparation of meetings with employees. Caucus is scheduled for September 16th.

Other Business

The Board received a copy PVPC's RFP for a Regional Emergency Services Study. The DLTA grant funded project will study the potential for regionalizing emergency services and provide consultant services to assist with the project. Howard moved to accept the FY'21 appointments/re-appointments per schedule provided by the Town Clerk. The motion, seconded by Hilary, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Rebecca, yes; Hilary, yes.

The Board agreed to issue a Temporary Extension of Premises License for Pub 116.

IT Grant: Two computers have been purchased with FY'20 Town Office Technology funds. Hilary agreed to assist with the IT Grant.

MVP Action Grant: The engineer's original assessment of 20 culverts may be able to add an additional 30.

Eversource Pole Hearing petitions for North Central, East Main, and West main streets will take place at 7:15 p.m. on August 25, 2020. The hearings will take place by conference call during the regular meeting of the Select Board.

Correspondence

A meeting with MTRSD Superintendent Sheryl Stanton will be scheduled.

The MTRSD School Committee sent notice of 1/12th assessments for FY'21 as member towns have not yet held their annual meetings.

Assistant Assessor Gina Papineau is contacting NEXAMP in regard to their letter of July 1, 2020 concerning the quarterly payment schedule.

Gina has also written to the Board concerning issues/changes she would like the Building Commissioner to address.

The Board received a letter from Chris Cole stating Chief Litchfield and Sargent Miazga have entered the Post Office without masks. Chief Litchfield has contacted Chris and resolved the matter.

The Board received a letter from Lily Thompson in support of the Police Department.

Conrad Liebenow emailed the Board about the potential for battery energy storage projects in Plainfield sent to land owners. His questions include: Is this something the Town might consider on town-owned property and what procedures would be

necessary? The Board will address this when and if any action is required.
KP Law Attorney David Doneski emailed his opinion in response to the question of whether the Planning Board or the ZBA has jurisdiction over special permits granted prior to the Zoning By-Law changes that took effect last year.

Other mail was reviewed.

Howard moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was approved as follows: Howard, yes; Hilary, yes; Rebecca, yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King
Administrative Secretary