

Minutes of the Select Board Meeting, November 9, 2021

Hilary Weeks, Rebecca Coletta, and Patrick Williamson were in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The minutes of October 12th and 26th were accepted as submitted.

Highway Superintendent

Walter Jennings and Conservation Commission Chair Judy Williams brought the West Hill Road beaver pond problem to the Board's attention. MassDOT representative David Stokes has informed Walter the state will not pay for future damages to Plainfield roads. (Chapter 90 funds were approved for \$30,000 to repair damages to West Hill Road due to the dam's failure in July.) Walter has been in contact with DEP Circuit Rider Mark Stinson concerning remediation of the problem. The landowner does not want the beavers killed. Walter's research lead to a company in Grafton, VT that installs a device called a beaver deceiver which enables water to flow while the beavers are able to continue their activities. The dam failed 10-12 years ago. The law of averages was discussed. Patrick asked if the device will work. While there is no guarantee, routine maintenance should alleviate the problem. A \$4,800 grant may be available for the project, but the landowner is also required to contribute. Judy Williams stated this solution would be a great prototype for other beaver ponds. She referenced the seriousness of the situation along Rte. 116 just beyond the Rte.8A intersection. David Stokes said the state has repaired West Hill Road twice; the landowner is responsible. Hilary moved to have Walter apply for the grant with the Board to negotiate a contribution from the landowner. The motion, seconded by Patrick, was unanimously approved.

Municipal Hearing Officer

Howard Bronstein has contacted the Ethics Commission concerning his interest in serving as Plainfield's Municipal Hearing Officer (Chapter 148A) in addition to his position as Administrative Assistant to the Police Chief. In towns with a population under 3,500 the "tiny town exemption" applies with the Board designating the positions as "special municipal employee". Qualifications and training will be researched. Chief Alvord will contact Cummington regarding their Chapter 148A needs.

Plainfield Police Working Group

Susi Westwood, Bob Baker, and Kimberly Longey approached the Board in response to the tasks assigned to the group in May. Hilary noted she had not yet had a chance to review the email response as the group was not on the agenda. The need or lack thereof of a community survey was discussed. Hilary asked if a survey is to provide data collection or an expectation that things be resolved. Rebecca noted a survey would provide an across the board look at the department with Patrick adding a reminder of the previous issue of the size and expansion of the department. Bob stated the PPWG is trying to avoid size and costs with the intention being to have a non-biased survey. The anonymity of survey responses was mentioned. Additionally, police departmental regionalization was brought up. Ideas and comments followed.

MLP Update

Manager Kimberly Longey reported things are going well with collections are on target. There are some delinquent accounts.

Hanover Insurance is expected to leave the market which leaves us and other towns looking for an insurer for pole bonds. Patrick asked about ownership. Eversource is in the process of a massive infrastructure project. Most roadside poles are co-owned with Verizon, the company which manages said poles.

The MLP is working on broadband a three-phase infrastructure update with other towns and MBI.

Other Business

The formerly postponed BTE Community Outreach Meeting for proposed marijuana cultivation at 129 Grant Street has been rescheduled for November 20, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. at the Town Hall.

Hilary moved to pay KP Law invoice #133485 in the amount of \$156.00. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was unanimously approved.

Rebecca is willing to meet with Ashfield regarding the options for a one-year temporary note or bonding the Sanderson capital projects approved at the May 1st town meeting.

The Board will not meet on November 23rd; the next meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2021.

Other mail was reviewed,

Warrants were signed.

A motion to adjourn was entertained and approved at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King
Administrative Secretary