

Minutes of the Select Board Meeting, January 11, 2022

Hilary Weeks, Rebecca Coletta, and Patrick Williamson were in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The minutes of December 7, 2021 were accepted as submitted.

Highway Superintendent

Walter Jennings reported Eversource concerns about a Yurt constructed within their easement beneath the power lines on West Hill Road. Neither Walter nor Mert Taylor, Jr. issued a driveway permit for the premises. The property owner has an of 688 Bear Swamp Road in Ashfield. Hilary agreed to contact Building Commissioner Gerry Garner to see if a building permit was issued.

According to Walter the 2019 Western Star is out for repair due to a breakdown and computer regeneration. The cost of the repair is in excess of \$14,000 half of which is to be covered by warranty.

The newest departmental employee left on December 24th. The position has been advertised and new hire David Shippee will start on January 17th or 18th depending on the storm forecast.

Fire Chief

A two-vehicle accident on November 7th at the four corners of Rte. 116 and North and South Central Streets has prompted Chief Alvord to bring the lack of weekend police coverage to the attention of the Board. One vehicle was in the road and the other on the lawn of 278 East Main Street. Though there were no injuries both vehicles were unable to be moved until fault was determined. First responders had to maintain traffic control due to the lack of local police coverage for the fifty minutes it took for state police to respond. Police Administrator Howard Bronstein agrees there is a problem, but with limited hours we can't expect 100% coverage. The five hours of weekend coverage are scheduled for Saturdays. He noted the same problem exists throughout the hilltowns. Patrick inquired about the frequency of calls 7 days per week. Howard replied the police officers' schedules were planned according to call frequencies. Hilary added there is not an immediate fix. There was discussion of an "on call" system for the weekend. It was noted weekend officers do not live in town. Chief Alvord reiterated first responders are volunteers.

The Open Burning Permit regulations are very specific. The open-air burning season begins January 15th through May 1st. Burning without a permit will result in a \$100 fine. All requests for permits must be made the day prior to burning before 7:00 p.m. at 634-5470. Chief Alvord has published the regulations in the Plainfield Post.

(Howard Bronstein added due to COVID-19 no municipal hearing officer classes have been scheduled.)

Tree Warden

Tree Warden Robert Mellstrom reported there is \$2,000 in the FY'22 budget for the planting of trees. He referenced state statute that trees can be planted beyond the town's right-of-way with the permission of landowners. It is the responsibility of the tree warden to maintain trees planted beyond the right-of-way for ten years after which trimming and cutting become the responsibility of the landowner. A signed agreement will be required from landowners.

Ten to fifteen bare root trees can be purchased. Species selected for planting are those appropriate for our zone. Bob is working with the Plainfield Tree Alliance on this project.

Other Business

The Board received a Notice of Intent to sell and/or convert to some other use, land classified as Chapter 61B and taxed under the provision of Chapter 61B of Mass General Law. Hilary moved not to exercise the Town's right of first refusal for land on Bow Street and East Street owned by Jamie Paquette, deed referenced in Book #12622, Page #64 with the lien referenced in Book #12777, Page #44 at the Hampshire County Registry of Deeds. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was unanimously approved.

Hilary moved to renew Jamie Wooldridge's Class II license for 2022. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was unanimously approved.

Hilary moved to pay KP Law invoice #134669 in the amount of \$123.28. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was unanimously approved.

Hilary agreed to write the annual report for the Select Board.

The Division of Local Services has certified the Town's Free Cash at \$229,757 and Broadband Retained Earnings at \$109,743 as of June 30, 2021.

Appointments/Resignations

Hilary moved to accept Anne Williamson's resignation from the Cultural Council with appreciation and regret. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was unanimously approved.

Hilary moved to appoint Kevin Greene to the Planning Board through

June 30, 2024 per recommendation of the Planning Board. The motion was seconded by Rebecca and unanimously approved.

Hilary moved to appoint Linda Mason to the Board of Library Trustees through June 30, 2022 per request of the Library Trustees. The motion was seconded by Patrick and was unanimously approved.

Old Business

The Board received information on the reimbursement process for the Climate Resiliency Planning Grant.

IT Grant: There is a possibility of an extension for the IT Grant. Migrating the accounting and payroll software to the cloud and paying for Novus support will be researched.

Correspondence

The Board received an application for Smith Agricultural and Vocational School. Notice of Eversource tree works guidelines and safety protocol was received. The Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Service District for FY'23 is \$1,688.40.

Miscellaneous mail and meeting notices were reviewed.

Warrants were signed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King
Administrative Secretary