

Minutes of the Select Board Meeting, February 22, 2022

Hilary weeks, Rebecca Coletta, and Patrick Williamson were present. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The minutes of February 8, 2022 were accepted as submitted.

Police Chief

Chief Justin Litchfield reported on the January call log.

Highway Department

Ben Gillett expressed his concerns on the use of straight salt on roadways and its potential effect on wells. He and Superintendent Jennings have spoken on several occasions. The use of salt has been cut back over that of previous years. Hilary noted her appreciation of Ben's concerns and reiterated the importance of discussions when everyone concerned is present.

Acting on the advice of Plainfield's District 1 representative, Walter has researched the cost of a used grader. David Stokes recommended the purchase with Chapter 90 funds as 38% of Plainfield's roads are gravel. Plainfield currently has \$160,000 available; Walter would like to obtain a grader for \$75,000. This would leave the balance for line painting a reserve of \$30,000. He anticipates approximately \$190,000 in FY23 Chapter 90 funding. Hilary moved to authorize Walter to find and purchase a used grader for up to \$75,000 with Chapter 90 funds. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was unanimously approved. Walter added he would like to find a grader old enough so as to avoid computers and electronics as it would be easier to maintain and repair.

Walter has also prepared grant proposals for the following projects: Culvert grant to replace the culvert on Mill Brook on Prospect Street, An Expression of Interest in the Shared Streets Program which increases the Town's eligibility for the following: grant for the beaver problem on Rte. 116 north of Rte. 8A estimated at \$1,000,000; West Street and Windsor Avenue full depth excavation and paving; South Union Street, Church Lane, Union Street milling and paving; Grant Street milling and paving; Prospect Street milling and paving. Under the Shared Streets Program the proposal for 1,000 feet of sidewalk on Rte. 116 isn't feasible due to required addition of public parking or an electric charging station. The alternative is some type of median on Rte. 116 to make the area near the beach safer.

MLP

MLP Manager Kimberly Longey submitted the FY23 Enterprise Budget noting the first six months of FY22 are on track. The budget includes an increase in the manager and assistant manager positions in addition to direct funding for town office personnel. Kimberly also suggested the formation of a MLP Board to replace the current MLP Board which is the Select Board (complete MLP report attached.) CAFII payments to towns are anticipated to start in the fall of 2022. Kimberly suggests having Town Meeting codify the 2018 policy decision of the Select Board decision to use CAFII funds to fund the broadband debt service. Referencing the March 2021 outage and flaws in MBI's middle mile, she reported work on rerouting service in the event of future outages. Walter asked about maintaining the access to the broadband hub. The Highway Department plows the driveway. The Select Board is amenable to the department maintaining the driveway.

Resignation

The Board accepted Sue Metcalfe Honneus resignation as COA Coordinator with appreciation and regret.

Other Business

The Board agreed to send letters to state legislators in support of the MTRSD recommendations to the Special Commission on Rural School Districts and seeking fair transportation reimbursement to towns, which by statute, are required to send students to "out of district" vocational schools.

Hilary moved to close the annual town meeting warrant to the submission of articles March 22, 2022. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was unanimously approved. A special article for the conversion of the municipal telephones to the VOIP system was discussed.

Hilary moved to send a letter to the Town Clerk requesting a referendum question on the May 7, 2022 ballot seeking to exclude the debt for Sanderson and Mohawk Trail Regional High School/Middle School approved at the May 1, 2021 Annual Town Meeting from Proposition 2½. The motion, seconded by Rebecca, was unanimously approved.

Budget forms for FY23 were processed. Salaries for town office personnel will be discussed at the next meeting. There was discussion about the addition of an assistant to the administrative secretary and/or a town administrator.

Correspondence

A letter from the Northampton Cycle Club seeking the town's COVID-19

protocols in relation to the 2022 Tour of the Hilltowns will be forwarded to Board of Health.

A third application to Smith Agricultural & Vocational School was received. The board received a memo from Howard Bronstein regarding research on a municipal hearing officer.

Other mail was reviewed.

Warrants were signed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King
Administrative Secretary