

## Minutes of the Select Board Meeting, July 12, 2022

Hilary Weeks, Patrick Williamson, and Ben Gillett were present. The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Board was reorganized with Patrick Williamson to serve as chair. Taking over as chair, Patrick thanked referenced the importance of the Open Meeting Law. Hilary was thanked for her service as chair and Ben Gillett was welcomed to the Board. Departmental and committee liaisons were discussed. Each member is assigned as liaison to multiple departments/committees. Patrick moved to accept the liaison list as reassigned with the updated list to be available and reviewed at the next meeting. The motion, seconded by Hilary, was unanimously approved.

Meeting posting places and other notification systems were discussed. It was noted only two residents attended the Finance Informational Budget Hearing.

### Fiscal 2023 Appointments

Fiscal 2023 appointments/reappointments were made. Public questions/comments were entertained in regard to the police chief position and police department as follows: FY23 Police Salary budget; dissolution of the Plainfield Police Working Group (recommended by both the Board and the PPWG); reference to Strong Chief statute and one year notice requirement of intention not to reappoint chief; plans for keeping the public informed of police matters; lack of police coverage; lack of response; positive note regarding local response to the previous Saturday's motor vehicle accident; emergency response team includes Highway Department personnel; police department budget increase versus no increase in the town's needs in regard to police coverage over the past five years; public has the "right to know" about reduced coverage and Vertava, formerly known as the Vertava (Swift River Addiction Campus, not aware of loss of police coverage; note that Swift River), in its Special Permitting process stated it would not be a drain on Plainfield emergency services and public safety; reference to Vertava's property being in both Plainfield and Cummington; additional reference to the FY22 police salary budget which only afforded 85 hours of policing.

Hilary said the Police chief has done everything required of him.

Patrick stated the Board cannot comment on rumors circulating about the police

department.

Questions concerning the Police FY23 salary budget plan, management of the Plainfield Police Working Group's Community Policing Survey recommendations, the former ad hoc group's recommendations, and police matters were raised by Rebecca Coletta. Patrick answered the recommendations are being worked through and will be posted on future agendas in small batches to be discussed by the Board. Peter Lapointe suggested not reappointing Chief Litchfield with current issues pending.

Following the lengthy give and take, the Board reappointed Justin Litchfield as Police Chief for FY23.

#### Other Business

Walter Jennings, Highway Superintendent, suggested the purchase of two automatic defibrillators with American Recovery Act funds (ARPA), one to be kept in the Highway Garage and one to be kept in the pick-up truck. Patrick asked the issue be added to the next agenda.

Hilary moved to renew the Ashfield Rod & Gun Club's 2022 club license. The motion, seconded by Ben, was unanimously approved.

Loan documents for the pick-up truck approved at the May 7, 2022 town meeting were signed.

#### Correspondence

The Board received the list of FY23 police officer appointments from Chief Litchfield.

The Board received Electrical Inspector David Rhinemiller's appointment of Chad Wagenknecht as Assistant Electrical Inspector.

NCC wrote a letter of thanks to the Board for its support of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Northampton Cycling Club Tour of the Hilltowns that took place on June 25<sup>th</sup>.

Howard Bronstein's "Anatomy of a New Response", a positive piece on the Police Department's response to a recent call, was received.

Other mail was reviewed.

Warrants were signed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King, Administrative Secretary