

Minutes of the Select Board Meeting, March 28, 2023

Patrick Williamson, Hilary Weeks, and Ben Gillett were present. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. The minutes of March 14, 2023 were accepted as submitted.

Whip City Fiber Contract

MLP Manager Lucas Suarez-Orzoco with Caitrin Ferriter and Andrew Schule, representing Whip City Fiber, addressed the Board in reference to renewing Plainfield's contract negotiations. A ten-year agreement which would include nineteen communities would ensure a discounted rate. Lucas has discussed the matter with both Kimberly Longey and Brian Hawthorne, former MLP manager and assistant manager. Due to Plainfield's long-standing relationship with Whip City the ten-year agreement was recommended. Patrick entertained a motion to approve signing a ten-year agreement with Whip City Fiber. The motion, moved by Hilary and seconded by Ben was unanimously approved.

Bow Street

Patrick reported on the status of the 7 Bow Street matter. KP Law drafted a formal motion to inspect which has been served to the property owners. Copies were issued to the Select Board, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, and the Building Commissioner. If the motion to inspect is not complied with in 16 days, the motion will be filed with Superior Court.

AEG Contract

Conrad Liebenow, Energy Committee, reported the Green Communities Grant extension has been approved through June 30, 2023. The state contract has been amended to include the additional funds for the Police Station heat pump, insulation, and dry wall; the total contract for all approved projects is \$137,500 and has been signed. A motion to sign an agreement with AEG for the work at the Police Station was approved and signed.

Police Chief

Chief Litchfield was asked if police salaries might be used for POST training since Sgt. Gibbs has left the department to which the chief replied he is using his duty

officers for coverage. Hilary noted that funds for POST training has been on the list for ARPA funds. Coverage is needed. State funds of \$3,300 per officer can be applied for to reimburse towns for POST. Justin said the cost for training is \$5,000. The town can't apply for reimbursement until the follow-up 2,400 hours have been completed which officers have three years to complete. The chief estimated \$12,000 is left in salaries due to Sgt. Gibbs leaving the department. Patrick referenced the shortage of police officers in the state. Western Mass will lose officers to the Boston area for better wages. Chief Litchfield added officers may have to sign contracts in the future if their academy training is paid for by the town. After discussion concerning the required 2,400 hours for officers, Dalila Almqvist asked for clarification that there are funds for training, but there aren't funds for the 2,400-hour requirement.

Other Business

Hilary moved to appoint Robert Walden as assistant Building Commissioner from April 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023. The motion, seconded by Ben, was unanimously approved.

Articles for the town meeting warrant include: Broadband FY24 budget, Broadband retained earnings to the Broadband Stabilization Fund, addition to the Firetruck Stabilization Fund \$50,000, request for a new fire truck (borrow), request for a medium size dump/plow truck (borrow), a loader mounted boom mower \$110,000, Hallock Bldg. and Police Station painting \$25,000, 2 bullet proof vests \$2,400, Mohawk Trail Regional School District Regional Agreement changes, non-binding resolution for administrative assistant.

Hilary moved to close the Annual Town Meeting warrant to the submission of articles. The motion, seconded by Ben, was unanimously approved.

Judy Cole reported the Finance Committee's vote of a 4.5% COLA increase for paid personnel for FY24. Hilary asked how we justify an increase lower than the Federal figure. Judy said there is no legal mandate. The 4.5% is the average of increases proposed in nine area towns

The Nomination of Inspector of Animals form will be forwarded to Animal Inspector Kate Nevins for processing.

Patrick suggested scheduling an Executive Session to discuss the 27 Broom Street Host Community Agreement with Town Counsel.

A motion to pay KP Law invoice #141350 in the amount of \$1,445.92 was seconded by Ben and unanimously approved.

Correspondence

Effective July 1, 2023 KP Law's rate will be \$225 per hour.

Two additional applications to Smith Vocational School were received.

The FY24 Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services District assessment is \$1,813.
The Board received notice of the JAM bike ride through Plainfield on July 23,
2023.

Other mail was reviewed.

Warrants were signed.

A motion to adjourn was approved at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula J. King
Administrative Secretary