

Minutes of the Select Board Meeting May 28th, 2024

Ben Gillett and Judy Cole were in attendance. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Hearing: Donald Voner was in attendance to represent Verizon Wireless for the Pole Hearing:

- 1.) One (1) jointly owned mid-span pole is to be placed on the westside of North Central Street at a point approximately one hundred twenty-four feet south-easterly from the centerline of Union Street. The pole will provide mid-span support to the existing pole line, and will provide for the distribution of intelligence and telecommunications and the transmissions of high and low voltage electric current.
- 2.) One (1) jointly owned stub pole is to be placed on the east side of West Main Street at a point approximately forty feet southerly from the centerline of West Hill Road, and approximately fifty feet easterly of existing pole T.31/E.93. The pole will provide support to the existing pole line; and will provide for the distribution of intelligence and telecommunications and the transmission of high and low voltage electric current.

Kimberly Longey, the Broadband Manager, asked if the poles would affect the fiber network as it regularly attaches to the poles and it was confirmed that it will not affect the network. Judy Cole moved that the Board vote to approve the installation of the two poles. The board voted unanimously to approve the installation of the two poles and the order was signed.

Kimberly Longey: Broadband Manager

-Broadband update on two operational policy changes: Kimberly proposed two changes to the Broadband's operating policies. One would be effective as soon as practical: a new policy that would allow for temporary internet service suspension for up to a period of time. The target for this policy would be people who only reside in Plainfield seasonally. (i.e. here for the summer and away for the winter

or vice versa.) We typically do not allow for a different rate structure for different types of residencies; however, this policy would allow for this, thus keeping the Broadband Department whole financially while also acknowledging these realities for people. This would be modelled after a Whip City Fiber policy that is already in place in Ashfield and Cummington. Kimberly receives occasional requests from several property owners who do not live in Plainfield year-round. This would provide a connectivity solution that encourages seasonal residents to stay connected with the potential to suspend service temporarily.

The second policy change would be revisions to a policy initially adopted in March of 2019 that was revised most recently in August of 2022. Kimberly is proposing retaining subsidies for homes that existed in 2018 (and included in our network design) and for homes that have a “cold drop.” The policy change would eliminate the subsidy for new homes that are being built, and would clarify that accessory apartments are considered “new homes.” The Rationale is that the Broadband operating budget is limited and that it would be in both the Broadband department’s and the Town’s best interest to conserve the limited funds for premises that existed when the network was designed. As new home construction increases in town, Kimberly believes it is reasonable to require that the home builder plan for the cost of connecting to Plainfield’s network as part of the overall construction budget. Often, new homes require a “network extension” which is more expensive than a standard drop. Accessory apartments were not mentioned in prior policies, and these housing units are also being built more frequently and should be considered as new homes for the purpose of this broadband policy.

Kimberly will continue conversations about these policies with a working Committee that she has proposed as well as with Whip City Fiber. She will keep the Select Board posted on any information that she receives and the timing of the changes.

VFIS FY’ 25 Insurance Proposal: To be signed by Select Board Chair. Ben Gillett signed the VFIS FY’ 25 insurance proposal.

KP Law Bill: \$1,198.04 KP Law Payment: Judy Cole moved that the board vote to approve the payment to KP law. The Select Board voted unanimously to approve the payment to KP Law in the amount of \$1,198.04.

Miscellaneous Mail and Meeting Notices:

-Letter from Tim Walter informing that, if nominated by the Select Board, he is willing and able to serve on the Plainfield Cultural Council. Kathryn Jensen, Cultural Council Board Chair, was copied on the letter.

-Email from Ellen Dupont: Complaint about Animal Control on behalf of the Board of Health and as a resident. Others confirmed that the current Animal Control officer is fairly unresponsive to correspondence. The police department often has to respond to calls. Chief Litchfield knows of someone with the necessary experience who is willing to take over. Judy Cole and Chief Litchfield intend to have a meeting with both Kate Nevins and the Certified Animal Control Officer from a neighboring town who would like to take over.

-Email from John and Sebern Fisher regarding the runoff on West Street caused by Eversource. There were photos included of the runoff and the new Highway Supervisor, Mark Hebert, has inspected the runoff and is aware of it.

-Email from FRCOG (Franklin Regional Council of Governments): Informing that the Franklin County Bikeway sign installation will begin next week.

-MIIA Letter informing of new deductible rates.

Warrants were signed. Other mail was reviewed.

A motion to adjourn was approved at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Dry