

New Ashford Select Board Meeting
March 7, 2016

Board Present: Jason Jayko (chair), Ken McInerney, Mark Phelps
Others Present: Stephen Demyer, Tom Matuszko, Dick Demyer, Keith LaCasse, Wayne Buckley, Bob O'Connor, Lori Jayko

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Assessor - Gus Martin. The board requested clarification about an abatement issued to a cell tower company. Gus explained that he received updated information from Verizon after the assessed values had been finalized, requiring an abatement. Gus will get a copy of the deed for the old schoolhouse at the register of deeds and will provide a plot plan for the board. Gus needs to make one more expenditure out of the assessor's software budget (originally \$15,000). He recommends adding \$1500 to the \$2000 for assessor's expenses for software maintenance. Within two years he should be completely on Patriot's software. Gus currently prints out the bills from his own system. If the town uses Patriots, there may be a fee to print the bills.

2. Berkshire Regional Planning Commission - Tom Matuszko, from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, provided an update on The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership. The plan is to designate a 21 town area to receive additional resources from The U.S. Forest Service and some state agencies to use the woodland resources in the area better. Focuses are on sustainable forestry, sustainable communities, increased economic development, forest conservation, and improved fiscal stability of municipalities. An advisory committee was formed. Legislation will request twenty million dollars from the federal government and five million from the state to fund the program and be placed in a trust fund so it is sustainable. Would the town support state legislation that would enable this program to go forward?

The Partnership would like to create a multi - use center, provide technical and financial assistance to business owners, forest viability programs, cooperative marketing, research and development, renewable wood heat initiative, tourism, municipal financial sustainability including annual payments to the towns, sustainable forestry practices for private property owners, and land conservation.

The governance structure would be a partnership board made up of representatives from municipalities and state agencies. The board would oversee the money. An affiliated non-profit would make the day to day business decisions, i.e. contracts. There would be no federal ownership of land and no eminent domain authority. There is a draft letter for the board to send into the state supporting the need for legislation. MTWP would like to see legislation ready for the spring. Mark Phelps recommends that the board support this. It will be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.

3. Veteran's Update - Dick Demyer, Veteran's Service Officer. Dick Demyer and Lori Jayko met with Heather Poliferno from the state veteran's office. Heather took the town veteran's information back to the Boston office. Heather is now the authorizer for New Ashford. The town will receive reimbursement for all of 2015. Heather entered January - June 2015 and Lori certified it. Heather will enter the rest of the information through February 2016. She will work with Dick on March 2016. There will be some adjustments made. Dick is getting forms updated and signed. The town overpaid the veteran \$813.30. Adjustments will be made to deduct this from future checks.

4. Building Inspector - The board received a draft agreement from the town of Adams. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Jason will send the draft to legal counsel.

5. Road Commissioner - Keith LaCasse, nothing new to report. 911 requested the new house numbers in town from Max LaCasse. Ken reported the numbers to Keith.

Bauer Road needs attention due to washout from a recent storm.

There are two bridges in town that are town responsibility, one at Roys Road, and the other near fire department. Mark reported that the bridge on Route 7 needs maintenance because it is filling in underneath with sediment.

For the next meeting, Keith will provide Ken with project specs for the Greylock/Bauer Road project, focusing on the road base, and guard rail. The culverts on Greylock road will be cleaned as part of this project. Ken had his monthly meeting with Erica Kreuter from Massachusetts Economic Development. She would like the project to be started after July 1.

Keith will fill in the cracks on Roys Road, Old Route 7, Beach Hill, and Ingraham Road, maybe can chip seal some of the roads.

The Mallery Road Paving project will be in the Central Register on March 9, and two later dates in the Berkshire Eagle. The bid package is ready and bids will be opened by the board on April 19, 2016.

6. Road Bylaw - shelved until next meeting while waiting on more information from legal counsel.

7. Mallery Road Paving Bid - covered in the Road Commissioner's Report.

8. Electricity - Will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

9. Budget - The budget was reviewed, line by line, by the board.

Stephen Demyer, town custodian, is requesting a raise from his current rate of \$12.50 an hour. He received a raise from \$500 a year to \$750 a year in 2011.

The Fire Department revised its budget request to \$7,445 plus \$15,000 for the grant tanker. The previous year's budget was \$7,100. Wayne Buckley, Fire Chief, thanked the board for sending the support letter for the AFG grant.

Road and bridges FY 16 \$40,000, FY 17 - \$54,682.65. \$14,682.65 was moved from the winter roads account due to there being leftover salt and sand that will not need to be purchased in FY17.

Northern Berkshire Solid Waste - budget might go up in FY17 due to increase in health insurance. Recycling Account - Dick Demyer will get the figures to Ken.

10. MBI/Wired West - Jason attended that last meeting. Committees have done risk analysis. Jason and Lori Jayko went to the MMA legislative breakfast. A draft bill about internet was discussed. Wired West will look into this. Some towns have started looking at other options. New Ashford might want to consider other options.

11. Public Comment - Can the select board delete e-mails? What are the regulations?

Sign warrant - warrant was reviewed and signed.

The minutes from the February 16, 2016 Select Board meeting were approved as amended on a motion by Mark Phelps, seconded by Ken McInerney.

Next meeting March 21, 2016

Meeting adjourned 9:42