

New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting
New Ashford Town Hall/Zoom
June 3, 2024

Board Present: Jason Jayko (Chair), Ken McNerney (MLP Manager), Mark Phelps

Others Present: Lori Jayko, Lars Reinhard, Keith Lacasse, Richard George, Stephen Roy, Diane George

Zoom: None

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Board Reorganization: Mark made a motion to nominate Jason for Chair, seconded by Ken. The motion passed unanimously. Mark made a motion to nominate Ken for Vice-Chair, seconded by Jason. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Approval of Minutes from May 20, 2024: On a motion by Mark, seconded by Jason, the minutes from the May 20, 2024 New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting were approved unanimously.
3. Public Comment: Richard George, Board of Health Chair, reported that the inspection at Bondhu is complete and there were no concerns.
4. Veterans Services Officer: The Select Board was informed that a volunteer would place flags on the Veterans' graves for Memorial Day. Ken checked the cemetery on the morning of Memorial Day and there were no flags, so he placed them. Stephen Roy, VSO, will take care of placement of flags on Veterans' graves in the town cemetery from now on. He will standardize the flag markers and remove the flags for retirement by Veterans' Day. The Select Board will send him the electronic file of the cemetery plots.
5. Cemetery: Kurt Singer and Pete Haig mowed the cemetery for Memorial Day. Mark offered to volunteer time and equipment to do tree work. There are concerns that someone drove in the cemetery. There are tombstones that need repairs.
6. Road Commissioner: Keith and Max Lacasse cleaned up and opened Roys Road. There were 14 downed trees on Greylock and Bauer Roads that needed attention before Greylock Road could be opened, including an oak tree that required the skid steer to move. The road is passable and needs to be graded. DCR will open Greylock Road tomorrow, once they are done with a construction project. Keith will start cleaning the sides of Ingraham Road tomorrow, to prep for blacktopping, and will put in a drain near Raimers'. He will mow the sides of the town roads soon and will remove more problem trees. A townwide e-mail went out about the mowing. There is a 24-inch culvert on Greylock Road between the second and upper gate that needs to be replaced with a plastic pipe. The town already has the pipe and will only need to pay for labor. There's enough salt in the Salt Shed for the winter season. If it gets stored too long, it gets hard. Keith will check the septic tank at the Town Hall, as the alarm has been going off. Max offered to do wood chipping for \$800 for a day.
7. Ronnie's Deliveries Sign: The Board would like to request that Ronnie's make their sign on Route 7 more accurate, as many tractor trailers have difficulty finding the warehouse. Ken noted that there are many Ronnie's ATV tags on the sides of the roads due to their transport in open trailers. Mark will contact Representative Barrett about the lag in response time from Verizon for repairs, as evidenced after the recent outage when a tractor trailer, looking for Ronnie's, clipped Verizon's low hanging wire. The Fire Station and several residents were without phone service for days.

8. Trees: Mark and Keith checked the trees in town, added trees to Eversource's list, and made a separate list for trees for the town to remove. Keith will take down as many trees as the remaining FY budget will allow and will prioritize removal of the most dangerous trees and highest traffic roads first. Mark will communicate the additions to the list to Eversource.

9. Fire Station Addition: The order of conditions has been issued and signed by the Conservation Commission. The Select Board needs to record it at the Registry of Deeds.

10. Woodlands Partnership Grant FY24: Jason e-mailed Legal Counsel again last week about the MOU and did not get a response. The MTWP advised that an amendment may be filed until the end of FY25. Mark made a motion to file for an amendment to the FY24 MTWP Grant for an extension to the end of FY25, seconded by Ken. The motion passed unanimously and Ken will let the MTWP know.

11. School House Boundaries: Mark got an e-mail from Legal Counsel, on 5-21, that they checked in with the Title Attorney and will give an update when they have one.

12. Legal Counsel: Responses are taking a long time and holding back projects. The Board will look into what other legal counsels are available.

13. MLP: Andrew Short, from Whip City, informed the MLP that Brodie Mountain LLC would like access to the town internet and suggested that town infrastructure may need modification. The MLP noted that the existing fiber is ready for 125 units for connection on a pole on Route 7 and no changes should be necessary. Brodie Mountain LLC will be responsible for costs associated with fiber connection from the pole on Route 7 to their property.

The Board discussed switching the Fire Station phone service from Verizon to town fiber. It can retain the phone number and will have fax capability.

The town got assessed a pole fee by USIC for a pole in Williamstown. The charge is due to the pole being within 500 feet of the town's boundary. Whip City advised that they will not contest the charge and Ken e-mailed Eric LeClair about the discrepancies with locations.

The MLP was assessed also for Dig Safe service for 99 Greylock Road, due to the presence of underground utilities.

The Wired West towns are doing a 5G upgrade and invited us to join in purchasing upgrade equipment with them, for the benefit of bundled pricing. It will cost \$31,226 for our town. This equipment has different backhaul needs which may lower backhaul costs. The town's current equipment will be outdated by 2026. Mark made a motion to approve the modernization plan, pending passing funding at Special Town Meeting, seconded by Jason. The motion passed unanimously.

Mark said there is a fiber line on Smith Road that is low hanging and gets caught on equipment. He thinks the lines should be raised on a new pole. Ken will look at it.

14. Town Clerk Updates: None.

15. Old and Any Other Unforeseen Business: Williamstown has the Inter-Municipal Assessing Agreement for signature by their Board.

Jason will contact the grant writers about the availability for grants for fire suppression water supply.

16. Warrant: The warrants were reviewed and signed.

Next meeting June 20 at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 7:53