

New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting

New Ashford Town Hall/Zoom

December 16, 2024

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

Others Present: Lori Jayko, Richard George, Susan Supranowicz, Frank Speth, Gary Sagendorph, PJ Pannesco

Zoom: None

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Approval of Minutes from December 4, 2024: On a motion by Mark, seconded by Ken, the minutes from the December 4, 2024 New Ashford Select Board/MLP meeting were approved unanimously.

2. Public Comment: Ken talked to John Goerlach about excessive salting on town roads, noting that the regulator on the truck may not be working. He also addressed concerns about the Fire Station parking lot not being plowed/treated and Smith Road. The Road Commissioner will handle communication about plowing going forward. Ken suggested the Fire Department get a key pad for the bay door, in order to have another entrance option.

3. Fire Department – Fines: Fire Chief, Frank Speth, said the Fire Department has responded to six false fire alarms at the Springs Motel, 94 Route 7, in the past year. The first false alarm is free, with a written letter. A second false alarm within twelve months of the first is a \$100 fine. All subsequent alarms within twelve months are a \$200 fine each. Alarm fees are payable to the town to go in a revolving fund for the Fire Department. The property owner has been billed for past false alarms, going back to 2021, but has not paid. She and property maintenance have been advised to keep the rooms heated to 50 degrees in order to not trigger the sensor that is causing the repeated false alarms, but the rooms are not heated. Frank will discuss this with the Building Inspector. Frank has sent letters to the property owner and would like to check with legal counsel about the next step, as the fees have not been paid. He will update the Board at a meeting in January.

4. 911 Changes – Berkshire County Sheriff's Office: The 911 services have transferred from the Sheriff's office to the state. The town paid the assessed yearly 911 fee of nearly \$9,000 to the Sheriff's office. As the Sheriff's office is no longer providing services the Board will request a portion of the payment be returned.

Frank would like the money that was budgeted towards 911 for stipends for the Fire Department Members, as he thinks this might help get volunteers. An attendance requirement for drill and calls would be required to receive the stipend, such as attending at least 75% of drills and 50% of calls. Frank will do some research on this and bring it back to the Board.

5. Road Commissioner: Not present.

6. MLP – Batteries: Eaton will do an assessment of the hut on January 22. One battery needs replacement, due to a bad inverter. Jason will get the replacement battery. Ken has a meeting with Andrew Short from Whip City on Wednesday at noon. Ken will make sure the roles and responsibilities are defined so that Jason will handle technical aspects and Ken will take care of managerial issues. Starting in January, Ken will have a meeting with Andrew every other Friday. The phone for the Fire Station has arrived. The digital equity grant opens on December 19th. Ken will look into it.

7. Assessing Computer Replacement: The computer at Town Hall that handles the assessing software needs to be replaced, as the hardware is outdated and software is at the end of life. Jason will get a quote for a replacement for the next meeting.

8. By-Laws: Susan has all but the FY12 and FY14 Annual Town Meeting warrants. She will look to see which by-laws need to be submitted.

9. Old School House: An ANR was presented to the Planning Board for Steve Nielsen to give ten feet of land to the Old Schoolhouse plot. The Planning Board questioned whether they could rule on it based on required frontage for zoning. A redrawn ANR will be presented this week to the Planning Board.

10. ADU: Mark went to the Planning Board meeting where the ADU law was discussed. The Planning Board is drafting changes to the zoning by-laws. The state's draft regulations are out now with a public comment period. An annual report will be required to EOH about the number of approved ADU applications, denials, etc. Mark thinks they should specify who is responsible for submitting the report.

11. Liquor Licenses: Bondhu has submitted an application for liquor license renewal. Susan will let them know that their outstanding personal property taxes need to be paid. The Springs is not reapplying.

12. Old and Any Other Unforeseen Business: Susan got a call from a lawyer in Lenox about when zoning went into effect and how it applies to the Springs motel. Zoning went into effect in 1969, with amendments along the way. The motel buildings were built before 1969 and are pre-existing non-conforming use.

Susan gave the Board the paperwork for the homeland security grant for reimbursement for the police officer for the elections. Jason signed the paperwork.

13. Warrant: The warrants were reviewed and signed.

Next meeting January 6, 2025 at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 7:46