

New Ashford Select Board Meeting  
New Ashford Town Hall  
November 20, 2017

Board Present: Jason Jayko (chair), Mark Phelps, Ken McInerney  
Others Present: Jennifer Welch, Gus Martin, Richard Demyer, Keith Lacasse, Lori Jayko, Chuck Morrone, Jeffrey Welch, Michelle Filiault, Dave Hadley, Lori Hadley, Colleen Little, Deb Allen, Molly Johnston, Bill Johnston

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Public Comment: Chuck Morrone, Tree Warden, asked the board to appoint a Tree Warden for the time he is gone. Mark made a motion that the Select Board act as Tree Warden until Chuck returns, seconded by Ken.

2. Mountain Pond Lane: Dave Hadley spoke on behalf of the Homeowner's Association of Mountain Pond Lane. The Association would like the town to consider taking over Mountain Pond Lane, including the maintenance. Dave said the development has been there 22 years, and they are long-standing residents who contribute taxes.

Mark Phelps, Planning Board Member, explained that as Mountain Pond Lane is a shared driveway and crosses all the residents' properties, turning it into a town road will cause the property lots to be divided into non-conforming lots. Residents would then need to go through the Zoning Board of Appeals any time they want a building permit. The lots currently have frontage on Old Route 7, which is a town maintained road. Redrawing the lots might be an option, with designing and engineering being the Association's cost.

Mark spoke with Nat Karns from The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, who explained that there is a process for plowing common driveways. The question needs to go to vote on town ballot. The board will contact town counsel. The Association collects \$2700 a year and spends, on average, \$2,200- \$2,500 on snow plowing (they pay per storm). They've discussed collecting specifically for a road maintenance fund.

The town has a current two-year contract for snow plowing.

3. Assessor: Gus Martin, Assessor, reported that the DOR Rep asked for sixteen more reports. Gus had trouble finding the information on the Patriot System and hired someone to help him. They got the reports to the DOR and Gus is waiting to hear back. He hopes to get preliminary certification next week. The next step is public disclosure, posting all the values for a week - tentatively from November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 6<sup>th</sup>. Then he will report back to DOR. The final certification comes after that, hopefully by December 15<sup>th</sup>. Then the Board can hold the Tax Classification Hearing and Gus will set the rate in the next day or two after that. If Gus prints the bills, he has to re-input data into his system. Jason will call Patriot and ask about printing the bills. The representative from Collect Pro has been unavailable to come out. The town would need DOR approval to send out estimated tax bills, but residents may pay the estimated amount.

4. Board of Health: Jason contacted legal counsel about a complaint from a new resident on Roys Road. Legal counsel said it is not a Select Board issue. It is a Board of Health Issue. The state inspected the residence last week and will send a report to the BOH. If there are any issues the BOH will need to enforce them.

5. Veterans: Richard Demyer had a telephone hearing on November 14 for the veteran benefits recipient that is in refund status. The preliminary refund status is \$2,143.07. The Hearing Officer will decide on the final number. The Hearing is open until November 21. In 2-4 weeks, there will be a written judgment. Repayment to the town can be done three ways. The town the recipient is currently residing in can issue a check in the full amount, or the VSO can negotiate a payment over a set period of time, or the state can take over. Repayment will be reported to the state, and the reimbursement amount from the state will be adjusted. There are new veteran services programs available for flag reimbursement, burial reimbursement, cemetery upgrades, food, etc. There are two active veteran benefits recipients in town.

6. Road Commissioner: Keith Lacasse, will pick up a gate from the state for Greylock Road on November 2. The roads will be closed for winter after he places the gate. Cemetery Road will not be closed, but blocks will be placed to limit ATV access. Keith will clean the culverts the last week in November and will patch the remaining potholes on Beach Hill Road. The lock on the upper gate on Greylock Road has been cut a couple of times. Greylock Road is in good shape and the state will blow the leaves off the road after Thanksgiving. Jason said the railings on the bridge on Roys Road look good and the rest should be replaced next year. Keith will get salt and sand placed for residents.

7. Colonial Power: Jason spoke with Colonial last week about setting the electric rates. Colonial's rate is \$0.10404, per kwh, for all services. Eversource's is \$0.10641, per kwh for residential service. The rate was approved on November 20, in effect for six months. The Colonial rate is automatically on residents' bills, unless they opt out. In the spring, the rates will be set again. There are green options that the town can choose. This raises the rates but uses green energy.

8. Town Flag: Ken will look into getting the design put on a flag this week.

9. Any Other Board Subjects for Consideration: Mark met with Jason Hoch, Williamstown Town Manager, and Bill Barken, Assessor, to talk about the possibility of their providing the town with assessing services. They felt that given the small number of properties in New Ashford, it would be simple to enter into an agreement. They currently use a third-party billing service that costs \$0.40 a bill, and felt confident they could export the information for billing from Patriot. Mark provided them with the current assessor's salary and budget and they requested more information from the town (the recap sheet, and forms LA13, 14 and 15). Mark explain to them that there are no office hours kept here, so there's no need to staff someone at town hall. North Adams uses the Patriot System and Adams uses Vision. Tony Mazzucco is leaving the position of Adams Town Manager. Donna Cesan will likely fill in on an interim basis.

The Board will hold a public hearing on December 14, for new electrical poles on Greylock Road, which will be advertised in the newspaper and the abutters will be notified. After the Hearing, The Board will sign the forms.

License renewals will be signed in December and will be on the next agenda.

The Fire Department will be asked to change its bank accounts to be under their own tax id number, rather than the town's. Lori Jayko will contact Sue Nawazelski.

The Board will get more quotes for furnaces for replacement, including using gas instead of oil. Mark will talk to Nat Karn, from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission for advice on marijuana dispensary regulations and what actions the Board will need to take.

Jason received the CAD file with the poles on it from Westfield Gas and Electric. He will review it. There is a phone call with Bill Ennon, from the MBI, on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

10. Approve the minutes from November 6, 2017. On a motion by Mark, seconded by Jason, the minutes from November 6, 2017 were approved. Ken abstained.

11. Warrant: The warrant was reviewed and signed. The bill from Berkshire Purchasing was received and will go on the next warrant.

Next meeting December 4, 2017 at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 8:13