

New Ashford Select Board Meeting  
New Ashford Town Hall  
April 2, 2018

Board Present: Jason Jayko (chair), Mark Phelps, Ken McInerney  
Others Present: Keith Lacasse, Lori Trottier, Alton Nichols, Karen Mongue, Jennifer Welch, Jeffrey Welch, Lori Jayko, Gus Martin, Karen Benko, Kurt Singer

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Approve the minutes from the 3/19/2018 Select Board Meeting. On a motion by Mark, seconded by Ken, the minutes from the 3/19/2018 Select Board Meeting were approved. On a motion by Mark, seconded by Jason the minutes for the 3/15/2018 Community Compact Signing were approved. Ken abstained.
2. Public Comment: None.
3. Assessor: Gus Martin, Assessor, informed the board that the 2018 levy limit is \$478,695. The town spent \$420,022.90 for 2018, including state charges and overlay. The levy limit of \$478,695 plus 2 ½ percent which is \$11,967 equals \$490,662. From that subtract the \$420,022.90, that was raised from taxes (including the \$30,000 used from Free Cash), equaling \$70,639. This could fluctuate when the local receipts (motor vehicle, room tax) are totaled. The town can appropriate more from free cash to avoid a 2 ½ over ride. The board will send Gus the total town budget number for his advice.
4. Veterans: Richard Demyer, Veterans Services Officer, is working on wording for the annual town warrant to set up the Veteran's account so the money rolls over year to year.
5. Northern Berkshire Solid Waste District: There is a used computer collection April 14, 2018. Information is on the bulletin board and on the website.
6. Road Commissioner: Keith Lacasse, talked to Dailey about the Salt Shed's 14 ton panel tipping 3-4 inches to the inside. They do not install or repair them anymore and recommended hiring an architectural engineer. They suggested putting blocks on the inside while digging on the outside and advised that a weld may have broken on the footing. Ken will talk to the insurance company. Drainage work is necessary, shaving back the bank and grading it down. Once the cost of repairing the salt shed is known, Keith will buy salt. The culvert replacement grant is due on April 6, 2018. Ken will apply for the culvert on Ingraham Road, as it is the only culvert that is eligible due to the perennial stream.
7. Noise Ordinance: There was recent activity by snow mobiles at Snowy Owl. The town has a noise ordinance in its zoning bylaws. However, that enforcement would go against the property owner and not the trespassers. The bylaw needs a fine or route of enforcement. The state police were out.

8. Annual Town Meeting Warrant: Jason gave a draft copy to the board. This year the revolving funds are in one article. The Sixth and Seventh articles make additions to the bylaws for logging and operation of heavy vehicles on the road. Jason will ask legal counsel for language for bonds. The enforcing authority would be the Road Commissioner. The Tenth would transfer \$35,000 to the Stabilization Fund from Free Cash, as the fund earns the best interest. The Eleventh could be increased to avoid a 2 ½ override. The Twelfth article concerns costs to purchase and hook up the generator (that are not covered by the Community Compact Grant) and air conditioner. The Thirteenth would cover any furnace replacement costs that aren't covered by the Community Compact Grant. The Fourteenth article is for upgrading the electrical service in the Town Hall. The Fifteenth article addresses the Fire Department's \$15,000 supplement of the grant money for the tanker truck, if the grant is awarded. If it is not approved, they would like to use that money to get a cab and chassis vehicle that the tank could be mounted on, contingent on the Select Board's approval.

9. Budget: The Board reviewed the budget line by line. The police and fire insurance will remain as a line item for easier tracking, rather than combining it with the Fire Department's budget. The Reserve Account was increased by \$2,000 to avoid having special town meetings for small expenses. The School Committee submitted a budget of \$592,017.79. The board decided not to increase the Town Hall budget, as there was over \$2,000 left at the end of FY17. That should cover any increases for the broadband equipment's needs. The Assessor salary and expenses will cover Williamstown's charge for providing assessing services, including a board of appeals, based on verbal agreement. A written proposal is expected in May. We will maintain the software fees. Mark will ask Williamstown about forecasting out. The Town Assessor software increase includes the Web Pro fee. The Town insurance is increasing to include pole bonding, the generator, and the broadband equipment. The Tax Collector's expenses were increased to FY16 amounts based on the Tax Collector's input. Lines were added for broadband principal and interest and depreciation reserves with no action on them yet as the amount needed to borrow is not known and depreciation costs may be passed on to the broadband customers. The total budget is \$841,600.41. Keith reminded the board of the necessity of creating an adequate water source for fire protection and recommended adding money to the budget to dig out the pond on Mallery and Cemetery Roads. Keith estimates it would cost around \$5,000. The budget is \$116,000 higher than last year. It is the fourth year that compensated positions will not see an increase and there aren't many areas that can be cut. The budget needs to be finalized by the next meeting. The number will be given to Gus for his advice.

10. Fire Department: Covered under the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

11. Broadband: Jason attended two meetings last week at Westfield. The first one was about procurement. The pre-bid conference is 4-10-2018 at 9:00 at Westfield Gas and Electric. The bid opening is 4-18-2018 at 1:00 at Westfield. The town's MLP accepts the bids. Ken can call in but cannot attend. The other meeting was a Drop Policy forum. Discussion centered on the distance that towns will connect fiber to homes and how much the customer will cover. The MLP will make the decision. Jason will check with legal counsel about forming an MLP Board and will review the paperwork from 2011 when the MLP was created to join Wired West.

12. Any other unforeseen business: Mark gave the board draft legislation for the Mohawk Woodlands Trails Partnership. The legislation, spearheaded by Steven Kulick, would create the 21-town district to promote forest products and activities, sustainable forest, and conservation. Participation by towns is voluntary and property owners in member towns will be eligible for certain programs. The original legislation requested start-up money, but now they will work on funding once the partnership is formed.

Mark informed the board that the Natural Resources Conservation Service has \$500,000 available for public access for hunting, fishing, and hiking on private lands. Properties can get a permanent conservation restriction or temporary easement. The Franklin Land Trust and the Berkshire Natural Resource Council are the contacts.

The Carriage House Motel appears to be allowing long-term rentals in violation of the requirements for the property. The building inspector has been informed and is working on it. Legislation is in the works for airbnbs.

There is a meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup> in Lenox with the Cannabis Control Commission about marijuana regulations.

The Planning Board was contacted several weeks ago by Commonwealth Cultivation. They have since decided to look for an alternate location.

Mark drafted a letter for Representative Barrett and Senator Hinds to ask for full funding for EPO's. Ken made a motion to sign it as written, seconded by Jason. The Police Chief also reviewed and signed the letter.

There is an ash tree on Ingraham Road, threatening a propane tank on a property. Keith will look at it.

13. Warrant: The warrant was reviewed and signed.

Next meeting April 17, 2018 at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 8:48