

New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting
New Ashford Town Hall/Teleconference
March 7, 2022

Board Present: Jason Jayko (Chair), Mark Phelps

Others Present: Keith Lacasse, Richard George, Lori Jayko, Susan Supranowicz

Call-In: Ken McInerney (MLP Manager)

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Approve minutes from 2/22: On a motion by Mark, seconded by Jason, the minutes from the 2/22/2022 New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting were approved.
2. Public Comment: Richard George, Board of Health Chair, is having trouble getting a waste hauler to turn in a permit check that was due in December. He has contacted the hauler several times and will tell them they cannot come to town without a permit.
3. Fire Department: Jason has been working with Legal Counsel and the State Police in regards to an incident that was reported at the Fire Station on February 22. Legal Counsel recommended that the Select Board appoint one of its members as a liaison to Legal Counsel for this matter. This will avoid the need for extra meetings to approve letters that need to be sent to notify the individuals that were affected. Mark nominated Jason to be the liaison to Town Counsel for the issue with the Fire Department, seconded by Ken. The motion passed unanimously. The Fire Department has not turned in its FY23 budget. Jason asked the Fire Chief to have a sign-in sheet for when people are at the station other than for trainings and calls. Jason got a new lock for the door and will meet with the Chief to discuss installation. He would like to add motion lights to the front doors. The Board asked the Chief, in January, to remove the radio from the hummer.
4. Special Town Meeting: The Board reviewed the Special Town Meeting warrant draft. Mark and Keith will look at the tractor this week. Mark left a message with Capital Tractors to see if they have anything available. The Special Town Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 24 at 6:00PM. Jason will revise the warrant and leave it at the Town Hall for signatures and Susan will post it and advertise it in the newspaper.
5. Special Permit Civil Suit: The civil suit is regarding the Kelly property special permit denial. The suit information was sent to Legal Counsel.
6. Road Commissioner: Keith Lacasse talked to the state about their using the old Brodie road for traffic when they redo the bridge on Route 7. Dave Stokes said the project is a couple of years out and suggested the Select Board send a letter to District One, jointly with Lanesboro, stating it would be appreciated if the state repaves the old Brodie road for use during the Route 7 bridge repairs. Mark talked to John Goerlach about it. Mark made a motion to send a joint letter, from New Ashford and Lanesboro, to the state to work with them on using the old state road to expedite the bridge repair project, seconded by Jason. The motion passed unanimously. Mark will draft a letter. Keith will clean out the culvert on Smith Road.
7. Veterans Service Agent: There have been problems lately with getting payment information in a timely manner. Mark will call the Veteran Service Agent. Jason spoke with Steve Roy, veterans agent for several other towns. He is interested in the position. The Board will look into who Lanesboro and Williamstown uses.

8. Budgets: The School Committee's budget was turned in. A training budget line was added to the regular budget.

9. ATM Warrant: The Board will review the Annual Town Meeting warrant at the next meeting, which will include adding the Fire Department to the bylaws, and repairs to the Town Hall cupola and Old Schoolhouse Roof.

10. School House Roof: Chris Wooliver will give estimates for repair.

11. MLP: Whip City chose one resident, at random, to have a device placed at their residence to confirm the availability of the internet, as a requirement of the Connect America federal funding.

The resident will get one month of free service for helping the town.

Whip City has a proposal for providing a redundant loop of service through North Adams and Pittsfield. This would add \$600 monthly to the town's Whip City bill. There will be a presentation meeting, before any decisions on the service are made.

Ken will reach out to Whip City about the current market cost of equipment to ensure that the town has the appropriate amount of insurance coverage given the supply chain increases.

12: Council on Aging: Sherry Youngkin, head of the Council on Aging, turned in paperwork for the COA state grant. Jason will sign it, get it notarized, and return it to Sherry. She will submit it to the state.

13. Unforeseen Business: Three requests were submitted for quotes to write the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Berkshire Regional Planning said they could not get the plan done in the required time frame. Pioneer Valley Planning said they would not work with us as we are not in the Pioneer Valley. Commonwealth Municipal Consulting, LLC can do the work. Mark made a motion to sign a contract with Commonwealth Municipal Consulting LLC to write the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by Ken, to be completed by June 30. The motion passed unanimously.

Mark received notice of a public hearing for Eversource's increase in rates. Mark would like the hearing body to be aware that Eversource has been lacking in vegetation management. When they are notified of hazardous trees, we do not get a response. As such, they do not deserve a rate increase. Mark will call Representative Barrett with his concern and add that Eversource needs to have an accountable scheduling system included in their modernization plan, showing when hazardous trees are reported and when they will be removed.

The liquor license application for Bondhu LLC was approved by the state. The Board will hold local approval until taxes are paid on the property.

The Springs Motel revised their liquor license application for the state and are waiting for state approval.

The Town Clerk turned in a list of proposed Clerk Fees. The Board reviewed the list and increased the fee for copies to 10 cents a page. Jason made a motion to accept the Town Clerk fees with the adjustment of ten cents for copy fees, seconded by Ken. The motion passed unanimously. Jason will put the fee schedule on the website. Mark made a motion to add an entertainment fee of \$25 to the Town Clerk fees, seconded by Jason. The motion passed unanimously.

The Town Clerk will do the Annual Town Report.

14. Warrant: The warrant was reviewed and signed.

Next meeting March 21, 2022 at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 7:49