

New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting  
New Ashford Town Hall/Zoom  
April 19, 2022

Board Present: Jason Jayko (Chair), Mark Phelps

Zoom: Ken McInerney (MLP Manager), Wily Goodman, Berkshire Regional Planning, Lindsey Kurowski

Others Present: Lori Jayko, Keith Lacasse, Frank Speth, BJ Church, Richard George, Nicole Miller, Gary Sagendorph, Shaun Dewitt, Zach Cochrane, Paige Hoffman, Billy Filliault

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Approve minutes from 4/4: On a motion by Mark, seconded by Jason, the minutes from the 4/4/2022 New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting were approved.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Berkshire Regional Planning: Wily Goodman from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Government Report. The BRPC gathers regional partners together for economic goals with a focus on economic resilience. Goals include preparing students for jobs and STEM career paths, a regionalized food system, rescaling/upscaling workers, helping small businesses to go digital, and making use of underutilized spaces. Projects are countywide and include affordable childcare, equity, public transit, solutions for outdoor recreation and agriculture as affected by climate change, and making sure there's a diverse entrepreneurship. The report is due in December. The BRPC is conducting interviews, holding working groups, giving presentations to select boards, and working with 1Berkshire. They will draft and expand the report, and present it. The BRPC wants to know how the town responded to challenges due to covid and they can help with grant management and administration for the CARES ACT and ARPA funding. The Select Board will give a response to the BRPC's questions within thirty days.

4. Fire Department: Fire Chief, Frank Speth, reported that the offer for Engine 2 is \$11,000. Frank does not want to sell Engine 2 until he knows what is going to happen with the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP), as he wants there to be two engines to service the town. The proposal submitted to AFGP would replace Engine 3 with a mini-pumper. Frank will get an expected timeline for the grant award. Engine 2 has a rejection sticker, for its inspection last June, due to emissions.

The Board asked for confirmation of the cancelation of the AED that was on back order for the Town Hall.

The Fire Department grants for the tanker radio, AED, and turnout gear are on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. Frank will request an extension for the grant for the turnout gear, as it is supposed to be completed by the end of June and supply chain issues have caused delays.

The Annual Town Meeting is May 17 at the Fire Station.

Frank said the old tanker is on the auction list and should be gone soon.

The Fire Department will hold nominations in May for the officer positions and will vote in June.

Lindsey Kurowski, owner of the Springs Motel reached out to the Select Board and the Building Inspector about why there needs to be another fire inspection with John Wood from the state Fire Marshall's Office, when Frank already recently conducted an inspection. In July, there was a list provided for corrective action. Lindsey hired a fire company to address those issues. The fire company met and had a walk-through with Frank. The alarm system was replaced. Frank cancelled the inspection with John Wood. Building Inspector, BJ Church, has given the Springs permission to open. BJ questioned why annual inspections of the property had not been done by the Fire Department. The proper procedure is to give the owner time to fix what is in the current report and then she will invite Frank back to reinspect. The motel rooms in the back are not being used and don't belong in the inspection. The cabins are zoned residential and do not belong in the commercial inspection. BJ is concerned that Lindsey is being harassed and treated unprofessionally. The Fire Code is a maintenance code and the Building Inspector is responsible for the Certificate of Occupancy. Ken asked Frank what the criteria was that John Wood would need to be brought in. Frank said he reached out to John about concerns with the alarm system, property, and detectors. BJ asked why the state inspector would need to come out, before Lindsey is given the time to correct the problems. BJ told Frank to give Lindsey a letter, cite the code violations, and give her a time limit to address them. After that, the Fire Department should do a yearly inspection with the Building Inspector to make sure that system is being maintained. Lindsey would like to know exactly what she needs to do now, as there were items in the inspection report that should not have been included and inconsistencies from the report in July. Frank will give BJ copies of the last inspection.

5. Road Commissioner: Jason filled out the paper work for the Berkshire Regional Purchasing Group. Keith will fill the potholes around town. He took down the requested trees at the Town Hall and the Fire Station. Keith cut and moved a tree that had fallen in the road. He will put topsoil on the Town Hall lawn. There is a tree on Roys Road with a dead crown within three feet of the wires. Mark will report it to Eversource.

6. Veterans Service Agent: The VSO is currently out of commission. February and March payments have not been entered in the state reporting system and there is a list of required paperwork for recertification. The Board will look into who can administer the payments and the time frame for turning in the necessary paperwork for reimbursement. Jason spoke with Steve Roy, VSO to several towns. He advised sending a letter of intent to join the regional veterans' services with North Adams. Mark made a motion to send a letter of intent to North Adams to join the regional veterans' services, seconded by Ken. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Special Permit Civil Suit: Nothing new.

8. Schoolhouse/Town Hall Roof: The Board is waiting for quote from Smeagal and will get one more quote for the Schoolhouse roof. Keith recommended checking with Vermont Roofing. Smeagal did some urgently necessary sealing on the cupola.

9. Budget: The Board estimated an increase for the Chapter 115 budget and a slight increase for the VSO. The Board will hold a meeting next week to finalize the budget.

10. ATM Warrant: Jason sent the warrant to legal counsel.

11. Town Bylaws: Mark made a motion to table the topic to a future meeting, seconded by Ken.
12. MVP: The Board reviewed the Statement of Work provided by Commonwealth Consulting (CMC). Jason will sign it and return it to CMC.
13. MLP: There was an e-mail about the redundant circuit. Jason will reach out that we are interested in having a conversation about it.
14. Any other unforeseen business: Vader returned a quote of \$9,990 for the tax suite, \$3,990 for support and maintenance, \$2,450 for licenses for the cloud, and \$6,500 a year. These prices are unreasonable for the town's needs.
15. Warrant: The warrant was reviewed and signed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39

Next meeting May 2 at 6:00