

New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting

New Ashford Town Hall/Zoom

February 22, 2023

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

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

Zoom: Chris Lamarre

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Approval of Minutes from February 6, 2023: On a motion by Mark, seconded by Ken, the minutes from the February 6, 2023 New Ashford Select Board/MLP meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

2. Public Comment: Ed and Cindy Grosso presented the Board with budget information for pertinent repairs and maintenance of the Old Schoolhouse. The cupola needs work and the Board will try to get this done when the roof is replaced. The windows need to be reglazed and repainted, the fascia and clapboard siding scraped and painted, the front door replaced with an exterior door, the back deck power washed, the plywood replaced near the ramp, and the front steps regouted. Some of the work could possibly be done by volunteers or as an Eagle Scout project.

3. Road Commissioner: Keith will redig the hole for the propane tank repair. There is water in the septic tank. Keith will reseal it in the spring. He filled the sand shed for residents. Asplundh took down trees on Mallery Road and cut branches along the lines going into the woods around town. Keith drained and filled the hole near the bridge on the north entrance to Roys Road. Paving an apron there should prevent reoccurrence of this problem.

4. MLP: Whip City did routine maintenance. Repair is necessary on Greylock Road between poles 21 and 22 where the overstrand is gone, due to a tree falling on the line. Ken recommended waiting and batching the repair with another job in order to keep repair costs lower.

The MLP discussed reimbursing 185 Mallery Rd and 530 New Ashford Road for their recent connections with money from the Broadband grant and also the Kearsy property for a cold drop. Ken is discussing with Whip City why they did not shut off overdue MLP accounts according to policy.

5. Budgets: Chris Lamarre, Assessor, called in to discuss the assessing budget. He has not discussed the budget with the Williamstown Town Manager yet, but he suspects that any increase would be nominal if at all. DOR annually requires Assessors to do a specialty appraisal on utilities, which will cost around \$2,000. House values should stay similar to FY23 and there is not much permit action for new growth. The tax levy went up last year by 5.8% and the tax rate was \$9.44. If the overall budget is the same this year, the tax rate will be about the same as well. Chris says the AssessPro software is fine and there's no need to upgrade, unless forced by Patriot. Chris will ask them about the yearly maintenance fee. PILOT money is increasing.

The Town Clerk can use the safe downstairs at the Town Hall for items requiring fireproof storage.

The Building Inspector requested an expense increase due to needing new permit cards and code books. Ken will confirm with her that this cost is being spread among the towns she works for. Mark talked to Representative John Barrett about the state paying for online permitting. Representative Barrett thinks there may be something through the Regional Planning Commission.

The Berkshire County Sheriff's Office has turned in their budget amount. Lori will e-mail the VSO for his budgets. Stephen Demyer will attend the next meeting to discuss recycling costs. The Roads and Bridges budget will increase to \$70,000.

6. Room and Marijuana Tax: The Town Clerk has sent the meal and marijuana tax vote results to the DOR. The Carriage House is not on the room tax list. DOR recommended contacting them.

7. Any Other Business: None

8. Warrant: The warrant was reviewed and signed.

Next meeting March 6, 2023 at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 7:40