

New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting
New Ashford Town Hall/Zoom
March 20, 2023

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

Others Present: Lori Jayko, Richard George, Gary Sagendorph, Keith Lacasse, Frank Speth, Jake Scafe

Zoom: None

Meeting opened at 6:30

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

2. Public Comment: Richard turned in a letter from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection stating that the New Ashford Motor Inn is no longer operating as a public water system. Plumbing has been removed from a number of rooms, leaving six rooms available for rent. The well at the Inn may only be used as public water source with written permission from MassDEP.

Richard received the check from TAM for the recycling hauling permit. He has not gotten a check from Adams yet, despite requesting it several times.

Lori got a letter from MIIA offering an Unemployment Services Program. The Board requested confirmation that there are no fees involved if an unemployment claim is filed.

3. Snowstorm Follow-up: The Board thanked Keith for maintaining the roads during the big snowstorm and the Fire Department for taking care of trees and monitoring the station. Keith cleaned up a tree on Greylock Road and noted that there were branches and limbs down all over town. He used his skid steer to push them out of the way. Eversource was notified of a tree down on Greylock Road that took out power. Mark asked Representative John Barrett if there will be supplemental money from the state for storm damage costs. Representative Barrett is in contact with Governor's office. The internet fiber is still active but came off of a couple of houses.

The Board would like to use ARPA money to put in a propane, auto-start generator at the Fire Station since it is an emergency shelter for the town. Mark suggested compensating the volunteers who worked the clean-up (Frank, Gary and PJ). Many other volunteer departments pay a stipend per call. Mark made a motion to use ARPA money to get a generator for the Fire Station, seconded by Ken. The motion passed unanimously.

Keith will make sure the propane tanks are dug out enough for the repairs by Mirabito. A tree hit the Salt Shed, but there does not appear to be any damage.

4. Road Commissioner: Steve Nielson is buying the property across the street from the Town Hall and the Board will discuss the property lines of the Old Schoolhouse with him. Jason will contact insurance to get a COI for the tractor. Pot holes are developing and Keith will fill them when the roads are dry. He sent in the forms for the Berkshire Purchasing Group, including requests for blacktop and gravel tonnage for 12,000 feet of road, and guard rail for Smith Road. Jason will ask when we can start applying for grants related to the Municipal Vulnerability Program. Keith will replace some culverts on Ingraham Road this year and fix the drainage near Raimers'. He will dig across Greylock road and work on the drainage to address the water problem near Woolivers'. He put two loads of millings there last year. The north end of Roys Road needs to be regraded after the storm.

5. Budget: The Fire Chief, Frank Speth, gave the Board the budget spreadsheet for the Fire Department requesting \$21,100, up from last year's \$16,000. Incident reporting software was added and \$1,000 was shifted from EMS training to Fire Academy. The MFPA pump testing and maintenance went up because all the hose on the apparatus needs to be tested, except on Engine Three. The incident reporting software is \$695 for CAD integration, \$345 for commercial property preplanning, \$395 for inspections, and \$995 for fire incident reports which will get everything off paper and streamline the end of year reporting process. The Fire Department electric and phone budgets will be removed from the Fire Department budget and added to the town's. Jason will look into switching the station's phone service to ooma. Keith will seal the asphalt where it meets the road in front of the Fire Station.

Frank thanked everyone on the Fire Department that helped with the fire at Snowy Owl and all the departments that provided mutual aid. Dalton and Hancock stayed until the end and assisted with clean-up. The Board thanked the Department for their work. A dry hydrant may be an option at the snow making pond on the property.

The law account remains the same. The School Committee's budget is \$420,502. The Board has not heard back from the Building Inspector and noted getting calls from people having difficulty getting permits. The preliminary total FY 24 budget is \$759,803, down from \$801,464. Mark noted that significant tree work is necessary. The Board discussed putting an addition on the side of the Fire Station to store the tractor and to provide storage for the Fire Department. The Board discussed increasing salaries by 4%, noting that key positions don't make what they should. Mark made a motion that the Treasurer's salary match the Accountant's salary, seconded by Ken. Jason abstained. The Board discussed if the MLP is contributing enough towards salaries and reviewed the MLP budget.

6. Town Warrant: The Fire Fighter's Safety Grant for FY 24 will be on the warrant. The FFSG for FY 23 for thermal imaging was approved. Keith will provide an estimate for an addition to the Fire Station for the tractor. Lori asked the Board to consider adding a warrant article for purchasing gear for the Fire Department for protection in an active shooter event. Lori will e-mail Amalio Jusino and ask for product recommendations and if any grants are available. Jake offered to help research products. There will be a warrant article to clarify the bylaws around when town elections are held, the fourth Tuesday or the last Tuesday in May. Jason will check with insurance to see what playground equipment could be installed at the Town Hall to replace the aging equipment, using ARPA funds.

7. Old and Any Other Business: Ken requested that the Board bring ideas to the next meeting on how to spend the Mohawk Trails Woodland Partnership FY 23 grant of \$20,000. Keith suggested adding a parking area above the gate on Greylock Road.

Ken would like the updated Broadband Grant balance to discuss paying for Kearsy's connection. Fiber repairs are necessary on Greylock Road. Ken is going to discuss the overdue accounts with Whip City and see if renters can pay a month in advance.

Jake said he can repair the doors for the Humvee and would only request reimbursement for the zippers.

8. Warrant: The warrant was reviewed and signed.

Next meeting April 3 at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 8:48