

New Ashford Select Board Meeting

New Ashford Town Hall/Zoom

March 19, 2025

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

Absent: Mark Phelps

Others Present: Lori Jayko, Keith Lacasse, Richard George, Cindy Grosso, Ed Grosso, Diane George, PJ Pannesco, Gary Sagendorph, Jake Provost, Frank Speth, Susan Supranowicz

Zoom: None

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Approve Minutes from March 3, 2025: On a motion by Ken, seconded by Jason, the minutes from the March 3, 2025 New Ashford Select Board/MLP meeting were approved.
2. Public Comment: None.
3. Town Clerk: Susan did a death certificate for a resident. She gave an alcohol license application for the Springs Motel to the Select Board for review. The Select Board will have a public hearing on the liquor license application on April 15 at 6:30. Susan said the House passed allowing hybrid meetings through 2027 and it needs to be passed by the Senate.
4. Church: The Board gave the Historical Commission permission to contact legal counsel about procurement for the church project.
5. Fire Department: Addition – Keith will give the Select Board a written quote at the next meeting. No one that Keith contacted was interested in the project. Ken will ask Kurt for a quote. The garage door opener is installed and needs to be programmed. Once it is finished, Jason will send links for the app to the Fire Department. The battery will need to be replaced annually.
6. Road Commissioner: Keith will fill in a dip on Roys Road and the potholes around town. He will have an estimate for paving for the next meeting. There is a large pothole on Greylock Road. A culvert may have separated on Greylock Road and water is bubbling out of the ground. A nearby ditch should be dug out and made lower. There's water going across Bauer Road and a culvert there needs attention. Keith will put brush, leftover from town tree work, by the Salt Shed. There's a pole box with a broken cover on Mallery Road. Ken will look at it to assess if it's related to town fiber.
7. MLP: The MLP may review the policy on late payments. Andrew Short is out for two weeks. The outstanding bills are reconciled. Contracts are in the shared folder. The batteries have been ordered and should ship around the 29th.
8. Annual Town Meeting Warrant: The Board reviewed the draft Annual Town Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting on May 20. Town caucus is Saturday, April 19. An article addresses repairing the ramp at Town Hall and shifting it slightly to expose the well cap, for an estimated

\$8,000. The estimate to repair the Salt Shed doors is \$4,000. An article was added for the purchase of a snowblower up to \$2,000. An article will be added for a funding source for MLP repairs from either the broadband stabilization or the enterprise free cash. There is an article to adopt a local option statute that tailings would stay locally, rather than being turned over to the state.

9. Budget: The Board reviewed the budget spreadsheet. They discussed the animal control officer's salary and will review it at the next meeting.

Fire Department – The Board reviewed the Fire Department's budget proposal, with an over \$8,000 increase from last year. Fire Chief, Frank Speth, wants to reallocate the E911 dispatch funds to create a stipend program for the Fire Department. He said he did research on stipends for fire fighters in Berkshire County. The Board advised him that the E911 budget was part of the town's budget and not part of the Fire Department's budget. Some departments pay per call and some have a flat rate system. Frank would like the following flat rate stipend system, broken into two payments a year: Chief \$2,500, Deputy Chief \$800, 2nd Deputy Chief \$800, Captain/Training Officer \$800, Lieutenant \$650, EMS Deputy \$650, Member \$400. Stipends will be paid only to firefighters that attend at least 75% of training and respond to at least 50% of calls and serve the entire six month pay period. The budget includes room for three additional members. The Board thinks that with Fire Department's budget increasing significantly every year and the length of response time to calls, due to most members living more than a town away, shared services/regionalization may be worth looking into. They noted that a stipend program will increase the work load for the financial team. There was discussion of how much training is required by the fire service per year and adding a cap to the number of people that can get a stipend. The Board asked Frank if there are any large expenses expected. Frank said he decided to forgo maintenance this year as it was done last year. He is getting the water gauge on the pump panel repaired on a truck but is not anticipating any big expenses. He was told the rear springs on engine two need to be replaced, but it passed inspection.

10. Old and Any Other Unforeseen Business: The Board asked Frank to remind members not to smoke on town property.

Keith asked about the plan for propane for the church. The church will be connected to the town hall's propane tanks and each building will have its own regulator/shut off. The Conservation Commission will schedule a hearing for the RDA.

11. Warrant: The warrant was reviewed and signed.

Next meeting April 7 at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 7:59