

New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting

New Ashford Town Hall

April 7, 2025

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

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

Meeting opened at 6:30

1. Approval of Minutes from April 2, 2025: On a motion by Mark, seconded by Ken, the minutes from the April 2, 2025 New Ashford Select Board/MLP Meeting were approved unanimously.

2. Public Comment: None

3. Town Clerk: Susan asked what time to hold the caucus on April 19th. Mark made a motion to hold the caucus at 9 am, seconded by Ken. The motion passed unanimously. Early voting and registration to vote for the Annual Town Meeting and town elections will be May 17, from 2pm-4pm. No mail-in applications have been sent. Susan sent out notices to department chairs that annual reports are due. She will put a picture of the Phoebe Jordan event on the report cover.

4. Church: Ed Grosso, Historical Commission member, said that Steve Neilsen's foundation cannot undertake the church restoration project directly. However, it can donate funds for the project. Ed will meet with Steve for further discussion. Once the funds are secured and procurement questions are answered, an engineer will be hired to produce a plan of action. There was discussion of adding a hatchway in the church floor or a passthrough from the addition to access the foundation.

5. Fire Department: Addition. Keith Lacasse says he doesn't have any quotes to submit and does not know if he can get the job done before the end of the fiscal year. Jason will add it to the annual town meeting warrant.

6. Road Commissioner: Keith will go over the roads with Palmer Paving to get an estimate of the cost for a full depth reclamation with repaving on two sections of Mallery Road, full depth reclamation and repaving from Greylock Road to Roys Road, and full depth reclamation and grading with calcium of Greylock Road. Dave Stokes advised that there will be around \$450,000 in the Chapter 90 funds as of July 1. The Board asked Keith to repair the pothole on Greylock Road.

The toilet at the town hall was overflowing, causing the tank alarm to go off. Keith took care of it.

7. MLP: Ken had a meeting with Andrew Short from Whip City on Friday. He added Mark to Hilltown monthly meeting. Lori will do the overdue accounts report this week. Jason was having decreased wi-fi speeds and had to replace his modem.

8. Woodlands Partnership: Mark attended a Woodlands Partnership sponsored meeting with the State Auditor about PILOT. The partnership is scheduling a meeting with Representative Blais to discuss proposed legislation to address the inequities in the formula. Mark will continue to monitor the issue. There's a copy of the auditor's report for town hall. The alternative to legislature is for the towns to file suit.

Ken reached out to DCR to see if they had any need for the FY24 Woodlands Partnership grant money. They need bog bridges on some trails. Ken will ask if they want to proceed with the project and the grant money can be used to purchase the supplies, with the leftover funds re-obligated to the partnership for another town's use. Ken asked DCR about putting in a parking lot on their land for the Sugar Loaf trail for the FY26 grant. DCR put it under review.

9. Annual Town Meeting Warrant: The Board reviewed the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. They added in funding for the fire station addition. The total budget is \$646,939. Ken will be added to Vadar. The Annual Town Meeting is May 20 at 6PM. The MLP budget needs review due to inconsistencies between spreadsheets.

10. Budget: The FY26 budget was reviewed and will be finalized at the next meeting. Insurance for the fiber network may be going up. The MLP discussed using a local contractor to do ONT replacement, to reduce repair costs. The Board discussed the ramp repairs. Jason talked to the Fire Chief, Frank Speth, about continuing the discussion on the stipend program and needing more time to do research into legal questions and what other towns are paying. Jason will contact town insurance to confirm it covers firefighters over the age of 65.

11. Old and Any Other Unforeseen Business: The Conservation Commission is holding an RDA hearing on Wednesday, April 9, at 6PM for the water and propane connection project for the church.

Mark and Susan attended a meeting with Paul Marks on Saturday. Of note, the Governor is pushing for an increase in Chapter 90 funds for roads and bridges in Western MA. There was discussion with the Inspector General of the challenges faced by procurement requirements, including bidding deserts, prevailing wages, and approved bidder requirements. There are two bills being introduced to address harassment of public officials. The excessive state training requirements for animal control officers was discussed. Mark got the contact information for the animal control officer in Florida, that also covers Clarksburg. It was noted that many communities have a lack of man power for their fire departments and there's a growing need for regionalization.

12. Warrant: The warrants were reviewed and signed.

Next meeting April 17, 2025 at 6.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26