

SELECTBOARD MINUTES  
JUNE 4, 2018

Meeting opened at 6:00pm

Present: David DiNicola, Chair; Judith Hoag; Albert Sirard  
Duane Pease, Town Administrator (TA)

Board reorganization: Judy motioned to reappoint Dave as chair, Al 2<sup>nd</sup>; Dave agreed to retain chair; vote 3-0.

Warrants reviewed and signed; Payroll: \$11,217.50; Expenses: \$37,876.74

Minutes of May 7<sup>th</sup> accepted on motion by Dave, Al 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 2-0. Judy abstained as she was not present at the meeting.

Minutes of May 21<sup>st</sup> accepted on motion by Judy, Dave 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 2-0. Al abstained as he was not present at the meeting.

No new mail to review.

Purple Heart update: Judy advised she has been in contact with Add-A-Sign who was recommended by Brian Willette as doing many of the Purple Heart signs in the state. Brian is the Mass Rep. for Purple Heart activities for Massachusetts. The signs will be paid for using the Selectboard Expense.

The Purple Heart Truck will be leaving the Vet Center in West Springfield at 11am and should arrive at Bell Cemetery by noon. There will be a police escort for the truck and any participants that will be with the truck. Dave and Al may also ride their motorcycles in the procession. There will be a ceremony recognizing Elijah Churchill as well as the office designation of Middlefield as a Purple Heart Community.

A reception in the Town Hall will follow, a group has got together to plan this part of the event in regard to foods, drinks, etc.

Brent LeBeau, Broadband Chair, advised the Board his committee had a short list of players regarding high speed internet for the Town. They had eliminated WiValley, Spectrum and Crocker leaving Comcast, Matrix and Whip City. When Worthington eliminated Matrix voted against Matrix that also took Matrix from town. The committee is attempting to get a Whip City to answer a few questions and are awaiting their response. Comcast is a for profit corporation and would own and operate the system, Whip City would be owned by the town and the town would be responsible for paying for upgrades, maintenance, operations, etc.

There was further discussion, Dave said the committee has done a good job given the short period of time they were given to bring a summation to the town. Sherri Venditti wanted to know what additional funding was available if the town went with Comcast,

she was advised MBI would add another \$231,000 to our allotment and what the rationale was for MBI promoting Comcast. Dave said that MBI considered their longevity, sustainability and financial strength. Sherri also questioned if there had been any push back by the town to increase funding if the town owned and operated the system, this would level the playing field. The actual Comcast bill would be higher than the \$69 advertised as there would be rental fees for equipment, increases for faster speeds, etc.

Maureen Sullivan, committee member said she is awaiting the additional information requested from Whip City and there are two big issues for the Town: Broadband and Cannabis. Perhaps the potential cannabis revenue stream could be used to offset any costs associated with a town owned system.

Marijuana was next item on the agenda. The Planning Board has been very active in arranging group meetings with the ZBA, Selectboard and Conservation. A number of questions have come up and were presented to Town Counsel and those answers created more questions. Mary Courtney of ZBA has been the contact person with Town Counsel. There are issues with by-laws and ordinances, the town voted in favor of legalizing marijuana but it has the right to restrict or modify according to counsel. There was further discussion and any retail sale would only be allowed in the business district. Fees charged for wholesale growing would be negotiated in the host agreement with agreed upon renewal terms and renegotiation. The Planning Board has another joint meeting scheduled for the 6<sup>th</sup> and there is a Community Outreach Meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup>. This meeting is a required scheduled meeting by Keystone Bluff, LLC where they will make a presentation to the townspeople. Jason Costa, principal of Keystone said the neighboring Town of Chester is actively soliciting marijuana businesses.

New Business: TA checked if there would be any penalties/fines if Town went with Hampshire Power and then returned to EverSource at a later date. No penalties involved.

TA provided agreement for the Tax Collector regarding the replacement of the State's tax program. Tax Collector had previously met with the Board and explained the agreement and costs. There is no fee for the first 2 years as the collectors membership fees will pay the costs.

Special Town Meeting scheduled for June 27 at 7pm.

Short discussion on appraisal for form landfill, TA will follow with appraiser. Appraisal for Cobb property and landfill were given to same appraiser, TA had advised appraiser it was necessary to have the Cobb property done first.

Judy questioned if signs could be put up on Skyline Trail warning of the Chester Road intersection. Vehicle exiting Chester Road have difficulties seeing traffic coming from their right. Also, if a sign could be put up on River Road advising of children. Highway

Superintendent, Skip Savery, said he could install the signs, he would put up a "Caution children sign on River Rd.

Dave said the Cemetery CD is coming due and there are better renewal rates in some of the local banks and should not just be rolled over. He said the treasurer should be looking to maximize the returns on all of the towns' accounts.

Public input: Sherri Venditti said the Building Commissioner has not taken any action regarding a camper that is in violation of the by-laws. He should act on the complaint. Dave said unless there is a written complaint he would not act. There was brief discussion as Sherri said the by-law is there for a reason.

Sherri also said the Heritage Society and the Wild and Scenic Westfield River groups recently had an event in the auditorium and Carol Waag was unable to stream her video, it started, stopped and then only the audio was working. She questioned if the speed the public wireless has was the cause of this. Judy said she would contact Carol.

Dave motioned to adjourn, July 2<sup>nd</sup>; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 7:50pm.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease  
Town Administrator

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

David DiNicola, Chair

Judith Hoag

Albert Sirard