

SELECTBOARD MINUTES
OCTOBER 24, 2018

Meeting opened at 6:02pm

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

Warrants reviewed and signed; Payroll: \$13,986.29; Expenses: \$22,698.05

General Election Warrant signed

Revised Order of Taking for the Jack Cobb property signed.

Highway Superintendent, Skip Savery, advised Board the new truck will be delivered within the next couple of weeks and had board sign the Chapter 90 paperwork for the purchase. Board also signed the Chapter 90 papers for the guardrail on Chester Road. He also said he had placed his first order of salt. Patching to be done on Town Hill Road

Town was not successful on obtaining the STRAP Grant for Skyline Trail. We had made it through the first two steps before it was rejected. Skip to check with Kathy Stevens at MassHighway to see why it was rejected.

IT grant paperwork signed on recommendation of Steve Harris, this grant is through PVPC. Cultural Council contract was reviewed and signed by Dave.

TA advised the property auction today went well, 3 parcels were sold: Ryan Road to Nature Conservancy for \$20,000, Town Hill Road for \$25,000 and Chipman Road for \$10,000. the Slocum Lot did not sell but Mass Fish and Wildlife has offered \$55,000 for that land locked parcel. All in all is was a good result for the Town.

Minutes of 9/25/18 approved on motion by Dave, Judy 2nd; vote 3-0.

Minutes of 10/15/18 approved with changes on motion by Dave, Al 2nd; vote 3-0.

Dave advised he and TA had met with Matt Drennan and interviewed him for the vacant Accountant position. Matt is currently working as an accountant and handles all types of accounting. He is familiar with non-

profits, businesses, etc. He does not have experience with municipal accounting but did not see that as a problem. Gita Jozsef indicated interest in the position, however, a verbal commitment had been made with Matt. Gita's information will remain on file. Dave said he was Matt and motioned to appoint him, July 2nd; vote 3-0. TA to advise of appointment.

TA told Board that Skip had received 2 bids for the fencing between the Cobb property and highway garage, both were within \$100 of each other, bid to go to Commonwealth Guardrail as they are a qualified State bidder. TA to advise Skip.

Next item discussed was the Broadband situation. Members Maureen Sullivan and Jay Swift were in attendance as was Brent LeBeau who had resigned from the committee. Maureen said they did not know what the Board was expecting from the committee but saw that they were on the agenda. Dave said he thought he had made it clear that the Board was expecting a report from the remaining committee members. Al also said he thought a report would be provided similar to what Brent had provided last week. There was continued discussion on what was expected, when and who would be providing it and that 2 different opinions were out there. Jay said Westfield Gas and Electric's price was for 100% of the homes being available to connect to the fiber network and Comcast was for 96% and it would cost the town additional monies to reach 100% with Comcast. Maureen said she saw Brent's report and there is conflict between the reports. Dave said he had been in contact with Bill Ennen and Peter Larkin and there are some recent changes that have not been addressed in either report.

Dave said he thinks Comcast is the best option for the Town as there is near zero financial risk, the Town's share of financing is about \$230,000 and can be deducted from the yearly Cherry Sheet contribution, no monies are paid by the town until the build is complete. Dave does not know how long the Comcast offer and additional money from MBI will be available. There are no sign up quotas with Comcast and interest rates are rising and that would cost even more if the town had to finance a loan for the WG&E system. The town has additional costs coming down the road and attempting to keep the tax rate reasonable he favors Comcast.

Dave said he knows not everyone in town would agree but this is in the best interest of the Town. Dave then said I'm going to make a motion that we

enter into a contract with Comcast, Al, I agree and 2nd; Judy, I don't agree, I think this is a town process; we should have a town vote. Dave stated everyone wants what is best for the Town, Jay and Maureen are good people as is Brent but we are very limited in finances. I say "Aye"; Al "Aye"; Judy "Nay". Dave said he had put a lot of thought into this before making the motion, Al said he thinks this is best for the town.

Howard Knickerbocker said thank you for making the tough decision.

Maureen said from day one the Selectboard said this was an issue the town would vote on; there is nothing on your agenda that you were going to vote tonight.

Jay said he had a subject he had been meaning to bring up for some time, he has all the records from the Town Center Committee and wanted to turn them in to the Board, he gave the TA a paper bag filled with reports, minutes, etc. He also said the tiles in the Town Hall contain asbestos and something should be done before it's too late and the tiles start to flake. TA advised he has been looking into having rugs installed and had gotten an estimate of over \$25,000 to have them removed but that quote was not a prevailing wage cost.

Dave motioned to adjourn, Al 2nd; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Town Administrator

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

David DiNicola, Chair

Judith Hoag

Albert Sirard

