*Minutes*

SELECT BOARD

Monday, September 16, 2019 6:00 p.m.

Town Office, 32 Main Street

*Select Board present*: Phil Kantor; Bob Armstrong; John O’Rourke, Chair (Absent)

*Others present*: Dan Fentin-Thomas, FCAT; Ben Purdon, Resident; Vicki Elson, Resident; Lee Whitcomb, Board of Assessors; Malcolm Corse, Board of Assessors; Russell French, Barbara Ware, Resident; Ron Sweet, Highway Department; Walter Goodridge, Highway Facility Committee; Peter Freisem, Resident; Tom Hutcheson, Town Administrator; Lisa Turowsky, Assistant to the Town Administrator

*Minutes*

September 4, 2019 *tabled until next meeting*

*Warrants*

* **On a motion from Armstrong to approve the vendor warrant of $590,454.43; the payroll warrant of $118,125.35; and the payroll deduction warrant of $28,495, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Meetings Attended by Select Board Members*

Kantor attended first state mediation with Union 38’s teachers union. Several more appointments have been scheduled. He also attended the first meeting of the Frontier school committee and part of a Historical Commission meeting.

Armstrong went to the Franklin County radio system review. FRCOG has been managing a long process to look at how to replace/upgrade radios; the state is offering to help convert to all to a digital system. There will be at least one more meeting. He also had a meeting re: the Comcast franchise agreement. He participated in a recent walk around the South River meadow with about 25-30 people. He attended a ConCom meeting and went with the Fire Department to learn how to take care of electric car batteries issues.

*New Business*

Ben Purdon regarding follow-up to resolution on aligning the town with the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Town Meeting passed a resolution about the prohibition of nuclear weapons. Purdon offered guidance and

support on how the Town can align with the UN Treaty. He brought documents from other towns who have

divested from companies that invest in nuclear weapons. There are bills in Boston that would create a citizen

commission to examine how severing ties with nuclear weapons producers can be done. Kantor commented that

the resolution was non-binding. What action could the Select Board take, asked Purdon. There are 28 companies

that are being targeted. SB could send a copy of the resolution to the state. Resolution only mentioned taking

necessary steps to align with the treaty. Kantor discussed the history of the Town weighing in on issues of the

day. Kantor recommended bringing the issues to Town Meeting.

* **On a motion from Armstrong to have Tom Hutcheson send letter to Sen. Elizabeth Warren; Congressperson Richard Neal; Sen. Edward Markey, Sen. Adam Hinds; Gov. Charlie Baker; Sen. Walter Timilty and Rep. Linda Dean Campbell, Joint Committee on Veterans and Foreign Affairs; President Donald Trump; Greenfield Recorder**

*Public Comments*

Resident Barbara Ware came in to talk to the Select Board about buses speeding up and down Rt. 116 past the bus stop, threatening the children. The signage indicating the presence of a bus stop is not visible, as it is covered with tree limbs, etc. Ware has seen fluorescent bus stop signs in South Deerfield that are much more visible. She reiterated that children need protection from this dangerous situation. It’s not the fault of the drivers; she believes they’re being pushed to go at a dangerous clip. Hutcheson said the DOT regulates the buses. Kantor asked if she has called the principal about the buses; Ware has not been able to do that yet. There are two issues that need to be dealt with: the bus schedule and the visibility of bus stop signs. Kantor would like to have the bus company and the school collaborate on the scheduling concerns. Hutcheson will look into the sign issue.

**6:15 p.m. JOINT MEETING WITH BOARD OF ASSESSORS**

Tax Classification hearing

Whitcomb, Corse and French came to present the issue of a split tax rate to the Select Board. Whitcomb explained that 88% of total taxable value is in residential property. Another 6% or so is in commercial, this also includes everyone who’s in chapter (open space). The Board of Assessors recommended that the tax rate not be split. According to Whitcomb having a residential factor of 1 has worked to manage the situation very well. Kantor asked about a split rate for the town center; Whitcomb said it’s not substantially different than the rate for those outside of the town center. The Board of Assessors recommended that the Select Board adopt a residential factor of 1.

* **On a motion from Kantor to adopt a residential factor of 1, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was 2 in favor of adopting residential factor of 1.**
* **On motion from Armstrong to authorize Whitcomb to sign the allocation, seconded by Kantor, the vote was 2 in favor of authorizing Whitcomb to electronically sign the allocation.**

*New Business (cont’d)*

Highway Facility: maintenance building—sign contract for design

They have a new design contract that is more favorable to the Town than the previous one. This agreement satisfies Town Counsel’s concerns.

* **On a motion from Armstrong to approve the design contract, seconded by Kantor, the vote was 2 in favor.**

Peter Freisem: request for future reimbursement from trust fund for cemetery preservation training

Freisem submitted the request for reimbursement for the training that he completed last Friday/Saturday in Vermont. He’d like to put on a similar workshop in Conway in the spring, with an eye toward restoration of some of the Town’s cemetery stones and monument. There’s money that could be used to reimburse Freisem in the Community Preservation account and also in trust funds, like the C.S. Boyden trust. Freisem presented documentation of mileage which supports his request for $190 for mileage. He also had information concerning the registration for the training which was $40 for two days. It was decided that the Select Board would not approve compensation for time that Freisem missed from work to attend the training.

* **On a motion from Kantor to reimburse Peter Freisem from the C.S. Boyden trust for mileage and registration in connection with cemetery preservation training, seconded by Armstrong, the vote was 2 in favor.**

Approve insert re: Town Academy

* **On a motion from Armstrong to include Town Academy inserts in tax mailing, seconded by Kantor, the vote was 2 in favor.**

Request to make Frontier Regional School Committee members Special Municipal Employees

A Frontier Regional School Committee member contacted Hutcheson with a request to be considered a special municipal employee so that she could be paid for choreography work she performed while she was a Regional School Committee member.

* **On a motion from Kantor to approve special municipal employee status for Frontier School Committee Members, seconded by Armstrong, vote was 2 in favor**.

*Items not anticipated within 48 hours of the meeting None.*

*Town Administrator update*

**Committees**

Planning Board: Our question revolves around the use of the word “premises” in our bylaw.  A narrow interpretation might be the location where you register and pay your fee.  A broader interpretation for a “portage business” might include the parking area, registration area, transportation vehicles, and drop off and pickup area. As background, Deerfield portage has in excess of 50 tubes available for rental and has on some occasions had in excess of 30 vehicles in their parking lot.

Mr. Winston Burt has returned to town and would like to schedule a hearing regarding his complaint about his neighbor’s geese. I will reach out to the Select Board and the other party and try to reach a time when everyone can attend. Since it is unclear how long such a meeting would last, it might be best to consider having it at a time other than the regular Select Board meeting.

The Historical Commission believes they submitted an invoice which was not properly processed in FY 2019, so they may need Town Meeting to pay a bill from a prior year to reimburse a member for expenses. A copy of their letter to the accountant is in your mail. Our accountant has been away; I have asked for his explanation as to how the invoice was missed.

I’d also like to give a reminder that the Finance Committee needs new members. They are now down to three, the minimum required. Two more volunteers, and even more to make up a bench, would be very much appreciated.

**Departments**

I am pleased to say that the new copier has been installed here at the Town Office. It is sturdier and has more functions than the last one, and cost about the same, even after five years.

There have been further complaints against dogs on Graves Road, though no further evidence has been submitted. Both the Animal Control Officer and the Police Chief are aware of this and alert for any nuisance activity.

The ground blasting for the new Highway facility has been completed, though some of the larger pieces of rock will also be blasted to assist in their removal. The Highway Superintendent plans to keep the rock, crushing and using it as appropriate in his regular work.

The Fire Department needed repairs totaling $10,939 to get an inspection sticker—there is only $7,500 in repair account, so they may need reserve fund transfer. They will bring this up at their budget meeting this winter. Depending on the end-of-year situation, there may need to be Town Meeting action in May, or Finance Committee action in June.

*Select Board Comments*

*Mail*

From a resident, a letter was received describing a disturbing incident with dogs.

Letter from accountant requesting proof of payment by individual who expended funds on Historical Commission’s behalf in FY2019

MMA is looking for comments on transportation.

Comcast notified the Town that an ascertainment hearing needs to be scheduled; this is done every 10 years.

Announcement of Economic Development Policy summit hosted by Congressman Richard Neal at Berkshire Community College

*Announcements None.*

*Executive Session*

*Under reason #6, to consider the purchase of real property (33 Main Street) if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.*

* **At 7:30 p.m., on a motion from Armstrong to enter executive session for one statutory reason and adjourn immediately therefrom, seconded by Kantor, Armstrong voted yes and Kantor voted yes.**

The meeting returned to open session at 7:40 p.m..

* **At 7:40 p.m., on a motion from Armstrong to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Kantor, the vote was unanimous in favor.**

*Next Meeting*

**Monday, September 30th**, **2019** at the Town Office, 32 Main Street, at 6:00 p.m.