

**ALL BOARDS MEETING Minutes  
FOR Tuesday, March 29, 2016  
Hawlemont, 7:00 P.M.**

Attendees: Michael Walsh, Ron Smith, Doug Telling, Bob Handsaker, Trevor Mackie, Dana Johnson, Jackie Cashin, Tony Ostroski, Robert Malone, John Hoffman, Doug Annear, Erwin Reynolds, Jerry Dupree, Doug White, Andrea Bernard, Eric Dean, Diane Bronccachio

Meeting convened at 7:01pm

When opening meeting the Select Board took a moment to remind everyone that there is no money available for counsel. If a Board or Committee needs to contact attorney, please ask the Select Board first.

1. Discussion of bridges – of the over 20' bridges, 4 restricted, 1 closed, 1 with a temporary bridge. Under 20', 2 Maxwell Bridges, 1 at bottom of Legate – if closed 91 residents stranded. The Town has a grant to have engineers cost repairs. Example of expenses: between 2 Maxwell Bridges engineering expenses to cost repairs is \$435,000 (data from 2012). Don't have a list of top 10's costs yet. Emergency Services has been asked to speak to the current condition on Legate. Ambulance stated it will add an add'l 45 minutes. Discussion of what differentiates restricted vs. closing. Question of how to address funding, mention that this is a national issue. Will a temporary bridge become available for Legate Hill? Mention that there may be a bridge program available for funding for small bridges. Trying to get together with other small towns in western MA for a small town summit to address these issues. No critical mass right now, but working on it. In reference to timetables, engineers getting the town a report. Have been giving reports and presentations to the State. Note about bridges while discussing Capital Improvement Plans– they are not a 1 for 1 fix; one of the Maxwell Bridge for instance will need to be extended to further than its current length. Discussion of temporary bridges, already have 1 of the 2 in the state. There is one at DCR.
2. Discussion of Capital Improvement Plan – working with Joe Markarian, FRCOG, to establish a plan for priorities, for all Town assets, including roads and bridges. If approved, a capital improvement committee will oversee this over time, to be proactive about tackling projects rather than reacting in an emergency fashion. Board of Assessors asked if using fixed assets list from Assessors List. Help spread the word to Boards and Committees to plan ahead.
3. Ambulance, halfway through the license renewal. Currently in a work group to think through how to fill in the gaps in coverage. Fact finding group, not decision making group. Work in progress.
4. Discussion about possible recreation tax, one of the things that's clear is that the Town needs more revenue to pay for expenses. Work group looking at possibility of paying a recreation tax. Have been encouraged by State reps to create legislation, take to Town meeting, and if approved take to the State. Some recreation companies have indicated they would approve. Proportional to the amount of revenue that comes in, it's minimal impact to the user. It creates revenue without leaning on the property owner. Estimates of what it could generate cannot be accurately calculated. Right now no other Town in MA that have this, but done in other towns in other states. Comments from Ambulance that many of transports not from area and asking for forgiveness on bill was disheartening. A lot of town resources being put into Town services, compared to Niagara Falls. What is the percent for the recreation tax? Proposing 3%. Meeting with recreation company in 2 weeks. Comment on meals tax: .75% can be added to Massachusetts 6.25% tax.

Additional items not identified at posting time

Planning Board would like Select Board support for By-Law revisions. Planning Board is trying to change perception of whether business friendly by improving permit approval. Can the Board be seen

as a dynamic board or an impediment? Tried to look at Planning Board. Made an effort to try to clean things up and streamline. Still short 2 members. When asked if any of the changes are controversial, Chair stated no. Building bylaw meeting in May, believe it is the 7<sup>th</sup>.

Doug Telling – brought up what can be done to revive the Abandoned Properties Task Force. Grant that is time sensitive is available to hire the Building Inspector from Athol. Understands everyone is busy. Select Board suggests closer to Town Meeting. Grant good for 30 hours to be used by July 1. Doug brought up that there is still money available as was stated in the tax bill. The Board of Assessors are willing to attend the next Task Force meeting. Beth with try to coordinate a meeting time.

Doug Annear – update from Fire Dept. The Capital Plan needs to happen. The building is rotting. Request has been presented past 3 years in a row at ATM

Board of Assessors – the State has upgraded its State Computer Aided Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system. The dues were \$320; they will be \$3,000. Also have a warrant for exempting military personnel.

John Hoffman – Ag com is still trying to sprout. If no anyone interested in agriculture, please encourage them to reach out.

Bob Handsaker – Broadband has not spent any money to date. Progress has been slow. State reviewing policies; may come up with no change.

Any update on the cell tower? Sent petition to Verizon, no response. Doesn't look like there will be any upgrades on cell tower. AT & T has pulled out of 3 towns, not good news. Last heard it would be coming in 6 months to a year. People might consider a 3G microcell.

John Hoffman commended the Select Board for how they're trying to address these big issues.

Sarah motioned to have Toby draft a bridge letter and Peg create a list with costs, residents impacted, and pictures included by tomorrow, Toby 2<sup>nd</sup>d. Passed unanimously.

Adjourned at 8:15

Respectfully submitted by Peg Dean 03/30/2016  
Draft minutes until approved by Select Board

Posted 3/23/16 PD