

Select Board Meeting Minutes 05-02-16

Meeting convened at 1:58pm at Charlemont Town Hall

In attendance: Select Board Chair Beth Bandy, members: Toby Gould and Sarah Reynolds; Invited Guest: Representative Paul Mark; Jon Schaefer; Carla LaGrassa; Town Administrator Peg Dean

1. Discussed Bridges. The Town had an engineering study completed for highest priority bridges through Gill, but now having issues with the small bridges. Legate was able to be added to the list. Can't do culverts. What they propose for structures is not simple. Over \$5M in top 5 bridges. How much is on Town vs. State's responsibility? The Town knows we're responsible for engineering. It's estimated it needs \$57k in engineering costs for two bridges to be considered. The question to Rep Mark was whether there is money coming for the little bridges? Per Mark there is a new MA DOT District 1 Director. Asked how the Town's experience working with them has been? The Town shared the example of working with MA DOT, when Maxwell Road bridges were inspected, they were closed within 2 hours. At this point the Town feels they are in a holding pattern. Still on the hook for engineering, and the time it would take to get moving is not reasonable.

Discussed Tower Road bridge. FEMA undermined the bridge when unplugging it during Irene. The Bridge Inspection report came in well after the window for filing a claim. The Town was recommended to approach Congressmen.

Rep Mark shared that MA DOT bill for funding small bridges is in bonding committee. The gentleman who testified mentioned Charlemont. That legislation should go through by 08-01-16 at the latest. We may or may not be able to earmark.

If MA DOT continues with small bridge inspections, the Select Board would like an agreement with MA DOT that if they are going to inspect a bridge, they can weight reduce it, but can't close it. The Town would like to know what MA DOT can pay for? Is there any way to fold the engineering costs in?

For the FEMA issue: bring in Richard Neal and Warren. How about looking at Tower Road and any other bridges of concern while here.

Rep Mark shared that there is an Economic Development Bill in the works for \$950M. It might be a chance to get money here for the Long Bridge. If anything happened to the Long bridge it would impair economic development.

Jon Schaefer meeting with Jay Ash and Secretary Pollack tomorrow. Rep Mark may attend.

It was asked if the closed bridges could be considered for re-ratings. It was commented that the bridges likely can't be re-opened. Sarah further elaborated on the beams on Maxwell not being eligible in MA DOT's eyes because of the holes in the carrying structures. Carla mentioned that the newest bridge is over engineered. Good question for MA DOT. Carla also suggested maybe temporary fixes to alleviate the real problems of deliveries, emergency services, quality of living. Sarah asking if there can be a little negotiation/ consideration for regulation. Rep Mark willing try to help MA DOT and DEP to be flexible in cases where they have discretion.

When tried looking at temporary bridge solutions, the engineering required for the temp bridge would not suit a permanent bridge, costing that much more money.

Rep Mark gave business card for FEMA contact to Sarah.

2. Broadband was discussed. Rep Mark understands, living in Peru. Palito made a speech in Heath saying there's a market based solution. Rep Mark feels otherwise. Examples: until 4 years ago police couldn't use their radios. Meeting with the Governor is a good opportunity to candidly share western MA's perspective. Chair shared that her concern is that the funds are not there, that only seeing \$19M in the Capital Improvement Plan line. Rep Mark assures the Town the money exists, and the Governor's pledged he's going to spend it. Chair stating still haven't had a response from MBI, of the communication the Chair's had, there is a lack of understanding of whether the Town could afford an alternative. Of the report recently produced, #s referenced in the doc were 2 years aged. Per Rep Mark the 5G could supplement where wireless is unavailable but that's a 2022 timeline. The commercial community needs something reliable like fiber. Is wireless able to withstand?

3. The Ambulance was discussed. Downing is the lead on the bill. Got an extension to continue working on it. Trying to get language stating required number of EMTs is based on minimum population.
4. Recreation tax was discussed. Rep Mark thinks it's a good idea. Having counsel write it so it can be amended. Can be changed in committee, on house floor, on senate floor.
5. Discussed how to afford ambulance: looking at a facility to operate out of here. This week should be getting quotes. Jon Schaefer asking how we can pay for Ambulance for next 4-5 years. It's all intertwined. Drive up tourism; grow the second home market, internet to incentive people to stay or move here, to help pay for schools.
6. Briefly discussed the upcoming small town summit scheduled for Thursday. Rep Mark stated that getting towns to work collaboratively will be good for everyone.
7. Jon Schaefer commented that the Tourism director needs to send money this way.
8. Legislative piece to solving the schools' issues is to get permission for multi-use. Rep Mark said they are working w Buonicanti and Kulik. It was clarified that this is contractual with school loans that the loan be used solely for school purposes. If could move away from the initial agreement to allow the District to think about other ways to use the buildings, there may be a lot of options. The Chair was on the previous steering committee where there was discussion, but no final plan to present.
9. Final wrap up with Rep Mark, for bridges, they will get people out here, the MA DOT District 1 Director, the Congressmen. The Town will keep Mark fully informed on any issues. Chris Cappucci is here every Thursday to ensure we know what's going on. The Town shared that for years, money was never set aside. Mentioned that establishing a Capital Improvement Plan. The Chair shared that real progress has not been made in past b/c of start and stops. Another thing with the long bridge – the complete streets money is available. There's funding available if you include features such as handicap access, bike paths, pedestrian lanes. The shell bridge in Northfield is being replaced, with money available through bike lanes and footpaths. If able to be flexible, towns can find opportunity for funding.
Rep Mark left at 2:55pm.
10. Met with Jon Schaefer. He mentioned they were featured on the cover of biggest bike magazine, "bike" magazine. He reported that they had 6 ambulance calls out of 6000 rides. 36 hospital trips. 30 were self-transport. For cross-country biking the accident rate will be lower. They were voted best bike park. It was mentioned that Jon would rent the Fairgrounds. Jon gave the Select Board "the case for the trail", a presentation being provided at tonight's Economic Roundtable. Jon will send along a letter as an outside business in re the Charlemont Inn. Jon suggested that Rick Sullivan willing to help see if there are any projects still open b/c of his previous experience. For instance, is the Northern contract for Tower still open. Sarah looking at the bridge inspection – the railings were an issue. "It has collision damage at the bottom from flood debris." Jon Schaefer and Eric Dean have pictures if want them. Jon was provided previously drafted letters to Sec Ash and Pollack from the Select Board outlining bridge issues.
Jon left at 3:24
11. The Select Board discussed overages on accounts. For vocational expenses, how to research overages: Need initials matched up with residents' addresses. Need to know when and if. Contact Franklin Tech, review addresses, entrance dates, correct list of students actually living in town borders. Peg to follow-up.
Discussed why not do a year-end balance? B/c restricted to 3% of any account. For funds available, Peg will ask Lynn and get back to SB– how much left over in Veteran's Benefit? Sarah will ask Gordon – winter sand, salt, and supplies – \$25,000 + \$80,000 remaining in Highway. Beth will send an email to Kathy asking about for an article at Town Meeting to include overages.
12. Discussed upcoming Select Board meeting. Design agenda to get critical stuff done early on. Expect to set some things aside. Keep appt with Sue Annear.
13. Discussed Police Chief resigning – can the Town take over fire arms permits for Hawley? Sarah will follow up with Jared to have him follow up with John Sears.

Motion: Beth motioned to have the Police Chief take over fire arms permits for Hawley if Jared is comfortable and it doesn't interfere with already existing schedule. Toby 2'nd. Passed unanimously.

14. The Hawley Select Board are hoping we're getting together with Heath in advance of the Hawlemont presentations. Looking at schedules, it's unlikely will be able to attend. Discussed the importance of attending the BEST meeting as a starting point with Heath. Beth will get in touch with Evie and will respond to John Sears.

Adjourned at 4:15

Respectfully Submitted by Peg Dean

Draft minutes until approved by Select Board.