**Selectboard Meeting Minutes November 18, 2024 Zoom Teleconference 5:30 pm**

**Call to Order**: Rick LaPierre called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm. Others present: Selectboard members Andrew Baker and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz. Member Tricia Yacovone-Biagi was absent.

A motion was put forth by Andrew to approve the amended minutes of November 4. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

Andrew asked for follow up on several items mentioned in the minutes. The Building Inspector was contacted about signs on Route 2 which are not allowed by the zoning bylaws. He was to follow up with letters to the landowners. Andrew received complaints about political signs near the police building. The signs were actually on private property. Andrew thought the CPA article passed at the last town meeting took care of allocating funds to the various components of the CPA. It was explained that the vote was for FY’25. What is needed is a similar vote for FY’24.

**Department Liaison Reports:**

**Pratt Library** – Andrew said the Pratt committee met last week. The main discussion was about the lease agreement with the town, with the issue being how maintenance is worded in the lease. Andrew felt it would be helpful to get a clearer idea of the maintenance needs of the library, and suggested that perhaps Buckland should pay for some of it.

**Highway Department** – The Old Greenfield Road project is essentially complete. Estimates for guardrails are still to come. Line painting will be done in the spring. Jeff Johnston is working with Joe Finck regarding building maintenance. An inventory of town building maintenance needs will be gathered. Winter hours at the transfer station will begin on December 3. Students from Franklin Tech are helping with maintenance at the Hill Cemetery. Tree Warden Jim Richardson is doing tree work on South Shelburne Road. The temporary bridge will be installed after Thanksgiving. The Chevy 1-ton truck has had a lot of repairs including an almost $10,000 repair of its fuel system.

**Franklin Regional Transportation Committee** – This group will be meeting later this week.

**Police Department –** Rick, Terry, and Chief Bardwell met with Capital Strategic Solutions, the group doing the police wage and classification study. The study is being funded by a Community Compact grant, found by Terry.

**Police Services Advisory Committee** – The committee studied an overview of the wage and classification study. Also discussed was the Mohawk student resource officer, and various capital items that will be coming up. There is a possibility of a landscaping project at the police building. Chief Bardwell will be reaching out to Franklin Tech for possible student assistance.

**Mohawk Personnel Subcommittee** – All Mohawk district member towns were invited to send their Selectboard Chair or a designated representative to a meeting on November 13, where one of those town representatives would be chosen to represent the district towns in collective bargaining with district paraprofessionals. Rick attended and was the only town representative there. He is now the town representative to the collective bargaining team.

**Appointments:**

**5:45 pm Detective Tucker Jenkins RE” Stuff a Cruiser Event 12/15/24** – Tucker explained that this is a common event where people bring donations of new, unwrapped toys and literally fill a cruiser with the toys. The event will be held on Sunday, December 15, from 11 am until 2 pm, near the pocket park. A resident brought this idea to the police’s attention and Tucker has been putting it together. He reached out to Heather Taylor who runs the non-profit Giving Back Together, which is partnering with the department and will arrange distribution of the toys. Also assisting in this event are the local fire departments, the state police, the Children’s Advocacy Center, local churches and the Shelburne Falls Business Network. Santa and Smokey Bear will be on hand and there will be refreshments and music. The Board needed to take no action on this.

**F.C. Sheriff’s Office Dog Nuisance Hearing, Colrain-Shelburne Road** – The hearing was opened at 5:58 by Rick. Dog Officer Kyle Dragon said this hearing was a resident request, it did not come from his office. Ginna Vogt, who requested the hearing, said her neighbor, Gordon Meadows, has had two dogs during the three years she has lived in town that have run, unattended, on her property. Gordon never asked permission, Ginna didn’t like it but she tolerated it. Ginna’s current dog, is a rescue, and is a large livestock guardian breed. When Gordon’s dog comes on the property Ginna’s dog gets very upset. Ginna said at one point this summer her dog became so agitated when Gordon’s dog was on the property that it pulled her over. She feels it is now a safety issue. On July 21 Ginna asked Gordon to keep his dog off her property but Gordon would not commit to that. Ginna then called the dog officer, who sent Gordon a certified letter about the situation. Later two dogs came on to Ginna’s property and the dog officer was called again. Ginna asked the Selectboard for its help.

Gordon explained that he shares an 800-foot property line with Ginna. He is farming on his land, primarily apple trees. The main predators to his trees are voles and rabbits and his dog is an integral part of rodent control. Gordon feels his right to farm is being infringed. He offered to build a fence. Ginna asked for a survey of the property line. Road work had buried one of the boundary markers so it took some time to get the survey done. Gordon has now started work on a fence which should be done in a few more days. He said Ginna’s dog had dragged her and said he had grabbed the leash to make it stop. It was Gordon’s opinion that Ginna is not physically capable of controlling her livestock guardian dog, which is very territorial. It was Kyle’s opinion that Gordon’s dog does not need to be restrained on its owner’s property and that a fence should solve the problem. Abutter Chris Vanvleet said Gordon’s previous dog had killed his chickens. Chris then built a fence. The current dog initially jumped Chris’ fence but for the past three years Gordon has done a good job containing the dog. There was some question as to whether a survey had been done, that is not in the purview of the Selectboard. It seemed to Rick and Andrew that a solution, in the form of a fence, was underway. Rick said if the dog stays on Gordon’s property there is no problem, if it continues to go on Ginna’s property the Board can take further action, including fines. Kyle suggested that the hearing be continued until the next Board meeting, by which time the fence should be in place. A motion was put forth by Andrew to continue the hearing until the next Selectboard meeting, which will be on December 2. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**Old Business:**

**ARPA Funding Requests** – $13,550 has been set aside for foundation work, siding, and painting at the Village Information Center. The remaining ARPA balance is $40,315.

**Solar Array Installation @ Highway Pole Barn –** The installation is complete but has not gone live as yet. The final inspection has been made. A meeting was held with PV Squared for preliminary registration for rebates.

**New** **Business:**

**Community Action Pioneer Valley RE: Future Funding** – For many years the town has applied for, and received, funds through Community Development Block Grants. Part of the funds, usually $25,000, have gone to support the West County Emergency Food Pantry. The town is not applying for a CDBG this year and the current funding cycle will end on June 30,2025. Without the grant funding, the food pantry may be forced to close. Terry said the CDBG is the only source of such funding that she is aware of, but she will reach out to Linda Overing to see if she knows other sources. Andrew suggested talking with Buckland to see if something can be done jointly.

**Susan Durkee RE: Planning Board Vacancy** – Susan has submitted a letter of interest and the Planning Board has voted to recommend her appointment. A motion was made by Andrew to appoint Susan Durkee to the Planning Board until the next town election. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**MEMA Mitigation Grant RE: Statement of Interest for Allen Brook, Colrain-Shelburne Road** – A very comprehensive overview of the project had been provided, but as this project has been spearheaded by Tricia it was at first thought to be best to wait until she was present. Tom Williams said that once a statement of interest is presented to MEMA they will explain how to proceed from there. Rick suggested that since this is only a statement of interest, and it was not committing the town to anything, perhaps it would be best to move on this. A motion was made by Andrew to support the submission of the statement of interest as presented. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**Community Preservation Act Applications for Affordable Housing Development** – Andrew had written two applications for CPA funding. One is for $50,000 for the demolition of the barn at 49 Mechanic Street. The other is for $10,000 for redevelopment permitting work for 49 Mechanic Street and 375 and 379 Main Street. The deadline for submission is tomorrow. Rick had previously not been in favor of these applications but was willing to help move the process along. A motion was put forth by Rick that the Selectboard support the submission of two applications to the CPC, as presented. This was seconded by Andrew, who noted that he had written the applications. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0. Two additional steps remain before the money is granted, approval by the CPC and approval by Town Meeting.

**Cate Chadwick, Moonlight Magic RE: Request to Use Memorial Hall Meeting Room** – Memorial Hall will be a venue for three musical performances during Moonlight Magic on November 29. The request was to use the meeting room from 3:15 pm until 4 pm for vocal warm ups. The Board saw no problem with that and gave their permission.

**Any Other Business:**

Andrew said that the CPA match for this year was the full 100%.

**Next Meeting** – The next Board meeting will be on December 2, at 5:30 pm via Zoom.

**Correspondence:**

**Mass Department of Revenue RE: Free Cash Certification**

Free cash has been certified at $353,986.

**BSE Playground Improvement Subcommittee RE: Request for Support/Endorsement of Project** – The subcommittee has applied for CPA funds to replace aging playground equipment. The Board supported the idea but was concerned that they should not show support for one CPA project over another. Andrew added that since the project was on school-owned property the Board had no jurisdiction. BSE Principal Hayley Gilmore said she understood but wanted the Board to know what BSE was doing. She said a winter tag sale on December 7 would be used as a fundraiser for the playground equipment.

**Public Comment:**

Maya Winfrey spoke in support of the playground equipment replacement project.

**Adjournment**: At 7 pm a motion was made by Andrew to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary