

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2024

The meeting was opened at 6:30 PM by Ann Marie Visconti, Chair with Curt Robie and Tamarin Laurel-Paine members present. Mark W. Doane, Administrative Assistant was also present. Town residents present were: Adair Laurel-Cafarella, Sherri Vendetti, Donald Trask, Karri Trask, Robin Savery, Judy Hoag, Diane Thome, Tylor Gosselin, Maureen Sullivan, Logan Judge, Ray Schneller, Susan Schneller, Doreen Black, Skip Savery, Chris Bresnahan. Police Chief, Jenny Dion was also present, and visitor Tom Irwin.

Prior to the business of the meeting, Police Chief Dion explained the Open Meeting Law, and copies of it were handed out.

Curt reported he attended a workshop on Federal Funds at Berkshire Innovation. The meeting discussed all the money for Western Mass which is receiving less than 10 million dollars, however, eastern Mass received over one billion dollars. The money is earmarked for low-income housing, which Middlefield isn't eligible. There were many representatives of federal representatives present as well as Ann Gobi. Curt also reported that there were no bids received for the engineering study on Cone Road. Curt reported that Dave from Department of Revenue will be put out again to other bidders. Brett Thebault will also be working on new downsized plans for the Senior Center carrying beam repairs. Curt also met with the Superintendent of the Gateway Regional School District in regards to the High School/Middle School roof. Curt reported that the roof is beginning to show some leaks, but roof is very clean. Any funding from grants won't be available until 2027. Some minor repairs will need to be done prior to a new roof, and some of the mechanical issues will need to be addressed as well. They will also need to begin looking for an architect.

Chief Dion reported that the state police will be taking over dispatch services in January of 2025. Chief Dion was going to look into it some more as Town Administrators apparently received communication regarding dispatch services, however, Chief Dion reported she hasn't received it. She also reported that it is going to affect fire services. Chief Dion reported that Peru has already switched over.

There was a question of whether or not there will be a joint Selectboard meeting with Washington on November 25. Ann Marie reported that as far as she knew, it was still taking place.

Tamarin reported that she walked Cone Road with Mark Stinson, and members of the Conservation Commission to address town resident's concerns. Tamarin also got the Green Communities Annual Report filed which keeps us eligible for their grant money. She reported that no grants are open at this time.

Tamarin brought up scheduling a Tax Classification Hearing with the Selectboard. She talked with Mary Ann Pease, Tax Collector. Mary Ann needs information converted to QDS software by December 4, 2024. Beverly Cooper reported she could have the data entered by November 25, 2024. Tamarin recommended that the Selectboard add a Tax Classification hearing after the Selectboard meeting scheduled for Monday, November 25, 2024.

Ann Marie reported that she told Beverly Schedule A has to be filed by November 30, 2024. Ann Marie also reminded people that on Friday, November 22, 2024, a Capital Plan Meeting is scheduled for 11:00 AM. Ira Bresinsky from PVPC will also be in attendance.

The Town had one applicant for the Town Custodian position. Curt reported that he had interviewed Robin Savery for the position, and recommended the Selectboard hire her. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to offer the position to Robin Savery. As Robin was in the audience, she agreed to the position.

The discussion then turned to Zoning issues and the Building Inspector. Ann Marie identified 2 issues: one is the Building Inspector and his authority, and the other was our By-laws and other rules about habitation.

Under code 780 CMR, the Building Inspector should be carrying identification. The Building Inspector also can inspect if there is reasonable cause of an unsafe or dangerous situation. If there is an active building permit, the Inspector has the ability to do inspections.

Ann Marie talked with Town Counsel and the Northampton Health Agent. Town Counsel was asked by Bill to review 2 of our By-Laws: one on mobile homes, and one on camping. The Town Counsel response was read that a special permit is needed for any camping for a temporary shelter.

The discussion then focused on the owners of 212 Skyline Trail, and the what is needed in order for compliance with Town By-Laws. A septic design needs to be in place, which the owners have, and they were supplied with the information to apply for assistance in putting in the septic system. William Girard stated that the owners can't receive a certificate of occupancy if there is no septic system. Further discussion resulted in the owners needing to get a permit from the ZBA, and okay from the Board of Health, to live on the property in an RV while the house is under construction, but is limited to 6 months. Following multiple back and forth, it was decided to have the Building Inspector, Northampton Public, and if necessary, the Police Chief, go to 212 Skyline Trail to get specifics that need to be done. The meeting will be on the 27th of November. Zoning Board of Appeals stated that the owners of the property will need to pay another \$100.00 fee for a camping (RV) permit.

Tom Irwin, who is working on trying to regionalize dispatch and EMS services, reported that the requesting process will also include the individual towns have the fire chief sign off in agreement with the plan. Mark will reach out to the fire department to see if they will sign the letter of support.

Following this the discussion went back to whether the owners of 212 can camp on the land or not for 2 weeks. The Zoning Board stated the owners have to make an application, then posted for two weeks, then a hearing, then a 20-day waiting period.

No further business to come before the meeting, it was closed at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark W. Doane
Administrative Assistant

Ann Marie Visconti, Chair: _____

Curt Robie, Member: _____

Tamarin Laurel-Paine, Member: _____