

Selectboard minutes
October 6, 2021

Meeting opened at 6:31pm

Present: Ann Marie Visconti, Chair; Tonya Santaniello; Curt Robie
Duane Pease, Town Administrator (TA)

Also present: Kristen Smidy, Superintendent of Gateway Regional School District; Steve Harris; Gita Jozsef; Adair Laurel-Cafarella; Tamarin Laurel-Paine; Dave DiNicola; Doreen Black, Planning Board Chair; Joe Kearns, finance Chair; Suzanne Lemieux, Town Clerk

Board met first with Smidy who introduced herself as she was recently chosen to be the superintendent of GRSD. She is going to Selectboard meetings of all of the district towns to make herself known and seek input from the towns. She wants to bring transparency to the school district and find ways to attract students to the school. There was discussion on the COVID status at the school, she can't mandate masks but the state has and the schools are complying. MCAST scores were down from the previous year but that was expected as remote learning was in place. The district received \$219,000 in Rural Aid grant and she is looking to provide various activities as well as learning for the students. Enrollment has declined by approximately 400 students in the past 10 years, many students are leaving to attend the vocational schools. Gateway does offer welding and early childhood courses that are not available at the vocational schools and she is looking for ways to feature these to attract out of area students. Board asked what they could do to help her and would be a willing participant in promoting Gateway. Board thanked her for her attendance.

Warrants reviewed and signed; Payroll: \$6,992.54; Expenses: \$67,464.77.

Minutes approved on motion by Ann Marie, Tonya 2nd; vote 3-0.

Mail: board signed voter precent for Town Clerk; Comcast agreement for completed network and memorandum of understanding with Northampton board of Health for additional nurses to provide coverage for COVID follow. There is no fee to the town as finances provided by State.

Meeting with Finance Committee was next on agenda. Ann Marie said there needs to be a point person for contact on the committee for information and what the duties of the committee are.

Daniele property was discussed next, property on Skyline Trail is for sale and town has right of first refusal as a portion of it is in Chapter land. The site is 10.28 acres, has been perked and is currently being marketed at \$59,000. Board feels this may be good site for future safety complex as it has potential of housing Police and Fire Depts. Board will continue discussion at future meeting.

Planning Board Chair, Doreen Black, requested assistance from the board regarding property on Harry Pease Road owned by Carol Varsano. She would like to subdivide her property and originally told Doreen she had no one to help her but a granddaughter has now entered the picture. She was told since the land involved is not on a public road, she would have to create a road that is built to current standards and then have it accepted by the town. Highway Superintendent, Skip Savery, has all the information as to the length of Harry Pease and what would have to be done to make an acceptable road.

Steve Harris, web site administrator, said he would update site with job descriptions and hours when material given to him.

Senior Center update: Curt said he has applied for a grant for an emergency generator for the building, includes all necessary to install and run. Engineer may be required to address some issues noted in the crawl space under the building. Curt is waiting for the estimate on the electrical work needed.

Curt also applied for a grant for the Police Dept. to update computers so officers can connect directly while in the cruisers.

Also discussed was a Capital Plan for the Town both a 5-year and 10-year plan. Board needs to be more pro-active to look to the future needs of the Town. Dave said this plan would have to be funded by the tax payers and currently we are budgeting for the absolute needs. Town's people will have to decide what the needs are.

Old business: agenda for the October 16th meeting of all boards, etc. will be posted after reviewed by Ann Marie will include request for job descriptions, hours, etc.

Audit: Dave Irwin is scheduled for the Nov 17th meeting to discuss parameters of audit. Ann Marie had been in contact with Scanlon but has not gotten return calls. TA will follow with Melanson.

Marin brought up hours for Trick or Treating, board agreed to 4-7 pm on Saturday, October 30th. TA will send to Country Journal.

Board agreed to close Town Hall on 10/8 and 10/9 for the only Columbus Day weekend.

TA advised Skip had been bitten by dog and sought medical treatment, more info when available.

Public input: Dave addressed the Police Dept. and the speeding on Skyline Trail, a car had hit a bear near his house and no local police were available. The State Police responded. He is upset there was a 300% increase in the budget but appears the cruiser is out of town when the officers are doing outside road duties. Seems the outside detail is more important than having a cruiser available in town.

Curt motioned to adjourn, Tonya 2nd; vote 3-0 and meeting adjourned at 9:05pm

Minutes respectively submitted by:

Duane Pease
Town Administrator

Minutes accepted with/without changes by:

Ann Marie Visconti, Chair

Tonya Santaniello

Curt Robie

