Select Board Meeting

September 16, 2020

6:00 pm meeting called to order by Neil.

Select Board members present: Mike Bedini, Ericka Oleson and Neil Oleson.

Select board members absent: None

Others present: Jim White, Christine Dobbert, Vicki Winchell, Mike Gleason, Ron Bosley, BJ Church, Charlie LaBatt, Scott Roycroft, Don Dubendorf, Donna Burdick, Merritt Burdick, Jesse Burdick, Susan Brown, Marilyn Brown, Terry Rysz, Edward Rysz, Doris Lewis, Stanley Brown, Jon Oleson, Ron White

Ericka Oleson made a motion to approve the minutes from the 9/2/20 meeting. Mike Bedini seconded. Unanimous.

Selectmen:

* At the request of Mike Bedini, the Selectboard met with Building Inspector BJ Church to address residents’ concerns regarding noise and air quality with the Railroad on Central Shaft Road. He was specifically inquiring as to whether the Railroad was required to obtain permits if performing work within the town. BJ stated even though the Railroad is in town, they do not need to answer to town officers, or laws. The Railroad falls under Federal regulations. She has no jurisdiction over them, even when buildings are involved. She offered to try to make contacts and place a complaint but was not hopeful that any progress could be made by her. Christine mentioned she has written letters to the DEP and contacted the state, but nothing has been done. DEP completed sound studies that showed sound level is under state regulations. BJ recommended waging complaints with elected state and federal officials and to keep trying. She also suggested speaking with the federal representative, Richard Neil.
* Selectmen addressed resident concerns raised at the Special Permit Hearing on 9/2/20 for Better Places Forests.
  + Mike had concerns for residents on the road regarding increased traffic.
  + Ericka raised the point that numerous businesses could purchase the property and not need a Special Permit. Those businesses could increase traffic even more than what Better Places Forests is estimating. The traffic study completed was higher than what Better Places Forests feel will be on property and their visitors are by appointment only, making it more controllable as well.
  + Selectmen understand and appreciate the concerns of residents however there is no legal reason to deny the permit.
  + Neil Oleson called for a vote approving the Special Permit for Better Places Forests allowing them to proceed with their plans for the property at 333 South County Road. All in favor - Unanimous.
  + Residents have 20 days to appeal the decision.

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* Selectmen signed the Special Town Meeting notice which has been scheduled for October 14, 2020 at 7 pm, after the regular Selectmen meeting. This meeting is to vote on appropriating funds “not to exceed $200,000” for the School heating system which needs ventilation into the gym, cafeteria, and nurse’s office. A second item has been added to the Special Town Meeting to vote for the purchase of a new loader for the Highway Department.

Christine Dobbert, Town Administrator:

* An amendment was signed by the Selectmen amending the electrical aggregation agreement. Price increased .001
* Christine received a letter of resignation from Library Director Jennifer Bean. The Selectboard and the Library Trustee’s will meet at the next Selectmen meeting on September 30, 2020 to discuss whether to hire an Interim Director until a Director can be found or to possibly close the Library until the COVID pandemic has ceased. Mike inquired if the library keeps a contact tracing list of customers in case someone does happen to come down with the Corona Virus.
* Christine brought up the topic of Halloween with the Selectboard. They are waiting for the state to make recommendations to the town about Trick or Treat. Several ideas were brought up for discussion. Mike Gleason said the Fire Department would like to take part in some way for the children of the town. Whether it be a bringing goodie bags to each child’s home via fire trucks, having families walk through the FD one family at a time for the kids to get treats or setting up something along North County Road in conjunction with the town. The idea of Trunk or Treat was also mentioned as some local towns have done this for years. Discussion will continue at the next Selectmen’s meeting.
* Terry Culpepper-Rysz works in several positions for the town (school, cleaning, and library). The total of all positions has had Terry working over 40 hours per week. Because of this she is resigning from the cleaning position. The town will need to find someone to clean 2-4 hours per week. However, if the Library does close for the time being then Terry will continue to do the cleaning.
* Completed a 2-day webinar on OSHA and COVID regulations. Completing this training takes 1% off the towns workman’s compensation bill from MIIA.

Jim White, Highway Department Supervisor:

* Blacktopping
* Cutting Brush
* Berkshire Correctional inmates worked on weed wacking. One man quit the first day.
* Working on trucks to prepare them for winter and inspections. Inspections will take place on October 27, 2020.
* New truck back to Ernies because trailer brake not working.
* West Oil found a bad chamber burnt out. Waiting on a quote for repair.

Mike Gleason, Fire Department Chief:

* Mike Bedini asked if there has been any progress regarding a new Fire Department building. Mike Gleason is working on the RFP.

6:56 pm Ericka made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mike seconded. Unanimous.