

# TOWN OF MONSON

*"A town where friendliness is more than just a word"*

## **September 28, 2023 – Select Board Meeting**

**Present** –Tyler Adkins, JD Walker, Sue Chase, Marti Gagnon, Bill MacDonald, Jonathan Pullen, Aaron Suomi, Brian Turner, Don Dunfee, Ryan Laplante, Giovanni Lauro, Gabrielle Huettner, Chuck Beane, Sandra Hardy

ZOOM: Alaina Zelkan, Jim, Unknown Caller

- 1) Meeting opened at 6:00 PM
- 2) Selectboard approves prior meeting minutes and signs warrants

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Brian Turner expressed concern that no road work, other than maintenance, is being done. Tyler stated that the Selectboard had previously discussed putting together a Road Committee to assist with prioritizing projects. He would like to see local folks on the committee.

Jonathan Pullen expressed concern that the Comprehensive Plan has not been sent out and other things seem to be falling by the wayside. He would like more communication with the Town Manager.

Don Dunfee stated that the house located at 19 Center St. is in very poor condition, but he does not agree that it should be torn down. He agreed that road work should be a priority.

### **TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Bill submitted the budget report. Sue noted that the Fire Department personnel expenses seem high, and the Public Works part time help line is currently over budget. Bill explained that the personnel is paid from 2 lines. Tyler requested year over year numbers be included in the report for comparison. JD requested the report be sent to the Selectboard sooner so there is more time to review. Bill then stated there is \$4000 in the Transfer Station reserve and \$103,000 in the Fire Department reserve. The town currently carries debt of \$1.3 million and \$250,000 was budgeted this year for debt service. The 2016 bond will be the first debt paid off, in 3 ½ years.

Bill has started conversations with the County to increase the dollar amount of the unorganized territory contracts for the Fire Department and transfer station. The solid waste will be based on population and the fire will be more based on the number of calls and the capital plan. The

new rates should take effect on July 1, 2024. JD asked Bill to find out what other towns the service unorganized territories are receiving from the county.

Bill then mentioned that he has been raising and lowering the flags thus far but was out sick on 9/11. He will work on assigning a deputy to take care of the flags in his absence. The office staff will also mark the calendar with all dates that the flags are lowered annually. JD noted that all flags should also be lit at night.

Bill feels that the road work has been significant this summer. He has been working with Steve on getting goals met. The gravel roads were graded in the spring, and it is anticipated they will also be done in the Fall. The beaver issue on Barrows Falls Rd has been resolved and the culverts have been un-plugged. Work has been done on the Bjork Rd and Bill has been working with Rod Bjork on getting the rest of the work completed. Storm repairs were done on Elliotsville Rd and Pleasant St. and several culverts will be replaced. The culvert work on North Guilford Rd, by Terr Gaudet's house will likely be expensive and may need to be put out to bid. Some projects will be done soon and other in the Spring. There is enough money budgeted to do one round of grading this fiscal year.

Property owners on Chapin Ave. have been moving their lumber and equipment back away from the road. JD asked if the incidents and correspondence are being documented. Bill said yes.

Bill spoke to Gorrill Palmer and DOT about short term solutions to the speeding issue on North Guilford Rd. JD stated something needs to be done about it right now. He suggested extra signs, flashing lights, anything to bring the speed limit to drivers' attention. Tyler requested that Bill look into solutions and report back to the Selectboard. 6 weeks ago, residents came forward with their concerns and the issue needs to be addressed as soon as possible. He asked Bill to commit to bringing forth solutions.

Bill stated the Planning Board, Code Officer and Board of Appeals are supposed to submit reports to the Town Manager annually regarding what is and is not working with the Land Use Ordinance. No reports have been received and Bill requested the Selectboard help him with getting the reports. JD told Bill to send email requests to the boards and to reach out to the Selectboard if he gets no response. All agreed that the reports will be due in March.

The GIS updates are dependent on information provided by the assessor. Bill and Alaina will work with the assessor on October 13 and should have a report at the November meeting. Sue asked if the updates will be posted right after the meeting with the assessor on the 13<sup>th</sup>, Bill is hopeful that will be the case.

The new server in the office was installed on September 6. Bill is hoping to have the email issues resolved soon. A signed quote has been sent to Sierra Communications and the office is waiting for a schedule from Sierra to migrate the email to Microsoft 365. JD stated the email and server issues are unacceptable. Town business needs to be conducted and an interim solution needs to be found immediately.

The 2020/2021 audit has been completed and recommendations were made by the auditors. All recommended changes have been implemented. Tyler noted most recommendations were procedural and asked if there are procedures in place. Bill stated there are some procedures in place. The 2021/2022 audit should be completed by the next meeting and 2022/2023 should be done by spring.

Tyler asked if there is an update on the downtown WiFi. Bill stated he still has not received a response from Axiom and asked the Selectboard for assistance. There also has been no response from Affinity LED regarding the streetlights. The streetlights are still under warranty, but alternative suppliers will be sought to move the process along.

Bill met with Lori Osher of the Maine Community Resilience Partnership. Lori will complete the application process for the town to become a member of the partnership so the grant application can be submitted.

## **SELECTBOARD REPORTS**

No reports.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Beautification Committee:** There is a meeting scheduled on Oct. 10 to plan for Christmas decorations. Sue asked if someone would volunteer to keep an eye on the flags. Ryan Laplante volunteered.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Authorize Bid Auction for Retired Public Works Truck:** Tyler Adkins motioned to auction the old Public Works truck, plow and sander as a package, reserve will not be published, bids will be opened at the November Selectboard meeting, seconded by JD Walker. Vote 3 – 0.

**Fire Department Grants and Needs:** The immersion suits have been ordered and received. MMA offers a grant for training. Tyler Adkins motioned to authorize Bill to apply for the training grant, seconded by Sue Chase. Vote: 3 – 0. Ryan Laplante found a possible source for a rebuilt cardiac monitor. A new monitor costs approximately \$58,000 but the Fire Department may be

able to purchase a rebuilt one for \$12,000. The Assistance for Firefighters Grant is not yet posted. JD expressed frustration with the fire truck/grant situation. The truck's life is coming to an end and a new truck needs to be a priority. Bill explained that if a commitment is made before getting a grant, grant money can't be used. He is looking for 3<sup>rd</sup> party money so the full burden doesn't fall on the taxpayers. Tyler reiterated the need to figure out the best way to get equipment the Fire Department needs. Tyler motioned to authorize Bill to investigate financing for a new fire truck, seconded by Sue Chase. Vote: 3 – 0. Tyler asked that the results be presented at the November meeting. Bill suggested that a Selectboard member assist with the investigation. JD offered to assist. Bill will also continue pursuing the Assistance to Firefighters grant and the Poland Springs water donation.

**Rules of Order:** Sue mentioned that MMA set new rules that if a Selectboard member misses a public hearing or meeting where substantial discussion is had, they may still vote on the matter if they educate themselves, ie. read minutes, watch recordings, etc. This change will be drafted as a footnote in the Rules of Order.

**Comprehensive Plan Status:** Bill intends to move forward as quickly as possible with the submission of the Comprehensive Plan. A bound paper copy needs to be sent to the State along with color copies of the maps, however, the maps will not have been updated from 2 years ago. Tyler and JD requested that Bill submit the plan as is and wait for feedback from the State. Bill will send the plan out tomorrow.

**Bodfish Valley ATV Contract:** Bill stated there will be a contract with the ATV club and he will write a letter of support to Maine DOT. Sue requested the conversation be postponed until the next meeting.

**EV Chargers Status:** Bill informed the Selectboard that the chargers have been delivered. The meeting with the electrical contractor had to be postponed. The Town and Libra have shared ownership of the parking lot and Bill feels that the original planned location of the chargers should be fine. There is no date set for the site visit with the electrician.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Sign Cemetery Deed:** The Selectboard signed one cemetery deed.

**Elliotsville Rd. Paving Repairs:** The estimate for the Elliotsville Rd repairs came in higher than expected. Bill suggests sole sourcing the equipment use for the job to Arvo Korsman. Estimated equipment cost is \$2,000 - \$3,000 and the Town will purchase the cold patch. Bill requested \$5,000 from the paving reserve to pay for the repairs. JD Walker motioned to authorize \$5,000 from the paving reserve for repairs to Elliotsville Rd., seconded by Tyler Adkins. Vote 3 – 0 Meeting moved to Executive Session at 9:45 PM. Meeting adjourned at 11:07 PM

