

*approved as
amended
11/3/11*

Select Board meeting minutes October 26, 2011

Present: Select Board -- Chair Norman Russell, Doug Field, Paullette Leukhardt
Interim Executive Administrator - Mary Fitz-Gibbon

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Minutes

Chair moves review of minutes to end of agenda

Appointments

Two Conservation Restrictions: Emily Boss, Franklin Land Trust, Chris Jerome, CR #1, Olaf Thorpe, CR #2

Emily Boss explains the Conservation Restriction process. If accepted by all parties the Conservation Restrictions will be held by the Franklin Land Trust. The Select Board is being asked to sign two draft Conservation Restriction documents which will then be brought to the Conservation Commission meeting tonight and then sent to the State for review. Norm Russell asks about public access, Emily answers that the CR's do not result in general public access but confirms that they will prohibit subdivisions and mining of the land put into a CR. The CR will allow agricultural use of the restricted land. Paullette Leukhardt asks about placement of solar or wind power installations on the land. Emily says that each parcel is retaining an excluded area which can be sold separately and upon which private use solar or wind installations can be placed.

Doug Field makes a motion that the Board approve the Conservation Restriction on 100 acres, more or less, on Bird Hill Road. Paullette Leukhardt seconds. The motion passes. Priscilla Phelps, Notary Public, notarizes the signatures of the Select Board.

Paullette Leukhardt moves that the Select Board approve the Conservation Restriction on 107 acres, more or less, on Bird Hill Branch Road. Doug Field seconds. The motion passes. Priscilla Phelps notarizes the signatures of the Board.

Old Business

Ashfield Wastewater Treatment Plant

The Board reads and approves a letter to be sent to the Department of Environmental Protection updating them on progress made in the Town's Inflow and Infiltration Plan. The letter details four areas of progress in the plan first submitted to DEP in May 2011.

FRCOG Building Inspector Program

The Board reviews a four-year statement of cost of and revenue from the FRCOG BIP. The net costs are: FY08 \$2,185, FY09 \$11,103, FY10 \$18,194 and FY11 \$17,132. The FY12 program assessment is \$38,166. The Town's calculation of the revenue received to offset the FY12 assessment will not be available till later in the contract year.

The Board also reviews the FRCOG BIP contract which was signed July 14, 2010 to cover the period from July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011 at which date the contract automatically renews for three years, after which point it must be re-ratified.

Paullette Leukhardt notes that the contract may be terminated by either party upon ninety (90) days written notice.

Norm Russell points out that the program's net cost has gone up steadily in the last four years. He states that he believes that the original impetus for joining a regional program was to save money and that the Board needs to review whether or not it is still the case that the regional approach saves money as compared to a town program. Mr. Russell says that he will contact area towns of similar size to collect information for comparison of regional vs. town-run programs.

Paullette Leukhardt says that if the Town is not in the regional program the Town would be able to set its own fee structure, perhaps reducing the building permit costs to individuals in Ashfield.

Doug Field notes that the Town has been happy with the FRCOG Building Inspector Program but that it appears that the Town may be able to save money and if so, that is something the Town should look into. Mr. Field suggests that if the Board does decide to consider switching from participation in the regional program to employing a per-use Building Inspector instead, that suggestion should be brought to a vote at Annual Town Meeting.

Priscilla Phelps describes the system in Deerfield which employs two part-time inspectors.

Other Contracted Services

Norm Russell says that other contracted services should be reviewed over the next few months with an eye to whether or not those contracted services are still cost-effective. He suggests that the Board review contracted veteran's services, accounting services, and procurement services among others to insure that the contracted services are still cost-effective for Ashfield's needs. Mr. Russell says that he will investigate what other towns are paying for contracted services or in-town programs.

New Business

Town Accounts

The Board reviews the most recent expense report and notes that the Legal Expense line is nearly depleted.

The Chair explains that money from that line was recently used to pay the second of three \$10,000-deductible legal fees arising from three lawsuits against the town. Mr. Russell reminds everyone that any use of Town Counsel must be approved by the Chair of the Select Board. Mary Fitz-Gibbon states that all Town Counsel use has been approved on a case-by-case basis by the Chair.

Doug Field moves that \$1,000 be transferred from Grant Program Income to Legal Expense line. (Transfer of funds from GPI is authorized by a vote of the Select Board.)

Paullette Leukhardt seconds the motion. The motion passes.

Liaison Reports

Doug Field

Fire Department – Fire truck repairs are ongoing and costs are mounting. The Board may have to look closely at the FD expenses line around February or March or before any next scheduled Special Town Meeting to see if the line will be sufficient for the year. The Fire Department is also replacing and adding firehose segments. The hose should be able to stretch from the lake to the four corners by the horse trough (now planter).

Highway Department – The Highway Department has been making good progress with the brook clean-up and with storm damage repairs.

Emergency Management – Field reported that he, the Administrator and the Town Clerk have all just completed a training session on use of the new Blackboard Connect system. The system will allow the town to make one call to reach all residences in Ashfield with important information. Field is currently combing through the pre-loaded data-base for errors.

Paullette Leukhardt

Personnel Board – The Personnel Board is reviewing and, where necessary, rewriting personnel policies for the town. The Board will also get ready to advertise the Executive Administrator position and get that hiring process started. The EA position has been being filled on an interim basis by Mary Fitz-Gibbon.

Norm Russell

msd
Town Hall – Lynn Taylor has started in her new position as Assistant Municipal Clerk. Lynn will cover all hours that Town Hall is open. Her office is in the new office space to the right in the small “offices corridor.” Her office will be the first stop for anyone doing business at Town Hall.

Mail

None.

Future Meetings

The Select Board will not meet on Wednesday, November 23rd as the next day is Thanksgiving.

Public Comments

None.

After a motion was made, seconded and passed, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.