



Ashfield Select Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 14, 2016, 7:00 pm

Ashfield Town Hall, 412 Main Street, Ashfield MA 01330

Pursuant to notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Select Board was held at 6:30 pm in the Ashfield Town Hall, Lower Hall. There was one audio recorder at the meeting.

Present were: Todd Olanyk, Chair; and Ron Coler.

Absent: Tom Carter, Vice-Chair.

Also present: Kayce Warren, Town Administrator; Bridget Rodrigue, Town Clerk; David Newell, BEST; Leslie Rule, BEST; Ted Murray, Finance Committee, Melinda Gougeon, Finance Committee; Carl Satterfield, Finance Committee; Carol Lebold, Finance Committee; Mary Fitz-Gibbon, Finance Committee; Mary Quigley, Town Hall Building Committee; Stewart Harris, Town Hall Building Committee; Nancy Garvin, Town Hall Building Committee; Doug Cranson, Green Communities; Brian Clark, Green Communities; and Roger Howes, resident.

Appointments:

BEST:

The Select Board members attended a Mohawk's BEST hearing on Monday, December 12th and Mr. Newell and Ms. Rule are present to answer any questions the Select Board may have.

Ms. Rule brought with her three handouts regarding Mohawk's BEST. The handouts include a Mohawk's BEST summary report, the power point presentation, and the operating scenario review.

Mr. Newell explains that nine towns comprise Mohawk and Ashfield is the largest of these nine towns. There are approximately 10,500 people in the Mohawk communities and Mohawk's BEST looked at comparable towns to see how they operate their education system. Currently, the Mohawk community has six principals, while most communities this size only have 2-3 principals.

Mr. Murray says the BEST meeting was very helpful and he sensed two themes at play. The first being on an emotional level with parents personalizing the situation, and the second is that many people did not like the outcome of the study and are trying to suggest a different process. He feels it should be stated that this is not the first time we have looked into making changes in the education system of the Mohawk communities and that these changes are needed based on an economic efficiency standpoint. He also suggests it would be helpful to give people an idea of the alternative if nothing is done. This might get the people to understand how important this really is.

Ms. Rule responds that this is what the committee is trying to communicate that the current education system is not sustainable. At this point in time, they have not planned out exactly what these cuts would look like if there was to be no change.

Mr. Newell adds that we are seeing a resurgence in enrollment at the preschool level and Ms. Rule says we must hope for economic development to bring young families into the community.

Mr. Newell also states that there has been a consolidation of education over the past 25 years in rural areas with a strong regional government. He references that Gateway has reduced the number of school facilities that serve its community. Mohawk did not allow for a strong regional government, rather the towns in this community wanted to maintain control over their local schools, so the Mohawk community has not seen a decline in education facilities, instead there was an increase (i.e. Heath Elementary School). It has been shown that parents have a more difficult time with letting go of local school than their children do. Mr. Newell says we are looking at a possible closure of the Colrain and Heath Elementary Schools due to very low enrollment.

Olanyk states one parent at Monday's meeting kept keying in on the quality of the education in a consolidated approach and he says they should question the quality of education in a school of less than 29 students. Ms. Rule agrees that it is not cost effective to run such a small school. Heath lost six students at the beginning of the school year to school choice and more may be lost to school choice next year. A consolidated school will not be the same, but it could be better. If this is the case, the transportation schedule will need to be adjusted to allow time to get all students to the elementary schools and high schools.

Mr. Satterfield questioned what would happen if the trend were to reverse itself, and Ms. Rule states that we would then use available buildings. Mr. Newell states that options will be kept open and that these buildings will remain with the towns. At this point in time, we are looking at the financing of these elementary schools with the increased costs and increased state mandates. The current model is not sustainable.

Mr. Satterfield says he feels lots of things are not well formulated. He is interested in the anticipated costs of starting a centralized campus but no one has looked into this. Ms. Rule states that we are looking at the daily/yearly expense of running the current four elementary schools and that a feasibility study would be needed to determine the actual cost of a centralized campus. The feasibility study is part of phase four in this process.

One of the current options would be to remove sixth grade from the elementary schools are have it at Mohawk. Some parents are concerned with this idea, but things are evolving. Coler states that we have been looking into this issue since 2006 and that he would expect it to be more developed. Olanyk agrees that it would be beneficial to give the historical perspective and show the decline since we first started looking into this issue. Coler states that if we give residents hard numbers and keep data simple, it will be easier for them to understand and see why we need to make these changes to our education system. Olanyk states it is important for towns to feel connected to their schools and feels schools should look into holding events in some of the towns that do not have a school (i.e. Plainfield).

Ms. Lebold states that school issues have always been difficult and agrees that BEST should reference numbers to show why this is an important issue.

FY2018 Budget Schedule:

Ms. Warren has prepared a preliminary FY2018 Budget Meeting schedule. Mr. Murray feels these meetings should begin at the end of January and that it would be helpful to look at both capital and operating expenses at the same time. Olanyk agrees with this timing and the Select Board and Finance Committee decide that the budget meetings will be on the following dates: January 31st, February 13th and 27th, March 13th and 27th, and April 10th.

Ms. Warren also prepared the FY2018 Budget Memo and Capital Project Request form for the Select Board to review. The FY2018 budget memo gives some great information but Coler feels it should be shorter and recommends removing the information about stabilization and free cash reserves. Ms. Warren says she will make these changes and bring an updated version to the next meeting. The capital project request form is designed to be used for a longer period of time and can support both current and future capital requests. Mr. Murray recommends adding "long-range requests" to the form so this is clear to those filling it out and says he is willing to help re-draft if help is needed.

Ms. Warren provided a sample operational expense form and Coler states this form looks great and recommends to check to make sure summations are working if the form is not locked.

7:43 pm - Finance Committee adjourned from the Select Board meeting.

Mold Abatement Update:

Coler put together a draft memorandum regarding the Town Hall mold abatement. In this memorandum, he gives a background on the Town Hall mold issue and the long-range plan for correcting the mold issue. Olanyk feels the memorandum makes sense, reflects the previous discussion, and likes the phasing for the correction plan. Olanyk would like to see the root of the problem fixed as quickly as possible.

Coler states that a hole was found under the outside steps which is most likely the place where the water was entering. The area has been compacted and 40ml plastic was put down to attempt to remove the water from this area.

Stewart Harris says the Town Hall Building Committee has been working to address the water issue at Town Hall and added rubber roofing which has helped lessen the water around the foundation. Color questions whether it would be beneficial to install French drains to help with the water run-off. Harris and Quigley both feel these would be of no value and a waste of time. Ms. Quigley feels the membrane solution is a good one and is only worried that this may affect the Fire Department crawl space. Ms. Quigley was skeptical of Walt Baenziger of Home Environmental Services, but after speaking with him, she feels he knows what he is talking about and is dismayed that the Town is looking at Service Master. Ms. Quigley says the EPA recommends physical removal of mold with a vacuum, not a biocide. Ms. Warren states that Service Master has been recommended by the insurance company, and this is why the Town reached out to them. Ms. Warren will look to see if Home Environmental Services is on the list from the insurance company.

Ms. Quigley recommends that if we end up going with Service Master, there should be a project manager overseeing the mold clean-up. Ms. Warren says there is \$20,000 put aside for mold remediation. If the insurance is paying for the mold clean-up, maybe some of the Town allotted mold remediation money could be used to pay for a project manager. The big issue facing the Town during this clean-up will be the relocation of the Police Department, especially the relocation of the evidence room material. Cutler would like to see how other Police Departments have handled similar situations. Corporal Bezio will look to see if any there is any studies with other Police Departments with similar situations.

Mr. Cranson says it will not be possible to clean out all the mold due to the fact that not all areas with mold can be accessed due to a double wall. In order to get rid of all the mold, the building would need a new foundation. Ms. Quigley says they would need to get rid of all the mold they can and then control it, so it does not spread again. Coler wonders if it would make more sense to relocate the Police Department due to this mold issue. Also, Mr. Cutler states that the Service Master drawings are not accurate and it is important to have accurate drawings. Mr. Cutler says they have drawings and will share them with the Select Board.

Olanyk recommends Ms. Warren work with insurance to see about other potential vendors for the mold remediation so we can move forward with the clean up. Olanyk would like the Police Department to put a plan together for relocating and hopes all this can be done before any melting starts.

Discussion/Decision Items

A. Town Common Use Application – Winter Solstice Celebration

A request has been received to use the Town Common on December 21st for the Annual Winter Solstice Celebration. Event would begin at 6:30 pm and end at 9:00 pm. They are estimating a total attendance of 70 people.

***Motion to approve pending Police and Fire Department approval: Olanyk Second: Coler
Vote: 2-0-0***

B. Howes Right of First Refusal, waiver of 120-day option period

Mr. Howes has notified the Town of Ashfield of his intent to sell approximately 11.4 acres of his property on Lilliput Road, with two acres for building. This land is currently held in Chapter 61A and he is seeking permission for these two acres to be removed from Chapter 61A and that the land use be converted to a potential building lot. The Town has the option to purchase said land at fair market value. Mr. Howes is asking the Town to sign a notice of intent to not exercise this option so he can proceed with the sale.

Motion to waive Right of First Refusal: Olanyk Second: Coler Vote: 2-0-0

Olanyk would also like to have a discussion on Chapter 61A land at a future meeting.

C. MassDEP RDP Grant

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has awarded the Town of Ashfield Recycling Dividend funds and Small-Scale Initiative funds under the Sustainable Materials Re-

covery Program. The Town of Ashfield has earned 9 points and will receive \$2,300. The RDP Contract must be signed and returned to MassDEP to receive payment.

Motion to accept grant funding: Olanyk Second: Coler Vote: 2-0-0

D. Tighe & Bond Landfill Monitoring Contract

Tighe & Bond has prepared a proposal for FY2017 Landfill Monitoring & Corrective Action Design for the Ashfield Landfill. The landfill monitoring and corrective action design is required by MassDEP. Ms. Warren states this work is part of the Community Compact agreement and we received \$20,000 from the state to assist with the costs. Tighe & Bond has proposed to complete this work in three steps. Task One would be the post-closure landfill monitoring, Task Two would be the corrective action design and Task Three would be the wetlands permitting.

Motion to accept and sign contract: Olanyk Second: Coler Vote: 2-0-0

Coler would also like to know if there will be an annual monitoring fee for the landfill.

E. MBI Communications – Nothing to discuss at this time.

F. Broadband Financing

Katie Stoico sent an email to notify everyone that the Last Mile funds were not impacted by the recent state budget cuts. In fact, earlier this week MBI approved three Last Mile grants for town-managed expansion projects.

Town Administrator's Report

- The Auditor's are currently finishing up the audit and Ms. Warren expects to have their report in January.
- Rebecca Herzog started today as Ashfield's new Town Treasurer. She will be working 9-5 on Tuesday and Friday.
- The library trustees reviewed the bid for the library steps and they recommended Galvin & Sons who were the lowest bidders at \$15,250 with the option to clean and seal steps at \$3,200. Ms. Warren recommended they add this option and is finalizing the draft contract. The Board will see this contract at the next meeting.
- Ms. Warren recommends adding the Police Chief position as an agenda item for the next meeting. It has been recommended to post this position internally first. Ms. Warren will look to see if this can be done.
- Town Hall roof tiles need to be repaired. Ms. Quigley has offered to hire someone under her company for insurance purposes. Ms. Warren thinks this will work as long as Ms. Quigley files a disclosure form and is listed as a special municipal employee. The Attorney General's Office would like a list of name of these special municipal employees. This list will stay on file until we update it. The last list on file is from 2005.
- Consent agenda – Ms. Rodrigue has offered this format as a way to allow items that do not require discussion to have a blanket approval, so that Select Board meetings can move faster. Olanyk and Coler like to discuss everything, but that this is worth trying.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

Coler received a letter from the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EO-HED) letting the Town know that they were unable to fund the Ashfield Lake Dam Project at this time. The EOHED received 114 applications, totaling over \$285 million and thus the applicant pool was highly competitive. It is recommended that Ashfield reapply during the next grant round.

Adjourn: 9:12 pm

Motion to adjourn: *Olanyk*

Second: *Coler*

Vote: 2-0-0

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget S. Rodrigue, Town Clerk

Document List:

1. Agenda for 12-14-2016 Meeting
2. Minutes for November 28, 2016
3. Minutes for December 7, 2016
4. Mohawk's BEST Summary Report
5. Mohawk's BEST Power Point Handout
6. Mohawk's BEST Draft Operating Scenario Review
7. FY2018 Budget Meeting Schedule Proposal
8. FY2018 Budget Memo & Capital Project Request
9. Capital Improvement Program Policy
10. Capital Project Request Form
11. Draft Budget Sheets
12. Town of Ashfield Expense Report and Police Department Sample Budget
13. Mold Abatement Memo with Service Master and Walt Baenziger's Proposals
14. Application for Use of Town Common
15. Right of First Refusal for Mr. Roger Howe's Property
16. Department of Environmental Protection letter
17. Tighe & Bond Landfill Monitoring & Corrective Action Design Contract
18. Katie Stoico's email regarding Last Mile funds
19. Consent Agenda sample
20. Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development Letter