

Town of Hawley, Massachusetts
Minutes of a
Selectboard / Board of Health / Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
In Person & via Conference Call

January 17, 2023

Present: Will Cosby (via Zoom), Bob MacLean, Hussain Hamdan - Selectboard
Tinky Weisblat, Gal Friday
Virginia Gabert, Treasurer and Financial Administrator
Gary Mitchell, Chris Tirone, Georgette deFriesse,
and (via Zoom) John Sears

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Hussain Hamdan; Selectboard chair Will Cosby was participating remotely and had asked for a volunteer to run the meeting. Warrants and minutes from previous meetings were signed. Then:

1. **The board discussed interim town clerk Pamela Shrimpton's letter of resignation.** In the letter, Pam said that she would resign on February 28; she thought that would give her enough time to train her replacement. The proposed replacement, Donna Desmarais Lemoine, was not able to come to the evening's meeting but had said that she would be happy to be appointed to serve as town clerk until the May election and would take out nomination papers for the election.

Will moved that the board accept Pam's resignation effective February 28 and appoint Donna Lemoine town clerk on that date. Bob seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

2. **The group passed over the discussion with Ken Bertsch of the Hawlemont School Committee.** Ken had called to say he was under the weather and would report back soon.
3. **The board turned to the issue of DLTA (Direct Local Technical Assistance) priorities.** Tinky reminded the group that FRCOG had asked towns to identify priorities within a week and a half. Will said that he had been in touch with Lloyd Crawford and that Lloyd had set up a Google Doc so that individuals in town could sign up to be the contacts for various issues. Will added that he and Lloyd had already signed up for several issues. Will said he would share the link to the document with department heads in town. Hussain asked how the whole thing would be finalized, pointing out that the final page asked the town to identify its top three priorities. Hussain added that as far as he was concerned, the issue of ambulance service should be a major priority, that although he was happy with the current contract with the Adams Ambulance Service, Hawley and its neighbors were all underserved, and that there continued to be merit to discussion about establishing a regional paramedic service. Will suggested that Hussain take ownership of this issue in the Google Doc. Hussain asked for access to the document. Will said he would share the document with the Board and Department heads. Tinky reported that public-health nurse Meg Ryan had put in a plea for prioritizing age- and dementia-friendly issues, given Hawley's aging population.

Tinky offered to contact FRCOG and ask its staff to wait until after the next Selectboard meeting to receive Hawley's final decisions. The current deadline was January 27 and the board was scheduled to meet again on January 31. The board asked her to do this.

- 4. Discussion turned to the red plow truck, which had been in an accident a week and a half earlier.** Gary reported that as much of the truck as possible had been "unbent" after the accident and that the road crew was currently using it since snow season was in full force. Hussain inquired about the truck that had been rebuilt to serve as a backup. Gary noted that that truck had no sander. Hussain asked whether the insurance company had been informed of the accident. Virginia replied that no official claim had been filed; the truck had not had to be towed away from the scene of the accident. She added that if the town waited too long to file a claim, it would become more difficult to do, since damage to the truck could not be linked directly to the accident. The group debated the actual value of the truck. Gary said that that would be hard to estimate but added that he thought the truck was more than the value of the repair and probably worth more to the town than its appraised value. Hussain said that the insurance company needed to be contacted right away. The town needed to know the appropriate procedure and what the insurance company would like to do (ex. sending up an inspection by an adjuster, taking the truck out of service, etc.). Without knowing answers to these questions, he argued, we could be limiting our options in the future. He noted that it would also be difficult to attribute damage to a certain incident several months later. The difficulty of taking the truck out of service was raised and Hussain suggested explaining this to the insurance company. Bob said that an adjuster might come out to look at it. Hussain suggested that once the insurance company decided what it was willing to do, the town could decide whether it wanted to use the insurance offer or to pay for the repairs out of pocket. Virginia looked at the repair budget and reported that the town had \$5000 available there, which might not be enough. Hussain suggested that the group table the issue for now, find out what the insurance company was willing to do, get an estimate for repairs, and discuss the matter at its next meeting. Will asked whether the sander was damaged as well as the truck. Gary said that the sander did have some bending, adding that it was old and hard to repair due to its age. In response to a question from Will, Gary said that he didn't know how much the stainless-steel sander would cost to fix. Ultimately, Will moved that the town investigate insurance and costs and discuss the issue at its next meeting. Hussain seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

In other business, Will provided a brief update on the Sears Road Culvert project, which was currently out for bid. He noted that several companies had asked questions about the issue, and that questions were due the following day. He added that a number of people had downloaded the bid package for the project. He described some personnel changes that might lead to a slight delay in the end of the bidding period. He added that he had asked Rosalie Starvish of GZA to coordinate the project.

Hussain observed that he was concerned about one of the potential vendors, which in his opinion had not done well by the town in the past.

Tinky reported that new Hawley's state Representative, Natalie Blais, and her aide Corinne Coryat had asked to meet with the Selectmen at their February 14 meeting. Will asked Tinky to tell them that they would be welcome.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Tinky Weisblat, Gal Friday

Williams Cosby

Hussain Hamdan

Robert MacLean