

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

November 10, 2022

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

The meeting called to order at 7 p.m. Warrants and minutes from a previous meeting were signed.
Then:

1. **The Selectboard spoke with Magnus Thorsson about his driveway on Middle Road.** Will stated that no application to build a driveway had been received, and Magnus noted that since there had been a driveway (alternately a cattle path or logging road) on the property when he acquired it, he hadn't known he needed to apply. Will asked him to apply formally, and Magnus said that he had filled out the application form and would send it in. On behalf of the Conservation Commission, Lloyd said he had visited the site and issued an order asking for information and had asked for the blockage of the driveway with hay bales. He said that Magnus could request to have that order rescinded.

Magnus said that he had received an email noting that the Selectboard was going to issue a search warrant for the building inspector to look at the property and had written back to say that the inspector was welcome without the warrant. He had assumed that the building inspector would give him further instructions. Lloyd stated that he needed some basic information from Magnus, such as how he planned to manage storm-water runoff. Magnus said that work had been done on the site toward storm-water mitigation and that so far it seemed to be working.

Hussain observed that a variety of jurisdictions were involved in the driveway issue: the conservation commission, the building inspector, the road crew, and the fire department. Each had different reasons and categories for its interest. Magnus commented that he was beginning to understand that. Will added the Zoning Board of Appeals to the groups interested, in light of the question of the degree of grading for the driveway. Lloyd said he hoped all the groups could come together and come up with a common decision. Hussain reiterated that Magnus should apply for the driveway permit and request a variance if the initial permit was rejected due to existing bylaws. Lloyd said it would be helpful to know what Magnus intended to do with the property, adding that he hoped for an amicable solution. Magnus concurred and said he felt welcome in Hawley. Will asked for prompt responses and suggested that this subject come up again at the first meeting in December (December 6).

Lloyd said that he would email the rest of the conservation commission and adjourned the commission's portion of the meeting at 7:19.

2. **The group moved on to discussion of the contract with Adams Ambulance Service.** Hussain explained that Adams had approved the language he had earlier presented at the Board's request (the most recent version including pro rata language about the fee for service in case the contract was terminated early) and wanted to talk again in the spring to evaluate the status of the relationship. He added that overall he was satisfied with Adams's performance. Hussain moved, and Bob seconded, signing the contract. All were in favor, and the contract was signed. By coincidence, Hussain observed, Adams had wanted to charge Hawley pretty much the amount our town had budgeted for ambulance service at our last town meeting (which was based originally on the number Charlemont had proposed). This made the negotiation process much easier, he said.
3. **Will briefly updated those gathered on the two road projects to be put out for bid.** He noted that FRCOG had a packet to go out to bid for the King Corner grant and hoped to get it out within a few days; then the board would evaluate bids that came in. Hussain asked whether he could see what was in the bid package, and Will said he would send that information to Hussain and Bob. Will added that he hoped that the Sears Road work would begin in the summer of 2023.
4. **The board discussed the website situation.** Will noted that Rick had done great work on the website, and he expressed the hope that the website would remain useful for townspeople and outsiders. Will said that he had talked to Lark Thwing about the communications committee, and Lark had expressed a desire to step down from that committee. Will asked whether that committee should perhaps be involved in the website discussion.

Hussain noted that a decision needed to be made as to whether to adapt the website based on its current form or change it altogether and that it needed to be user friendly. He suggested sending out a survey to townspeople, perhaps via the e-news, asking people what they thought of the current structure and what they would like to see on the website.

Tinky and Will both said they liked the idea of a survey. Will asked whether people paid bills to the town via the website; Virginia said that anything of that sort was handled by a third-party vendor. Hussain stated that, from a security and liability standpoint, this arrangement was best to maintain. John Sears noted that he had worked on the website for the Sons & Daughters of Hawley, observing that at least two or three people would need to be able to make changes to the website. He suggested that in addition to sending out a survey, the Selectboard or the communications committee could look at other town's websites. He added that the town of Buckland's site had been designed by CivicPlus, an entity that specialized in town websites.

After some discussion of whether the site needed total redesigning, Georgette spoke up to say that since the only way she was able to gain access to the internet was via her cell phone, she would like to make sure that any redesign was accessible via cell phone. The board agreed.

Will brought up the question of hiring an entity to host the new site. On the question of backups, Hussain said that Rick had made extensive backups and that the current practice was to do this with physical media. Lloyd said he understood there was a one-time expense in the redesign and wondered whether there might be more. Lloyd also suggested that the town needed guidelines about what was suitable to go on the site.

Hussain suggested that the Selectboard could issue such guidelines but that different boards and committees would need some latitude.

Tinky returned to the issue of needing help to maintain the site, noting that although she did day-to-day updating of her own website, from time to time it needed professional help. Hussain suggested that Suzor IT, which had worked with the local schools, might be a company to consult and offered to contact them.

Will returned to the question of whether to involve the communications committee; Tinky suggested inviting them to the next Selectboard meeting.

Will said he would like to see three to four expressions of interest and design critiques by interested companies at the next Selectboard meeting.

5. **Will asked Gary about Phillip Towe, who had recently found full-time employment and would therefore no longer be available to the town road crew.** According to Gary, Brandon Reynolds was a possible person to hire part time. Will suggested that the board might have to go into executive session to discuss this hiring. Hussain reminded him that executive session needed to be posted and that the board needed to review people's credentials before considering hiring them. He said he felt that the position needed to be advertised, and qualified people needed an opportunity to apply and be considered. Will promised to have Tinky post a notice of executive session soon.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tinky Weisblat, Gal Friday

Williams Cosby

Hussain Hamdan

Robert MacLean