

Town of Hawley  
8 Pudding Hollow Road  
Hawley, MA 01339  
(413) 339-5518

Town of Hawley, Massachusetts  
**Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting – November 1, 2016**

Present: John Sears, Bob MacLean, Hussain Hamdan– Selectboard  
Cass Nawrocki – Administrative Assistant  
Virginia Gabert, Gary Mitchell, Rick Kean, Mike Poirier

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. **Review and signing of treasury warrant.**
2. **Review and acceptance of prior meeting minutes.** 9/27/16 & 10/18/16 reviewed and signed.
3. **Tax Classification Hearing** - Virginia and Rick are attending this hearing as representatives for the Board of Assessors; no one from the Finance Committee is present. Virginia explained that the purpose of the hearing is to establish tax levy percentages and a single or split tax rate. If there were a split tax rate in Hawley, the split would be residential/commercial/industrial. Agriculture and forestry are considered commercial properties, so if there was a split rate, with commercial being higher, farmers would have to pay more. This is one reason why the Assessors have never recommended a split rate. The overall value of town property has risen slightly to \$51,740,000, but the tax rate has not changed and is \$15.50 on the thousand. Hussain moved that Hawley approve tax levy percentages as set by the Assessors and retain a single tax rate; Bob seconded; all in favor.
4. **Software conversion.** Virginia explained that the present Assessor soft-wear is becoming obsolete. The Massachusetts Office of Information Technology, in concert with other entities, has conducted a competitive process for a replacement solution and Tyler Technologies was the successful bidder. Rick has attended the webinar on the Tyler proposal and it appears to be very data rich and to have a bandwidth which the Town Office could support. Hussain has examined the proposal from a security standpoint and is satisfied with its safety. The Assessors have agreed to proceed with the Tyler Technology conversion. Hussain moved that John as the Board Chairman, be empowered to sign for the Selectboard a Memorandum of Understanding expressing the town's interest in the Tyler conversion; Bob seconded; all voted in favor.
5. **Mohawk Trail Regional High School District bond issue; Hawlemont bond issue.** The SB agreed that the town's portion is so minor, that the 5 year schedule of repayment is fine with Hawley. Cass will communicate this to Mike Kociela, Business Manager for Mohawk Trail Regional High School District.
6. **Town equipment disposal procedure.** Gary and Bob have discussed a reserve amount for the GMC truck which is out to bid and decided on \$4000 – the truck will be sold without the plow. This reserve amount will be disseminated to interested parties and shared on the website. Cass shared with the Board the "Procedure for Sale or Disposal

of Excess Equipment Valued under \$5000” which had been adopted by the Board of Selectmen on August 21, 2007. Cass recommended that this procedure, which just recently came to light, be amended. It should reflect the new Chapter 30b ‘under \$10,000 rules’ with updated possibilities for the town to utilize, such as the town website and sites such as Craig’s List. Cass will draft a new procedure for the Board to review and discuss.

7. **Winter sand for residents – delivery by highway crew.** John stated that Ann Falwell, Chair of the Council on Aging (COA), has told him that there are some older people in town who are unable to access the town sand supply and yet need the sand for safety in the cold weather months. Would the Hawley highway crew be willing to drop sand off (but not spread) at their houses in a bucket provided by the COA? Hussain moved that the highway department do this; John seconded; all in favor. Cass will notify Ann and publicize this as needed.
8. **Any other business not reasonably anticipated prior to posting this agenda.**
  - a. **7 Pudding Hollow Road.** This structure across from the Town Office building was condemned about 10 years ago and has remained unoccupied since, falling into further disrepair. Cass will contact Glen Ayers, Health Agent at Franklin Regional Council of Governments, to get information on the town’s options and responsibilities.
  - b. **Highway Department Computer.** The Communications Committee has discussed with Gary what the highway department’s needs are, and Hussain and Cass will make the purchase.
  - c. **Green Communities Application.** The Selectboard needs to vote for the town to adopt the final Alternative Compliance Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy (FEVP) and the Energy Reduction Plan (ERP). The Point of Contact person (John Sears) will then complete the Application process online prior to the deadline of November 21<sup>st</sup>. Bob moved that the Board approve the FEVP and the ERP; Hussain seconded; all voted to approve.
  - d. **Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Training.** Mike Poirier asked for reimbursement for his EMT training and certification, which the Board authorized. He also recommended, and the Board agreed, that future EMT candidates should maintain an association with the local fire or ambulance services. Hussain stated that Mike has been very competent and is an asset to the Fire Department.
  - e. **Communication Committee’s Broadband update.** Rick distributed a Communications Committee Report and *draft* Internet Survey. Given the total project cost of \$402,000, of which Hawley’s share would be less than \$150,000 and with an operating cost of \$8140/per month, 84 users would have to pay \$104/each per month. Given the higher cost to users than originally estimated, the committee thinks it is best to get an update on resident interest and affordability through another survey. Discussion suggested that a simple very user-friendly explanation should accompany the survey to help residents know

what they would be getting for their money. Hussain will work on a draft to start and ask for suggestions and revisions from those who are less technology savvy. In other news, Fred Goldstein of Interisle, has continued to be very helpful to Hawley long after the completion of his \$5000 grant project, and Hawley would greatly benefit from his continued involvement as a subcontractor. Rick suggested that Fred get an additional payment if the funds become available. Meetings with other towns have stopped for now, partially due to 1) Massachusetts Broadband Initiative's focus on readiness and sustainability requirements (being currently worked on by the towns), 2) unexpected Middlefield Tower costs, and 3) test project postponement. Cooperation with Savoy and Charlemont remain real possibilities to help lower costs.

- f. **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grants and loans.** John, Will Cosby, and Greg Cox met with Judith Sharrow from USDA in regards to what funding might be available for expansion of the Town Office and Fire Station buildings. These applications often can be challenging and would require borrowing most of the money but can have long, 40-year payback periods at a low interest rate. The priority for the town of Hawley would likely be the renovation/expansion of the Town Office, if the Fire Station is eligible for Homeland Security or other grant funds.
  
- g. **Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) land exchange.** John reminded the Board about the 90 acre property on Middle Road in the center of Dubuque State Forest which is privately owned by eager sellers and is being pursued for purchase by DCR. Hawley objected to this action by DCR because DCR has not repaired Middle and Hunt roads, which were damaged by tropical storm Irene over five years ago. The town believes repairing the roads should be DCR's first priority. In addition, the town would lose this property's tax revenue. The town and DCR Commissioner Roy have discussed the idea of a land swap which would require a special act of the Legislature. John asked if the Board of Assessors would be willing to be on the lookout for a piece of DCR owned land that DCR could deed to the town in exchange for giving up the parcel in the forest. The appraised value of the private parcel on Middle Road is \$78,500.
  
- h. **Highway Department Bank Stabilization; Flu & Rabies Clinic / Emergency Dispensing Drill.** John stated that the Corps of Engineers permit for the stabilization of the bank along the river at the Highway Department building has been received. The project is projected to go out to bid in February or March 2017. John reported on an Emergency Dispensing Drill which he took part in Charlemont a week ago. The drill was facilitated by Greg Lewis, Public Health Emergency Preparedness Planner at FRCOG, and involved a hypothetical small pox outbreak. Drills such as these point out areas needing improvement in handling different types of emergencies.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cass Nawrocki, Administrative Assistant

Minutes accepted by Board of Selectmen:

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John Sears

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Hussain Hamdan

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Robert MacLean

Appendix A - Relevant documents:

- Town of Hawley – Procedure for Sale or Disposal of Excess Equipment Valued under \$5000 (adopted by the Board of Selectmen on August 21, 2007)
- Communications Committee Report Outline (November 1, 2016) & *Draft* Internet Survey