

**Town of Hawley, Massachusetts**  
**Minutes of a**  
**Selectboard / Board of Health / Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting**  
**in person & via Zoom**  
**April 23, 2024**

Present: Will Cosby, Hussain Hamdan, Robet MacLean – Selectboard  
Tinky Weisblat, Gal Friday; Virginia Gabert, Treasurer and Financial Administrator  
Donna Lemoine, Wayne Lemoine, Lloyd Crawford, Gary Mitchell, Chris Tirone, & Robert Sears

**The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.** Warrants and minutes from a previous meeting were signed.

1. **The group discussed the status of road work around town.** Will reported that Sears Road was almost finished; the final meeting for that project was scheduled for the following Thursday. He said the engineer would check to make sure that everything had been done according to plan. He noted that the disturbed soil would have to be dealt with and that in future the town had some obligations. In particular, the road crew would have to maintain the creek bed for some distance and to keep an eye on the stream bed, as well as to make sure the grass grew where it had been planted. As for Pudding Hollow corner, the paving that had been scheduled earlier in the day had not taken place so obviously that schedule was going to change. Will said he was unsure when that job would be completed. Lloyd expressed concern that the previous work on the roadway there had not “taken.” Hussain noted that while on Dean Desmarais’s land (inspecting a shortcut around the construction, which Dean had allowed the Fire Department to use), he had gotten a clearer picture of the problems in the road. According to Dean, the clay in the embankment above the road was continuing to liquify and travel under the surface, undermining the land it passed beneath. Hussain said he had witnessed evidence of this while on site and believed therefore that the current repairs might not last. Lloyd confirmed that there seemed to be wet clay underneath the road, although according to Hussain some drainage had been put in with the current project. The group agreed to return to the topic in future.

Will turned to King Corner. He said that the town expected GZA to produce permit-ready drawings soon so that a STRAP application could be filed. If the project turned out to be more expensive than a STRAP grant would allow (the grants were usually capped at \$1 million), the town would have to look for additional funding for the rest of the work. Lloyd said the town had several possible uses for STRAP funds, adding that he had talked to Anne Gobi, the governor’s director of rural affairs, about obtaining materials. Will turned to the Ashfield Road project, which he described as a hybrid construction endeavor. The group briefly discussed what projects might be the strongest candidates for STRAP grants. Lloyd noted that it didn’t make sense to request more funds for Ashfield Road when the town hadn’t yet spent the funds it had. King Corner also had some uncertainty. The Dugway needed a plan before funds could be looked for. The group briefly discussed the listening sessions needed for the Dugway. Hussain stressed that emergency-services personnel and the highway department should be at the listening sessions. Lloyd expressed worries that the project would take so long to come to fruition that the public would forget what people had said in the listening sessions.

The group went back and forth for a while about which projects might be best positioned for STRAP applications. Lloyd noted that if King Corner were to be finished, there could be a problem with the DER, which seemed unwilling to back a construction endeavor that would involve a shorter culvert span. The town might consider reducing the size of the plan there if funding were inadequate for the large span contemplated at the moment. The group decided that King Corner was probably the most actionable project in the short term, and Lloyd agreed to work on a STRAP grant application for that.

**2. The group turned to Green Communities' projects.** Tinky said that she had talked to a person at Green Communities, who had said that the program would not cover the windows needed for the fire station. Lloyd said that the program would cover insulation and weather stripping at the fire station and perhaps also at the highway garage.

The group took a brief break while Tinky, who had been taking notes remotely while waiting for her dog to come home, drove to join the meeting in person.

Lloyd said he would handle the Green Communities application. Hussain offered to show him around the fire station so he would understand what was needed. Hussain added knee walls to the list of drafty items there. Hussain noted that fortunately the windows were being donated by the vendor, Window World.

**3. The group turned to the equipment improvements need at the town office.** Will said he would order the needed mini-split. Hussain said he had waited to have the hot-water heater installed because the Town Clerk had proposed swapping out the sink in the bathroom as well, and he had wanted to check with the board before attempting that replacement. Tinky said that the sink the Town Clerk had wanted seemed too big; she had thought a new sink would make mopping easier but had wanted a smaller sink. Wayne, the clerk's husband, explained that she had ordered the sink she had found and was willing to donate it to the town. Will and Hussain opened the box that held the sink but discovered that it was too large for the space. They decided to forego replacing the sink. Hussain said he would ask his plumber friend to work out a way to fill a bucket directly from the water heater so that mopping would be easier.

**4. The group turned to letters of support it had been asked to sign by FRCOG, the Deerfield River Watershed Association, and the Woodlands Partnership.** Hussain, noting that the FRCOG grant initiative might lead to emergency-management funds for Hawley, moved to have Will sign the FRCOG letter, Bob seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. Hussain wondered aloud whether the town could benefit from the Woodlands Partnership's study of first responders and public safety. He said he was skeptical about the Watershed Association's application. The Town had earlier looked at the proposal to designate the Deerfield as a scenic waterway but had rejected getting behind it because of concerns about creating additional regulations in the area. Virginia observed that New England Forestry (which was working with the Woodlands Partnership) had taken advantage of Hawley in the past. The group decided to table the letters (other than the FRCOG one) and research further.

**5. Tinky gave a brief report on committee vacancies,** saying she had written to people whose terms were about to expire to ask whether they were interested in remaining on. She asked Will, to whom she had not written, whether he would stay on the Conservation Commission, and he agreed to do so. The worst situation was on the Personnel Committee. This three-person committee already had one vacancy, and Lark Thwing had told her he did not want to remain with the committee. That left it with one person. The board asked her to mention that and other vacancies in the e-news again, and she suggested that perhaps one of them (maybe Bob?) could serve on the Personnel Committee. Meanwhile, Hussain said he might be willing to fill in the spot on the Finance Committee left by Tammy Schofield's death.

**In other business,** Will mentioned that Donna, the Town Clerk, had asked for about \$700 to attend the summer town clerks' association conference. He asked whether there were available funds in the continuing-education budget for this. Virginia said that the budget could handle the expense. Hussain noted he would be willing to support this specific request because it seemed to be affordable with current funds. He expressed concern, however, that one office seemed to be using a lot of the continuing-education budget, noting that a recent conference for the Town Clerk had also been funded and remarking that there were other positions to which continuing education was also applicable.

He wondered aloud whether this were a short term issue (because the clerk was new). If it were going to be a recurring issue, the matter needed to be reviewed as part of the budgeting process. Virginia noted that she had attended a lot of conferences when she first became treasurer but agreed that Donna should ask to have more funds in the budget if she needed to continue attending multiple conferences; the budget for the following year was adding only \$500 to the funds in continuing education. Hussain moved to approve Donna's request and to ask her to provide feedback about future plans. Bob seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. Tinky was asked to inform Donna of the decision.

**Lloyd asked the group to set a date for the public hearing on the Dugway.** Hussain noted that it should take place during an evening or a weekend. The group decided on the evening of Wednesday, May 29. Hussain said he would ask the Fire Department to skip its regular meeting to come to the hearing. The group decided that it would be a good idea to offer food for townspeople at the hearing, although no details were fleshed out beyond Hussain's offer to bring a grill.

**Tinky asked about the status of the BEAD internet program.** Will said that he had written to ask whether Charter's proposal to wire Hawley had been accepted and had received no news. He stated that he thought it made sense to move on to the BEAD funding. Tinky asked about the FCC's erroneous impression that all of Hawley had broadband, even though the state maps clearly indicated that the town did not. No one knew whether the FCC would believe the state. Hussain said he was talking to Brian Foucher of WiValley to document that company's customers' levels of broadband.

**Tinky brought up Charlemont's offer to share the cost of a mower** for Hawley (which would then be shared with the other town). The question arose whether Charlemont would then own part of the mower. Hussain opined that the current arrangement (in which the two road bosses worked out equipment sharing at their discretion) should be left in place. The group decided not to respond.

**Tinky asked whether anyone was going to Greenfield soon,** hoping that that person could pick up flags for Hawley from the veterans' services office on Main Street. Hussain said he was going the next day and offered to do the pick up.

**Finally, Hussain said that Dave Norcross of Adams Ambulance had asked the Selectmen to write a letter** expressing the Town's interest in returning to the prior EMS services relationship with Adams if its license were reinstated. He read his letter to that effect, and the other board members endorsed it. A final draft was signed.

There being no other immediate business, the meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Tinky Weisblat, Gal Friday

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Williams Cosby

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Hussain Hamdan

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Robert MacLean