

**Town of Hawley, Massachusetts**  
**Minutes of a**  
**Selectboard / Board of Health / Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting**  
**in Person & via Zoom**  
**April 22, 2025**

Present: Will Cosby, Hussain Hamdan, Robert MacLean – Selectboard  
Tinky Weisblat, Gal Friday  
Virginia Gabert, Treasurer and Financial Administrator  
Chris Tirone and Robert Sears

**The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.** Warrants were signed. Then:

1. **The group signed the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. Tinky suggested that discussion of the water-testing results be put off until health agent Randy Crochier could weigh in on those results.** The board agreed but asked her to send the results to all selectmen.
2. **Will began a run down about roads and grants.** He explained that it was just about time to solicit bids for the Ashfield Road culvert replacement work. The Conservation Commission would meet on May 8; Will hoped the request for bids would be posted on May 7. A site visit for interested vendors was planned for May 20, and the deadline for questions would be May 28. Questions would be answered by June 3, and bids would be due on June 10. He hoped to nail down a bid in July and schedule work for the fall, depending on the weather.

A STRAP grant application was in the works for concept and preliminary design work for the Dugway; that was due in early June.

Will said he hoped the new computers would come in soon. Virginia said that the bill for those had been paid; she later confirmed that the check had been cashed. She added that she hoped that she could transfer all her files to the new computer; transfers had proved difficult in the past, particularly when QuickBooks had been updated. Will said that an IT meeting might be needed. Hussain volunteered to help Virginia with the QuickBooks transfer. Will said he hoped to make the transfer to the new machines by the end of the fiscal year. He observed that another grant would be needed to turn on multi-factor authentication in the new computers. Hussain noted that that authentication could cause problems for emergency services because they need their computer to work when networks and connectivity were down. The group decided to hold off on applying for a second grant and see what was needed.

In other road news, Chris Tirone of the road crew reported that Davenport Construction had begun its work at the Hawley end of Ashfield Road, originally scheduled for the following week. Hawley's road crew was sweeping streets.

Will noted that people on motorcycles seemed to be going around the gates into the State Forest. He asked whether big rocks should be placed near the gates to impede this practice. Chris said that motorcycles were relatively light and might not damage the roads too much. Hussain suggested that it was best to let the motorcycles go around the gates; if rocks were put in, the motorcyclists would still enter the state forest, but it would be harder to figure out where, which could hamper rescue efforts if an emergency arose. Will said that Luke from the DCR would like the gates opened before Memorial Day weekend, as was customary. Bob observed that the DCR would need to clear some trees out of Hunt Road before the official opening; currently that road was accessible only to motorcycles. Chris said he would look at the trees and talk to Luke. Chris added that Luke had announced that some DCR workers would be headquartered for the season at the SCA camp at Hallockville Pond to keep an eye on local trail maintenance. Hussain said that it would be helpful to have some of those people meet with the Fire Department; he said he would talk to Luke about this idea.

3. **Hussain reported on the recent winter-storm review call in which he had participated,** organized by the office of Natalie Blais. It had included representatives from towns, from MEMA, from National Grid, Natalie, and others. He explained that the consensus had been that National Grid's estimates of when power would be restored had been seriously off, and National Grid had understood this. He said he would like to move to agenda item seven, the GoNetSpeed problems. Will asked that first the group discuss training more people to use the generator so it could get to work faster in emergencies. Hussain suggested that perhaps the next meeting could start at 6 to allow time for this. He also suggested that perhaps a Wednesday meeting of the Fire Department could be held at the Town Office and include the training. Virginia reminded the group that written instructions for starting the generator would be helpful. Even if everyone trained, a long time between training and actual use of the generator could result in human error. Hussain offered to document the steps for starting the generator. Tinky suggested that the town pursue a grant for a permanent generator that came on automatically when the power was out. Will said the town had more pressing uses for any grants it found. Hussain added that the Town had used a little over two percent of its budget on the February storm and that he had been sure to mention this on the call.
4. **The group moved on to GoNetSpeed issues.** Hussain observed that the Lawless pole (and probably others) did not have the backup batteries promised when WiValley installed the system. He argued that this was important not just because people lost internet without the backup but that the problem affected telephone service since many people had switched their phone service to the network. Chris said that he was pretty sure that the West Hill pole was in the same situation. Hussain offered to draft a letter to GoNetSpeed (cc-ing Michael Baldino of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute). The others accepted his offer gratefully. Will noted that it was possible that Charter would take longer than originally planned to install broadband in Hawley; the December 2026 deadline might be for a start rather than completion of installation.
5. **Proposed changes to Chapter 90 were next on the agenda.** Will explained that the comment period was open for a proposal from the governor for changes in this funding.

Part of the payment would be based on mileage rather than population, a good proposition for Hawley. Another proposal related to a bond issue also sounded advantageous. He suggested that each of the selectmen write testimony on these bills, but also urged drafting a letter from all three to be signed at the next meeting. The others agreed.

6. **The group briefly discussed appointing a new Conservation Commission member.** When Tinky pointed out that Bob Taylor's term would be up at the next meeting, the board decided to wait until then. Meanwhile, the proposed new member, Charlie MacLean, would be invited to the next Conservation Commission meeting.

**In other business, Tinky said she had received a driveway-permit application for the McDermott property on Pudding Hollow Road.** The person wishing to install the driveway had also requested a house number. Tinky was told that the permit application went to the road boss and the fire chief; the house number would be determined by the latter.

**Tinky also described a recent dog bite.** The dog in question had not had a current rabies vaccination so the bite victim had been required to get a series of rabies shots herself. Hussain said that if necessary the Board of Health could hold a hearing on this issue. Meanwhile, Tinky was asked to let the dog's owner know that the Board of Health was aware of the incident, that he needed to quarantine the dog for 10 days, and that the dog had to be under control at all times. Hussain also asked for contact information for the victim so he could ascertain if further steps were needed from the Board of Health. Virginia noted that someone should visit the dog owner to make sure the quarantine was being observed. Chris, as dog officer, said he would do this. Tinky was asked to let the owner know that if anything happened before the next meeting, the dog would be removed from its home.

**Hussain reported on a recent meeting of local towns interested in forming a regional ambulance service,** hosted by Colrain, Charlemont, and Shelburne Falls Ambulances. Although no concrete plan had been formed, the towns had agreed in principle that a shared paramedic service was needed. The group was looking for a grant for a feasibility study and might ask for a letter of support. Will expressed his approval of such a partnership, predicting that it would result in shorter wait times for help when it was needed.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 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