

Town of Hawley, Massachusetts
Minutes of a
Selectboard / Board of Health / Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
August 25, 2026

Present: Will Cosby, Hussain Hamdan, and Robert MacLean – Selectboard
Tinky Weisblat, Gal Friday; Virginia Gabert, Treasurer and Financial Administrator
Gary Mitchell and Chris Tirone – Highway Department

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. The board approved minutes from a previous meeting and signed treasury warrants. Then:

1. **In road and grant news**, Will noted that the DCR was prepared to give the town access to its parking lot for the work at King Corner, although his DCR contact had worried that “environmental people” might have some quibbles. The board agreed to let the situation be for the moment; the Conservation Commission was okay with the project. Will explained that in two days bidders on the King Corner project were due to attend a mandatory bid conference. He added that 20 people had looked at the plan and that consultant Andrea Wood thought the town might get three to five bids from qualified firms. Gary said he hoped to attend the conference.

Will reported that he had met with VHB about the Dugway project. The company was behind schedule, but he hoped a public meeting about it could take place on October 21. VHB had discovered that in the 19th century that area of road had been designated a right of way and might not actually belong to the town. VHB was going to work with FRCOG to research the issue. The group recalled that Tedd White had stated that he owned the land under the road. Hussain noted, as he had before, that roads were right of ways and that when a town abandoned one, it generally reverted to the abutters. Will observed that ownership of the land could muddy funding questions; federal and state funds might have different requirements. He added that floodplain problems could also affect the cost of work and that Scott and Ellen Purinton’s projected sale of land to the Department of Fish and Wildlife could also make a difference. He suggested that if the townspeople and abutters came to a consensus about the project at the meeting in October, the town would have to move fast to apply for Transportation Improvement Program funds.

Will added that questions about sidewalk and shoulder requirements could muddy the waters for the Dugway project and that the state and federal governments had different requirements for those. All were in agreement that a sidewalk through the dugway (which wouldn’t continue on either side of it) made no sense. Hussain remarked that VHB had to remember that Hawley was not a city like Worcester.

Will mentioned that the DCR was trying to fast-track work on Middle Road in the State Forest and that the Conservation Commission should be receiving a Notice of Intent about this soon.

There was some discussion of a slightly different matter involving people getting water at Moody Spring. Hussain noted that the state kept pulling out the pipe at the spring in an excess of caution, and visitors kept putting it back.

Will said that bids were to be opened the following day for the Savoy Road bridge replacement. All agreed that that project must not coincide with the King Corner work to avoid traffic nightmares.

2. **The next topic was the possibility of celebrating Good Neighbor Day in late October.** Tinky said she had talked the issue over with Hussain, and the two were suggesting that in light of the many recent and upcoming neighborhood gatherings being hosted by the town, perhaps Hawley could skip Good Neighbor Day in 2026. All agreed.

In other business, the group considered the slate of election officials presented by the Town Clerk. Hussain moved to approve the slate, Bob seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

The board looked at a quotation of \$5826.12 from George Propane for replacing the heater at the Fire Station. Hussain noted that the quote was under \$10,000, meaning that it could be approved under sound business practices; the town had also received at least one other quote that had been higher. The quote was less than the sum that had been appropriated. He moved to accept the quote, Bob seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. The quote was signed, and Tinky said she would scan it right after the meeting and send it along to George Propane. The group thanked Fire Chief Greg Cox for working on the issue and asked Tinky to urge George to install the new system as soon as possible.

Will discussed the broadband roll-out by Charter/Spectrum He noted that several houses in Hawley, including some on his own family's property, were not on the official map. He said that he had emailed Nancy Clark of Charter to ask about the issue. Tinky was instructed to put out an e-newsletter asking who had NOT been contacted by Spectrum. Hussain expressed particular concern about certain roads accessed through Buckland, including Labelle Road, the Dodge Roads, and Buckland Road. Tinky was asked to check with Susan Swope about the Taylor home on Middle Road. Hussain said he would talk to a number of people. Will added that Spectrum was coming to the Town Office the following day to talk about wiring the town-owned buildings.

The group discussed what GoNetSpeed would do once Spectrum was in place. One question had to do with whether it would continue to support customers who did not migrate to Spectrum and if it did for how long. On another matter, Hussain noted that the pole on the Lawless property could be used by the Highway Department to install a radio repeater to facilitate better communications between East and West Hawley. Gary supported the idea. Will asked how many repeaters would be needed. Hussain and Gary felt that one would be adequate. Hussain opined that it would be important to find out what GNS planned to do with its electronic equipment. Some things, like the electrical run, could be repurposed for town equipment. According to the contract with GNS, which expired in 2029, the town owned the poles. It would be important to coordinate with the company. In response to a question from Will, Hussain indicated that the poles of greatest priority to the town for communications needs would be the Lawless pole and the one located at the Town Office

Tinky reported that the latest report on the old Tri-Town Landfill was unremarkable. No PFAS had shown up in any of the drinking wells although a small amount had been found in a test well, along with excess iron.

Tinky said that she had received a request from FRCOG for a floodplain contact person as new maps were forthcoming. The group agreed that she should ask Lloyd Crawford to serve in this position.

Gary reported that he had assembled the speed-feedback signs from the state. He said he would try to find the time to program them. He noted that he would like to scrap the International plow truck. The group agreed that it was time to do so. Virginia asked whether the Fire Department had any International trucks; it did not. Gary added that the town of Charlemont was getting rid of a plow truck, which might work well as a spare truck for Hawley. Will agreed that it was worth looking into; Hussain observed that a back-up truck would be useful. Gary said he would go ahead and ask about the truck, adding that he had a driver's seat for it.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tinky **Weisblat**,
Gal Friday

Hussain Hamdan

Robert MacLean