

Town of Hawley, Massachusetts
Minutes of a
Selectboard / Board of Health / Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
September 8, 2026

Present: 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 p.m. The board approved minutes from a previous meeting and signed treasury warrants. Then:

1. **Hussain suggested going straight to the agenda item about Verizon.** Tinky explained that she had received a call from a property owner who was building a house on Hunt Road. He had told her that Verizon had refused to install copper telephone wires and had informed him that it was planning to phase out copper lines in the area in the near future. Tinky had heard reports from Charlemont to this effect. Hussain explained that according to the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable, Verizon could transition from copper to fiberoptic cable if it were able to provide the cable. He explained that Verizon had been trying to get out of landlines for some time, telling a story about the company's trying to replace his grandfather's broken landline with a wireless device that would have had poor coverage at the house. After Hussain had explained this and the technician had come to the site, Verizon had repaired the line. Hussain noted that Verizon didn't have any fiber in Hawley but speculated that perhaps it could make some kind of deal with Spectrum to have its fiber used. He suggested that the owner on Hunt Road try being more forceful with Verizon but also promised to draft a letter to the state about the situation.

Tinky said that she had asked Sarah Reynolds, Charlemont's Administrator, about the changeover in that town. Sarah had sent an email saying that her town didn't like the situation but had been told that it had no choice but to transition away from copper wires. Tinky expressed concern for people who relied on their phones in snowstorms; the fiber phone lines had batteries that lasted for a while but not long enough for some storms. Hussain suggested that people needed to get generators; if they didn't have them and the power went out for eight hours in the winter, they would have additional problems beyond their phones not working. Tinky noted that not everyone could afford a generator. Hussain speculated that perhaps some grant money could be found to help with this issue. Tinky said she would reach out to FRCOG to ask about possible grants. The subject of switching to phone service through Charter briefly came up. Hussain and Bob agreed that for the moment the town would stick to Verizon phone lines.

2. **The group looked at the Spectrum quotation for internet in the town buildings.** Hussain asked Virginia what was budgeted for this. Looking at the quote, he decided that one or two items weren't necessary but noted that the cost still seemed significantly higher per month than what the town was currently paying. Virginia said that the quote was indeed higher than the current budget: \$295 per month in contrast to about \$164.

She added that some of the difference, particularly with regard to installation, could be made up out of other accounts. Hussain suggested that perhaps the town could negotiate with Spectrum. The Town Office at least had the MBI “middle mile” as an alternative as well. Virginia asked whether Spectrum had a rate for charities; Hussain affirmed that the town was nonprofit. Bob suggested that Spectrum probably had only two tiers, residential and commercial. Hussain offered to write to Michael Baldino at the Massachusetts Broadband Institute; Bob agreed this would be a good idea. Further discussion of the Spectrum pricing was deferred to the next meeting.

3. **In road and grant news**, Gary said he was hoping to pave in East Hawley soon, noting that there was some time left before snow began to fall. He said he was unsure of the timeline for the state work at Savoy Road. Hussain emphasized that it was important to get clarity and to ensure this project was not happening simultaneously with the King Corner one. Gary said he would talk to David Stokes at the DOT about this issue.
4. **The group turned to the DCR letter about the possibility of Hawley’s acquiring land behind the fire station**. Hussain observed that the letter showed little knowledge of the local situation and was unproductive. He suggested reaching out to legislators. Tinky said she could ask Casey Pease in Senator Paul Mark’s office for advice. Hussain said he would draft a letter about the matter for the next meeting. He asked Bob whether he thought the town still wanted to pursue the land; Bob and Hussain agreed it was worth pursuing.

In other business, Tinky said she had been invited to a cybersecurity exercise at FRCOG. Hussain said the exercise would not offer much help for Hawley.

Tinky asked whether the board wanted to meet with GoNetspeed to feel the company out about its intentions for Hawley after Spectrum’s arrival. Hussain suggested she write to her contacts at GNS and ask whether it planned to stop Hawley coverage in the immediate future. If so, she should ask representatives to meet with the Board (possibly by Zoom) at the following meeting. If not, she should invite the group to the board meeting on October 20 as the next two meetings already had guests scheduled.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tinky Weisblat
Gal Friday

Williams Cosby

Hussain Hamdan

Robert MacLean