Town of Hawley, Massachusetts
Minutes of a
Selectboard / Board of Health / Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting
October 20, 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
Lloyd Crawford, Metok Hughes-Levine, Helena Hughes, Liam Cregan, Alain Peteroy,
Jill Behringer, Trina Sternstein, Leslie Cooper, Ava McDermott, Ruth Gillan, and John Sears

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

1. **The board opened the three bids that had come in for winter sand.** Mitchell Materials had bid $20.55 per ton; Delta Sand and Gravel, $23.25; and Northeast Paving a.k.a. Cold River Materials, $16.25. Hussain moved to award the contract to Northeast Paving, Bob seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

2. **The group recognized Liam Cregan and Alain Peteroy** of the Franklin Land Trust, along with Helena Hughes, who owned land on East Road**.** The group explained that Helena had approached the Land Trust the previous year about putting most of her land in a conservation restriction (CR) while leaving a lot near the front so that Helena's daughter, Metok Hughes-Levine, could build a house. They explained that they hoped to retain some of the tax base for the town. Helena explained that much of her land was inaccessible because of wetlands issues. Alain said that she understood the concerns of towns like Hawley about taxable land. She pointed out that the land was currently under Chapter 61 and would continue that way. Virginia noted that conserved land could be taxable at a higher rate than Chapter 61 land but also that land was frequently kept in both programs and taxed at the lower rate. Helena said she saw the house lot for her daughter as an investment in the future.

   Tinky asked how the Selectboard would be involved in this process. Alain explained that with certain conservation restrictions they purchased, someone would have to hold the restriction. She noted that in the past towns had been asked to co-hold the restrictions; that was no longer necessary. Will asked whether the part of Hawks Brook on the property was a cold-water fishery. Liam confirmed that it was, as well as the portion of Bozrah Brook on the property. He said that the Land Trust would return in 2027 or early 2028 to ask for the signatures needed; the process was lengthy.

   Hussain discussed the plight of towns like Hawley that had a lot of state-owned land, which produced little or (in some cases) no tax income. He said he supported the Land Trust's mission in places like the Connecticut River Valley, where it had preserved farmland that might otherwise have been developed. However, places like Hawley were at a breaking point, he believed.

Conservation could be beneficial and so could financial incentives for it (like tax breaks), but he argued that the state was providing these incentives at the towns' expense. Everyone in Massachusetts could benefit from this conservation, but the towns were bearing the cost. He suggested that the Land Trust work with towns to push the state to help pay for these incentives. Alain stipulated that she was an avid supporter of PILOT reform and was following the issue closely; she agreed that land in Hawley offered benefits for the whole state. She added that the Land Trust would benefit from PILOT reform and noted that she liked the balance in this project. Will asked about the lot size being reserved for Metok. Metok explained that the minimum lot size was all that could be built on.

3. **Discussion of possible new signs for Middle Road and Pudding Hollow Road ensued**. Hussain explained that the current concept was similar to signs Bob had observed in Vermont, although the board was still struggling a bit with the wording. He noted that in general the town wanted to deter trucks from entering these narrow roads so perhaps there could be a sign that graphically indicated "no trucks," along with a second, lower sign that read "Local Deliveries Only." Leslie Cooper suggested adding "Unpaved Road Ahead." Will said the wording needed to be specific. Hussain said he envisioned the top sign as some kind of yellow diamond with a logo similar to "no smoking" signs, but with a large truck in the middle instead of a cigarette. Ava McDermott said she liked the concept. Asked whether the highway department's source could produce custom signs, Gary asserted that it did and said he would explain the new concept to the vendor. Lloyd said he hoped similar signs could be erected on other difficult roads like West Hill and Savoy. Virginia and Hussain agreed that this would help. Ruth Gillan asked whether there could be signs at certain times of year indicating that the State Forest was closed. Will explained that putting signs up and taking them down was difficult. Virginia noted that there could be a sign explaining the months in which the State Forest roads were closed. Hussain noted that such signs should be paid for by the state and could be added to a conversation with the DCR. Lloyd bemoaned the fact that many roads in the woods appeared on maps whether they were passable or not.

4. **In road and grant news**, Will reminded those present that a public meeting would be held the following evening about the Dugway and said that he hoped that the evening's guests could come; consensus was needed in order to move forward. Gary reported that the shoulder work on East Hawley Road would take place in mid-November. Will endorsed this idea, noting that the drop-off on that road could be severe.

5. **Tinky presented the revised quotation from Spectrum** for internet service at the Town Office for three years. Hussain observed that the offer seemed contradictory; in one place it said the service would cost $150 per month and in another $115. Tinky was asked to clarify this with Keith Haviland. Will tried calling Keith but didn't reach him. Meanwhile, Hussain moved to approve the service in the event that it cost $115 per month. Bob seconded, the motion, and all voted in favor.

6. **The group looked at the warrant for the upcoming state election.** Hussain moved to approve it, Bobo seconded, and all vote in favor. The warrant was signed.

7. **Hussain suggested tabling discussion of ambulance negotiations.**

8. **The group discussed final plans for the upcoming Dugway session**. Will reiterated the need for building some kind of consensus at that meeting.

9. **The group moved on to appointing an energy-facilities representative.** Will said he was prepared to serve in that capacity with help from Lloyd. There was no bylaw yet in Hawley dealing with the issue. Lloyd noted that Alison Gage of FRCOG had met with the Planning Board to work on language for a bylaw and added that he thought it was in the town's best interest to go through the state's process. He also said he would be happy to help Will in this area. Hussain expressed the view that the whole Selectboard should discuss any applications that came in; he moved to appoint Will pursuant to that condition. Bob seconded the motion, and all voted yes. Will asked Lloyd about the state model bylaws and said he (Will) would talk to Alison Gage. Lloyd suggested that Will be informed of the next Planning-Board meeting.

In other business, the group briefly returned to discussion of Spectrum. Bob said that he was frustrated with the company, which had set up an installation appointment via email and had then not shown up.

Virginia expressed concern about disaster planning. Will asked whether she was talking about training overall or training people to use the Town Office generator. She said she worried about both. Hussain suggested that since the group was hoping to discuss the land behind the Fire Station with people from the DCR at its November 5 meeting (and reminded Tinky to ask them then), and emergency people would be in attendance, that would be an ideal time for the conversation Virginia was requesting. Will noted that the town had a municipal-vulnerability plan. Virginia said that it was long and needed a summary. She added that people needed to be familiar with what to do in an emergency. Hussain noted that the MVP plan was not the operative document for an actual event; that would be the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan or CEMP. This had recently been updated in a process involving Hawley officials and MEMA. Will asked for a copy, which Hussain said he would forward.

Lloyd brought up discussions the Conservation Commission had been engaged in with the DCR about repairing roads in the State Forest. The group noted a number of areas where help was needed, including Hell's Kitchen Road, Hunt Road, and Middle Road. Will said there were six affected sites. Hussain and Lloyd stressed that Middle Road should be a priority, and Hussain asked about the wooden bridge on Hell's Kitchen Road; neither he nor Lloyd was aware of any bridge on that road.

Virginia asked when the town could expect to hear back from Davenport about the contract for King Corner. Will explained that since the low bidder, Maverick Construction, was contesting the decision to award the project to Davenport, the project was momentarily on hold while the Attorney General's office worked on the challenge. Will observed that Maverick had apparently presented other challenges in the past and said he hoped for a speedy resolution. He counseled patience.

Tinky reported that Martha Thurber and Sheryl Stanton would come to the board meeting on November 17 to talk about the school sustainability study.

Tinky brought up the need to plan both administratively and financially for changes in personnel. She noted that she would have to be on leave in April for knee surgery and hoped eventually to be replaced. Virginia said that she could envision having someone be town clerk and administrative assistant, with that person (or someone else) helping her and backing her up. She observed that she definitely needed someone else with her knowledge. Hussain agreed that redundancy would be needed if someone got sick. In the meantime, Virginia stressed that someone else should be able to sign checks in case of an emergency. Will moved to appoint Hussain as a second signatory, Bob seconded the motion. Will and Bob voted in favor; Hussain recused himself.

The group decided to ask John Sears and the Personnel Committee to begin exploring personnel options. Hussain observed that John should also be asked whether he had heard back from Town Counsel about the Personnel Policy. The group tentatively decided to begin discussing personnel on December 1.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tinky Weisblat
Gal Friday

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Williams Cosby	Hussain Hamdan	Robert MacLean