

Selectboard Meeting
Working Session 4/3/2023
Minutes

In attendance: Bill Glabach, Glenn Caffery (virtually), Katherine DiMatteo, Bill Brooks, Nan Rolstad, John Higgins, Liz Kidder, Beth Kuzdeba

Bill Glabach called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

Highway Department clothing and boot allowance: Bill Brooks explained that it has been customary for the full-time workers to get \$400-500 a person a year for clothing. Bill B looked at surrounding towns and this amount was in line with what others offered. Some towns reimburse and others just give a stipend. Boots run \$200-\$300 a person per year and this started only a few years ago. The branded clothing comes out of the highway expense budget and is not included in the clothing/boot allowance. Clothing is purchased from vendors with whom we have accounts: Tractor Supply and Greenfield Coop Supply. The boots those vendors offer are not of quality to last a year so boots are purchased in other stores, most recently AJ purchased his boots at Bootlegger's in Greenfield. Katherine asked if Bill B would ask Bootlegger's to set up an account for the town and he agreed. The reimbursement for AJ's boots will be paid if Bill B signs the approval form.

Glenn proposed that a maximum of \$500 for clothing and \$300 for boots be approved per year per person to be managed by the Highway Supervisor. There was discussion of where this is budgeted and highway expense is most logical. Katherine noted that this is a benefit and should be included in the offer letter given to highway department hires. She will check whether it needs to be included in the personnel manual. Bill G, Katherine and Glenn accepted this as highway arrangement as highway department policy.

Tree Warden Expenses: Bill B reported that the Recreation Committee has asked that the broken tree threatening the Avery Field Pavilion be removed by the town. Bill B noted that the Tree Warden budget is about spent and asked if the expense could come out of building maintenance. Bill G, Glenn and Katherine agreed that since Avery Field is town property, and the pavilion is a town building that the expense could come out of the building maintenance budget. Katherine did note that that account might be overspent if the elevator repair needs to be done before the Annual Town Meeting and the cost comes in at \$2-3,000 estimated. Bill B asked if the Tree Warden budget could increase to \$15-20,000. This will be taken up at a Finance Committee/Select Board joint meeting.

Board of Health: Beth presented the history of water testing and septic cleaning for Town Offices and Town Hall. The Town Hall septic was cleaned in 2016 and the Town Offices was cleaned in 2019. The Highway closed tank is pumped every six months and comes out of the highway budget. Water was tested at the Town Hall in January 2022 and the Town Offices have a waiver, although Beth recommends that the water be tested at the offices yearly. There was discussion of what the water is tested for. Katherine suggested we also include PFAS, Beth noted this would cost more but soon PFAS testing will be required. Beth pointed out that the septic cleaning seems to be done by different companies and that perhaps that one company would be cost-effective if they did both septic systems on the same day.

Bosley is the company the Highway Department uses for the closed tank. Beth urged the Select Board to have a schedule for testing and septic cleaning that was monitored. Bill G, Glenn and Katherine agreed to ask Municipal Assistant to get the water tested and septic systems cleaned for both buildings. A question came up about Avery Field and its septic system. No one had an answer, John Higgins had left meeting but he might be able to answer or Michele.

Glenn suggested that there needs to be a systematic look at the costs charged to all the departments and if a more centralized approach could be taken for heating, internet, testing, etc.

Bill Glabach left the meeting due to illness.

Town Caucus: Town clerk and Municipal Assistant have asked that the Caucus be set for April 18th. Katherine moved; Glenn seconded to set the Town Caucus for April 18 at 7pm at the Town Hall. Katherine-yes, Glenn-yes. Approved unanimously.

Priorities for Select Board: Katherine and Glenn discussed important tasks that need immediate attention (before July 1).

1. Simple form for staff reviews. Glenn will do and bring to be next Select Board meeting for approval.
2. Compensation strategy/policy
3. Construct the next phase of administrative functions and roles.
Note: Katherine suggested that the Select Board meet again this week to do the top three items. Wednesday at 6 pm was agreed if Bill G is available. Liz Kidder noted that when she worked as a clerk in Shelburne Falls for several boards, she worked 320 hours a year.
4. Bob Penfield follow-up. Liz and Katherine suggested that depending on how we move forward, working with the Franklin Land Trust to hold the land in conservation reserve for the town is an option; and Conservation Commission has funds for land purchases (amount unknown) Glenn stated that this discussion about next steps with Bob Penfield would be in executive session, and we should schedule when legal counsel is available.
5. Fire Department/EMS budget and personnel appointments. Scheduled to be discussed at joint Finance Committee/Select Board meeting on April 12th.
6. Technology: our systems are insecure and out of date and we have no web master
7. Appointments to committees: solicitation is difficult because there are no descriptions to be handed to those interested. Committee chairs should be tapped to write a description of their committee role and member responsibilities that can be posted.
8. Orientation of town officials: need to start planning in order to implement in July
9. Town Meeting articles
10. Green Communities: completion of the five steps to get designation.

Donna MacNichol joined the meeting.

Fire Department Personnel: Liz provided background to Donna about the current status of the Fire Department personnel. Donna suggested that Nik Adamski and Tom Raffensperger be made co-chiefs, explaining that the Select Board does not hire fire personnel, only the fire chief. Liz replied that Tom

does not want that position. Donna thought that the model we were using: Select Board, Nik as Officer in Charge and Tom as Captain of Administration, Safety and Training would not be satisfactory to our insurance company. Other arrangements were discussed with a final agreement that the best way forward would be to offer Nik a contract as Fire Chief until 6/30/2024. The contract would have his limited duties clearly spelled out, and then the Select Board would review. State law is unambiguous on Fire Departments and without a contract, we would have to give a year's notice of non-appointment. Liz will contact Stephen Foley about drafting a contract and Donna will review to bring to Select Board meeting as soon as possible for approval.

Other business for legal counsel: Donna agreed that the discussion of next steps and a proposal for Bob Penfield should be done in executive session.

Personnel Policy Manual: continued discussion with Donna on contents of policy.

Donna advised that the highway clothing and boots allowance not be in the personnel policy manual unless they were asked to return the articles when they left employment.

Glenn moved; Katherine seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 p.m. Glenn- yes. Katherine – yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Katherine DiMatteo