

TOWN OF MONSON

"A town where friendliness is more than just a word"

May 14, 2020 – Select Board Meeting

- 1) Meeting opened at 7:08 PM
- 2) Buddy Martin officially opens meeting to public comment

PUBLIC COMMENT

Selectboard approved The Quarry's Liquor License Renewal.

Rick Clawson raised the following concerns:

Update on dock installation – Per Daniel - will be done Monday

Why is the brush not cleared all the way to the Willimantic line? Daniel was not sure where the line is.

What are the Public Works hours and what are they working on? The public has a right to know. Also, the bridge and benches should be sealed.

Rick asked about the town paying workers compensation insurance for contractors. Daniel explained that if a contractor does not submit a certificate of insurance, the town has to pay the insurance on the amount that was paid. One contractor did not submit a certificate last year.

Brian Turner mentioned a green truck that is parked behind the office and said it should be moved. Daniel explained that it was donated to the fire department and they will move it.

David Bjork asked if the town attorney looked at the plow contract before it was signed, Daniel said no, it was a standard contract from another town.

PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Daniel stated that the road grading will begin next week. Eric stated that the town should be getting bids on road projects. Tyler suggested that all projects should be included in the road plan. A short discussion followed regarding planning for road projects, Eric said we may get

better pricing if more of a “package deal” was put out for contractors. Also, that planning should begin sooner rather than at the last minute. Daniel then mentioned that it’s getting harder to find contractors willing to bid on projects for Monson and that he has found that contractors generally only want to give pricing if they know they are going to get the job.

Daniel then stated that Public Works employees are being followed by residents again. Jimmy Erickson is very upset because he is supposedly being harassed by a resident. Eric Vainio stated that he followed up on the situation and the resident denied it.

SELECTBOARD REPORTS

Eric Vainio mentioned that there is a lot of debris behind the gym again and, also, that the brush and tennis court need to be cleaned up. Eric then asked if residents are allowed to dispose of tires at the dump. Daniel said that although the transfer station is not supposed to take tires, Jim will take a couple at a time as there is nowhere else to dispose of them. David Bjork stated that on two occasions he was told that he could not dispose of tires at the dump. Daniel informed him that someone had left a bunch of tires at the dump when Jim was not there.

Eric then stated that there should be some type of exhaust system downstairs in the municipal building to get rid of exhaust fumes. He suggested budgeting for the system, perhaps in the fire department budget. Daniel said that there may be money left over from the bond. He will find out.

A very short discussion ensued regarding the plan for employee performance reviews. It will be discussed more at a later date, but Daniel stated that he would like it to be a public meeting.

Eric also mentioned that the bearing on the driver side of the utility trailer is completely gone. He looked at it when there was snow on the ground, and it looked like it had been dragged. The trailer should have been inspected before being used. Dee asked who had borrowed the trailer and Daniel said that he had let Chris had borrow it. Buddy agreed that it was negligent for someone to have dragged the trailer with no bearing.

Tyler asked if there is an inventory list and Daniel said that the insurance company has a list.

Tyler asked Daniel asked if the left over cold patch can be used to fix the tennis court. Dee stated that the town would have to hire a contractor with a heater to do the curbing. Rick does not believe that the cold patch can be used, and Brian agreed that hot mix will need to be used. Daniel will look into the matter as there are rules surrounding what can and cannot be done to the tennis court.

Tyler brought up the budget process as he feels that there is not enough involvement. He suggested putting in the town report how much of people's tax bill goes to all the line items. He feels that it would allow Monson to be a leader in open government. He feels that the information should also be included in the tax bills. Daniel feels that he would be able to do that. Eric feels that comparisons from years past is also important for taxpayers to understand. He also feels that if there are large increases, taxpayers want to know what the "big ticket" items are, as well as justification for the increase. Tyler feels that the Trio reports do not provide enough information.

Buddy Martin brought up the transfer station and that he had spoken with Jim about the shut-down. Jim said that 3 people had come forward to pay for the garbage that they threw in the temporary dumpsters. Buddy stated that he is disappointed that more people did not pay. He then asked how the demo was going to be charged going forward. Daniel informed everyone that it will be .33 per cubic foot. A pick-up truck load will be \$20, and Jim will measure trailers although he does not want to.

Buddy then asked if there have been anymore problems with the Smith's animals. Daniel said he has not noticed any animals there lately and that the town attorney is aware that the town wants to file the consent.

TOWN COMMITTEE REPORTS

RECREATION COMMITTEE: Dee Adams reminded everyone that as of town meeting day, the existing Recreation Committee will be done. She will try to get the back stop done and the totes cleaned out. She stated that the only inventory that Rec. has is basketballs, uniforms, a few gloves and cleats, and some swim and lifeguard equipment. She would like to have a handicap port a potty delivered to the beach (so there will be more room in there for people to change) and no potty at the ballfield this year.

FESTIVAL COMMITTEE: Dee researched state closures and recommended to Daniel that Summer Fest be canceled as no one is sure whether or not certain vendors will be able to open. She would like to keep the fireworks scheduled as long as the contractor is comfortable with that. David Bjork asked what will happen to the money paid for fireworks if they are canceled. Dee explained that since the price is contracted, if the contractor backs out, he will have to make good on the contract. Daniel will find out how the contractor feels, and he also informed the group that the money paid for the fireworks is offset by the Burke and Durham Fund.

BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE: No report.

OLD BUSINESS

Advice from lawyer about town policy on contractor damage: Daniel explained that the town attorney is advising against adopting a new policy on contractor damage repair as it opens a potential legal risk for the town. If the town adopts the new policy, it will become exempt from the Tort Law. The attorney also advised that if the town does adopt the policy, to put a limit on how much it will spend on repairs. Tyler Adkins stated that it is already in the contracts that the contractors are liable for any damages they cause, so why change it. He said that between that attorney and MMA, it seems unanimous that the town should not adopt the policy and that the intent behind the whole discussion was simply to keep it fair to everyone. Daniel stated that it had been standard practice for a long time for the town to repair damages. The consensus was that contractors will be liable for any damage they cause.

Road Plan Update: Daniel told everyone that as he was working on the road plan this afternoon, the program had an error and shut down. He reached out to the person who wrote the program to see if all the information was lost. The person replied to his email that the information was not lost but Daniel got the email too late to finish the plan. He will finish it and email it to the selectboard as well as have it available at the next budget meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Town Meeting Date: Daniel stated that the town meeting date is set for June 11. Currently only groups of 10 people are allowed but as of June 1, it will be 50 people. Buddy suggested letting the first 50 people into the meeting and making alternative arrangements for any additional attendees. Eric does not feel that 50 people will attend. Tyler suggested setting up for 50 people and having a video screen set up in another space such as the library or the Moore Building. Daniel mentioned the possibility of having more poll workers to tally votes at the alternative location if needed.

Opening of Town Office Timeline/Moving Forward: Daniel stated that on the National front, there is lots of debate going on at the federal level regarding relief for states and towns. Nothing has been passed yet, but he is keeping track of Covid related expenses. On the state level, rural counties are beginning to open at a faster rate than other counties. June 13 is the new deadline for renewing expired vehicle registrations. Jim is now working back at the transfer station and accepting money. Office staff will be working staggered hours on the days that the office is open, Marti in the mornings and Daniel in the afternoons. Plexiglass will be installed soon, and customers will be allowed into the office one at a time. Roberta will not be coming back to work yet, and additional decisions will be made on June 1 regarding how to continue to move forward.

Brian Turner wanted to mention that although there has been lots of complaining that the docks are not yet in, he wondered if anyone had noticed what a good job the Public Works crew did cleaning up the mess from downed tree limbs after the last storm. He noted that surrounding towns, as well as the state, have not yet cleaned up their mess and he's glad that the mess and dangerous trees were cleaned up before the docks were installed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.