

# TOWN OF MONSON

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

## **April 11, 2019 – Select Board Meeting**

Present select board members: Buddy Martin, Eric Vainio, Tyler Adkins Town Manager, Daniel Swain.

Townspople – John Adkins, Jan Martin, Theresa Hill, Dee Adams, Jim Greenleaf, David Bjork, Bobbi Crockett, Brian Turner, Andy Stirling, Ricky Clawson, Bruce Thomas, Nelinda Huettner

- 1) Meeting opened at 6:00 PM
- 2) Select board reviews warrants and unapproved meeting minutes.
- 3) Buddy Martin officially opens meeting to public comment

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Daniel Swain informed the select board that Rebekah Anderson needed her liquor license renewed. The board signed the application.

David Bjork asked about the cost for the potential Mayo tax. He stated that other towns had added it into their budgets just in case the tax was implemented. Buddy Martin said that it was too late to add it into the budget, also that no one is sure of the amount or if it will even happen.

David then asked about Blanchard people tapping Monson trees. Daniel stated that no one else had asked permission. Buddy asked if David had wanted to tap the trees and he said no. No one else minded that the trees were being tapped.

David then asked about Libra buying sand from the town. He stated that he had asked Eric Vainio a couple of years ago about buying 1 – 2 yards of sand and was told no. Daniel explained that there has been a lot of swapping going on between Libra and the town and that he had considered the use of the sand a trade, however, Lucas did not want any hard feelings so he offered to pay for the sand. Brian Turner stated that many towns sell their sand or trade for it.

### **TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Daniel explained that he is making a new plan for board meeting agendas. He stated that he plans on explaining a lot of the smaller matters in a report rather than bog down the board meetings.

## **TOWN COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Recreation Committee** – Dee Adams informed everyone that there were not enough kids in each age group for baseball or softball teams but that they would offer clinics so the kids can continue to work on their skills. David Bjork asked about sprucing up the tennis court and Dee said they will consider doing some fundraising.

**Festival Committee** – Dee stated that the committee is preparing for Summer Fest and is looking for events and volunteers.

**Bicentennial Committee** – No report.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Smith Animal Issue** – Daniel informed the group of the accident earlier today involving the Smith's sheep. 6 were killed after being hit by a car. The Sheriff and Animal Control were called and several of the sheep had to be destroyed. The Smiths were issued 6 summons', one for each of the sheep. The town will also file a petition with the court to take the sheep or force the Smiths to take them to auction. If they are auctioned, the Smiths will have to reimburse the town for related expenses and can keep any remaining money. Daniel also spoke to the Humane Society and there is currently an open investigation for animal cruelty. Buddy Martin asked what will happen if the town takes the animals and Daniel said the town could have the animals destroyed or send them to auction. If the town sends them to action the same money rules apply. The consensus was to proceed with the court action. Buddy then informed everyone that the Planning Board is working on revising the animal ordinance so that the town can enforce the rules. Currently there is no language in the ordinance regarding enforcement.

**2019 Tax Commitment** - Daniel explained that the budget was written up for 18 months but that the school budget had been overlooked and was only written for 12 months. The amount should have been \$813,000. Buddy confirmed that once we get to the new fiscal year schedule everything will level off. Buddy then assured the group that the mill rate will go back down next year. Daniel is looking into pricing to mail a separate letter to all tax payers explaining the tax bill situation. Buddy also noted that this change will benefit the town in the future.

**Update on Mayo merger with Northern Lights:** Daniel stated that yesterday Marie Viennue sent word that the legislature passed a bill requiring all towns to hold a special town meeting to vote on the merger. Bobbi Crockett stated that, per Paul Davis, they will be looking for the percentage of all towns, for and against. If the vote fails, the legislature will do nothing and it will be up to the hospitals to figure out how to change the language in the charter so they can move forward with the merger. Bobbi then informed everyone that Gerald Nessman is drafting a letter to put in the newspaper explaining the other side of the debate. Buddy expressed

concern that a lot of people would show up to vote on the matter at the special town meeting but that many of them may not be fully informed. Bobbi mentioned that perhaps Gerald Nessman would be willing to come to the meeting to answer questions. Daniel then proposed having the meeting on April 25 in order to allow enough time to post the warrant. He also would like to add the updated revenues to the warrant to be voted on as well. Buddy Martin motioned to hold a special town meeting on 4/25/19 to vote on the HAD merger with Northern Lights Healthcare and update the revenues to lower taxes. Eric Vainio seconded.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Board meeting start time has been changed to 6:00 so whereas the RFP for the Snow Plow Bid stated that the bids would be opened at 7:00 pm, this portion of the agenda will be addressed at 7:00.**

**Road Advisory Group:** Daniel suggested starting a Road Advisory Group to discuss and decide what needs to be done with the roads. They will not be an official town committee, but it would allow citizens to come and talk about their road concerns. The final decision on what to do will be left up to the road commissioner and selectboard.

**Bond Process:** Daniel explained that the next step is to consult with a bond attorney to begin the process. He suggested using the same attorney that was used last time. Everyone agreed.

## **ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

Daniel then presented the draft audit. He stated last year the unassigned fund balances were and had increased to \$203,000 this year. He explained that this money is surplus and can be used to lower taxes or be used for emergencies. He also noted that a town the size of Monson should have about 3 – 6 months of reserve money and this amount is about 4 months worth. He feels that although the surplus amount could be more, the town is in pretty good financial shape. Daniel stated that the auditors would like the draft signed and returned as soon as possible. Eric Vainio confirmed that there were no issues. Buddy Martin motioned to accept the draft as written, seconded by Tyler Adkins.

Tyler Adkins brought up the energy use in town. He has looked over the electric bills and feels that there are opportunities for savings. He feels that CMP rates are high, and that solar power has come a long way. Daniel informed the group that the town spends about \$7,500 per year on street lights. Tyler stated that if the town implemented the solar option, the cost recovery time would be about 2 – 3 years. He also mentioned that LED lights will last longer and cost less. Jim Greenleaf then questioned why the town has so many street lights. He feels that there should only be street lights on the main street. Buddy Martin agreed. Tyler suggested having a

future conversation about how many street lights the town has and where they should be located. David Bjork, on behalf of his mother, stated that she likes the street light outside her house and would be uncomfortable if it was not there.

Tyler then brought up the subject of connectivity, i.e. cell towers and public Wi-Fi. He suggested perhaps partnering with others to figure out a good solution for Monson. Jim Greenleaf suggested making it part of the cable contract to provide public Wi-Fi.

**Opening of Snow Plow Bids:** At 7:00 pm the snow plow bids were opened. Tyler Adkins opened Dean Rideout's bid and stated that Rideout proposed \$4,874.90 per mile for 2019 – 2020, \$5,167.39 for 2020 – 2021 and \$5,477.43 for 2021 – 2022, for a total of \$426,791 for three years. Eric Vainio opened the bid submitted by Roderick Bjork. Bjork proposed \$105,000 for 2019 – 2020, \$107,000 for 2020 – 2021 and \$109,000 for 2021 – 2022, for a total of \$321,000 for three years. Buddy Martin then asked if anyone in the group knows Roderick Bjork. David Bjork stated that Roderick is his cousin and he has been in the logging business for a long time. David then suggested calling around to get references on the two bidders. The selectboard agreed and the decision will be put off until the next board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

