

# TOWN OF MONSON

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

## July 23, 2020 – Select Board Meeting

**Present** – Buddy Martin, Eric Vainio, Tyler Adkins, Daniel Swain, Bobbie Crockett, Brian Turner, Ricky Clawson, Dee Adams, Joy Bueschen

- 1) Meeting opened at 7:00 PM
- 2) Selectboard approves prior meeting minutes and signs warrants
- 3) Buddy Martin officially opens meeting to public comment

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Joy Bueschen stated that the Community Entrepreneur Pilot Program Team has been meeting regularly. They are focusing on GIS mapping so properties can be viewed and information gathered. On August 12, the consultant will be coming to Monson for a tour. Eric asked if any re-zoning will be needed for potential new businesses and Joy explained that Monson does not have a lot of regulations to begin with so the zoning should be ok. Daniel then noted that GIS Mapping will be taking the tax maps and digitizing them so they will be more accurate and will provide more information. Daniel asked the selectboard to vote to authorize him to sign a contract with the mapping agency. Buddy Martin motioned to authorize Daniel to sign the contract with Special Alternatives, seconded by Tyler Adkins.

Bobbie Crockett then noted that the new community sign has been installed and someone will need to be responsible for taking the letters down. She also stated that she has contact information for Eric and Tyler but that she does not have any info for Buddy. Buddy gave her his cell phone number.

Bobbie then asked when the prayer should have been said at the Town Meeting. Buddy stated that he had planned on saying a prayer before the meeting reconvened at 6:30 but that he had forgotten.

Daniel mentioned some concerns of the residents on Degestrom Rd regarding the lack of attention paid to the road by Public Works. He stated that he checked on the road today and did see a tree in the ditch but other than that the road appears to be in good shape. Brian Turner stated that the road has been like that for a long time and that it should be resurfaced as should all the gravel roads. It was determined that the road will be added to the road plan and that Public Works will be more diligent about checking the road after storms and cleaning up downed trees.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED**

## **TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Joy stated that there will be a fundraiser for the Fire Department on August 22 at Turning Page Farm. The public will have the opportunity to see the new rescue truck.

Daniel stated that the winter sand and salt are here, and that Chris has been mixing them. He also noted that the Fire Department used their new rescue boat for an emergency call on Onawa.

## **SELECTBOARD REPORTS**

Tyler mentioned that although the town is not legally obligated to post the selectboard meeting agenda, it should be done. The townspeople depend on the town officials to keep them informed of the topics that will be discussed. Tyler suggested that the agenda be posted on Facebook 3 days before the meeting and that if there are any changes that need to be made, they can be made as needed. All agreed.

Tyler then stated that the meetings should be more like board meetings and have less general discussion. The emphasis of the selectboard meetings should be on matters that the selectboard needs to discuss and approve. Tyler was surprised to see a road topic on the agenda without having an update to the road plan.

Daniel stated that he has not worked on the road plan because he has had to prioritize some other projects. Tyler then asked about the summer list for road work. In the fall/winter, it was discussed that there would be budgeting for summer road work. Daniel stated that this was not done.

Tyler asked about the WiFi and the clock repair, Axiom was paid back in December. Daniel informed him that Axiom has rescheduled the install several times and that he asked them about the possibility of sending someone else. Marti will ask Ed when he might be able to repair the clock.

Eric Vainio stated that he has reservations about appointing Daniel Deputy Code Enforcement Officer. He also noted that the sewage mess is still in the basement at the gym.

## **TOWN COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**FESTIVAL COMMITTEE:** Dee noted that the fireworks on July 18<sup>th</sup> were successful. A rock had to be moved so the technicians could get onto the field because she forgot to ask Chris to move it. Dee then stated that she had spoken to Chris and apologized for believing that he was not doing his job. Chris informed her that he had not been aware of some of the things that people were requesting to have done, specifically the back stop at the field. Dee expressed concern that she had been lied to, either by Daniel or by Chris. Bobbie said that she has also apologized to Chris. Eric noted that he has heard the same thing and feels that there is a communication issue.

Ricky Clawson asked Daniel if he has mentioned the dock at the beach to Chris. Daniel stated that he does not withhold anything from Chris and that he has told him about everything that needs to be done.

Buddy Martin stated that no citizen should be asking any town employee to do anything. All requests should go through the Town Manager. Dee said that she did not ask Chris to do anything as a citizen but as a Recreation Committee member.

**BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE:** Daniel stated that the committee will be meeting next month.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Dangerous Buildings Enforcement Update:** Daniel stated that Ed Lyons, owner of 31 Water St., Ed was not home when the papers were to be served. Daniel informed the attorney and was told that there are 3 options. The town can give the attorney Ed's information and he can try to find him, they can obtain a statement from the processor stating that they can not serve the notice or publish a notice in the newspaper once per week for 3 weeks. Daniel suggested asking the attorney to find Ed's address and to also publish the notice in the newspaper. He stated that the process will have to be started now because the public hearing is scheduled for August 13. Everyone agreed with Daniel's suggestion. Daniel will proceed.

**Mil Rate Adjustment:** Daniel explained that the mil rates in Trio for the homestead exemption were outdated so he was able to adjust the mil rate from 7.7 to 7.5. The town will now have overlay of \$31,000. Buddy Martin motioned to accept the adjusted mil rate, seconded by Tyler Adkins.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Public Hearing for Turning Page Farm CBD Grant:** Daniel stated that Turning Page Farm has been awarded a CDB Grant to install restrooms and a wood boiler at their facility and that the town will need to hold a public hearing to discuss the grant. Buddy asked if Turning Page has to match the funds received from the grant and Daniel said no, they do not. Buddy motioned to

hold a public hearing to discuss the grant on August 13, seconded by Eric Vainio. It was decided the hearing will be held at 6:00 and the dangerous building hearing will be at 6:30.

**Elliotsville Road Shim Coat:** Daniel presented a petition signed by 69 residents of Monson and Elliotsville asking for something to be done about the condition of the Elliotsville Road. They are concerned that the road won't last through the winter. Daniel explained that the town currently has \$75,000 set aside for road work this year. Due to the condition of the road, he suggested using the money to apply a shim coat. He received a quote from B&B Paving for \$90,000 to do the whole road (2.75 miles). The pricing could change depending on the thickness of the shim coat. Daniel noted that while this option would alleviate the resident's concerns, it would use up all the road money.

Eric asked if the plow would damage the shim coat and Buddy stated that it did not damage the Steward Road. Buddy then asked Daniel what this work will do to the road plan. Daniel explained that it will move everything forward by 1 year.

Ricky asked if any ditching needs to be done to the road, stating that the town will be throwing money away if the prep work is not done. Daniel said that the shim coat will not be applied until the fall so there will be time to do the prep work. Buddy then noted that the road is not stable in a lot of places. Daniel informed him that where the base is gone, the town has material that can be put down and also the culverts on the first part of the road are in terrible shape but the portion of the road that need work mostly needs ditching.

Ricky mentioned that Phil Curtis from Maine Local Roads would be willing to come to town for free to advise on the road.

Buddy stated that while he has empathy for the residents, he is not willing to throw away money if the prep work can't be done.

Tyler expressed concern that 1 month after the Town Meeting the Public Works budget is being thrown away when the town was aware of the condition of the Elliotsville Road. Eric noted that last summer work was done on roads that were in much better shape than the Elliotsville Road and that the Elliotsville Road should have been done first.

Tyler then reiterated that the town should not have to be responding to complaints but should have a plan in place to address road issues before they become a big concern. He is not in favor of doing any road work until the road plan is done and feels that the plan should be a top priority.

Brian Turner mentioned that everyone seems to be pointing fingers at Daniel, but the Elliotsville Road has been bad for many years. He stated that when he worked for the town, 15

years ago, he had told the selectboard at the time that the road needed work but the selectboard did not want to spend the money and now it's too late. Tyler explained that the current selectboard and manager is here now to pick up the pieces and that responding to petitions and not having a plan is not the right approach. Eric feels that the safety issues with the road need to be addressed as there are some soft spots. Buddy noted that the selectboard still needs to respond to the petition. Eric feels that the ditching and culverts would be a good start. Tyler agreed. The consensus was to address the safety issues on the road but not apply the shim coat.

Brian Turner informed the selectboard that he found someone who has a wood chipper with rubber tracks that is willing to do roadside mowing and chipping. The person is looking for long term work. Buddy noted that this does not help the bidding process because there are no other contractors to bid on the work.

Daniel stated that he will continue to work on the road plan and informed the group that Steve Vainio will be hired to help Chris. Steve is in the process of getting his CDL.

**Town Manager Evaluation:** Tyler noted that he would like to see changes in the formatting for the evaluation form and that there are not a lot of differences in the ratings from the town manager and the selectboard. Tyler stated that he has a lot of concerns and would like to see improvement in Daniel's job performance, such as follow through. He does not feel as though he has seen a lot of improvements.

Daniel then responded to the selectboard's comments on the evaluation.

Section 1: Daniel feels as though he works well with the town employees., Daniel explained that he had no previous experience with public works and has had a lot to learn. He feels that he works well with Chris. Daniel also stated that his management style is to not manage or get involved unless he has to. His style is to have a "hands off" approach, however, he feels that he is more involved with the office staff because he works in the office.

Section 2: Daniel feels that he has good ethics and that he has always promoted efficiency. He also noted that he always tries to own up to his mistakes.

Section 3: Daniel stated that he usually handles criticism well but has a harder time handling the criticism in Monson because the number of people who complain is small and many times he feels as though the complaints are not valid and therefore he sometimes loses his temper. Daniel noted that he is aware of this problem and is working on doing better, but overall, he feels that he works well with the citizens. He also explained that he is shy and doesn't like to meet people but feels that he is doing better at getting to know more people.

Section 4: Daniel stated that he does do research on the topics to be discussed at meetings but sometimes he is not prepared to answer questions that he is asked. He also noted that he needs to do a better job of publishing documents.

Section 5: Daniel noted that he has applied for grants and had the revaluation of the town done but that he sometimes does not follow through with tasks. He stated that he has been doing a lot of work on the Carl Vainio estate and speaks to Carl's daughter on a weekly basis about potential opportunities for the town regarding Carl's property. Daniel would also like to re-vitalize the old train depot.

Section 6: Daniel feels that budgeting is his strong suit and noted that he was proud of the 2020 budget that he wrote and felt bad that it was essentially "ripped to shreds". He explained that he does follow the budget and that he does not need to obtain permission to spend the money as long as the spending stays within the budget. He also noted that many people do not understand the role of a town manager. The law gives a town manager a lot of authority and it is not the job of the selectboard to micromanage. Daniel then noted that the first year, he was told that he did a great job on the budget. The second year he was told that the budget process went to fast and this year he is being told that there was not enough time. This is an example of how difficult it can be to gauge how to respond to issues or items for the town manager

Tyler then asked Daniel if he still wants the job because various issues have been brought up repeatedly. He feels that if Daniel cared about his job, he would pay more attention to things like typos and work harder at improving his job performance. He stated that Daniel needs to show more progress and take the lead. Daniel said that things will change.

Eric then stated that Daniel's "hands off" management style needs to be more "hands on". As road commissioner, Daniel needs to learn more. Better communication and follow up is also needed and improvements need to be made on conflict resolution. Eric mentioned that MMA offers classes and that people would like to see action – not just words.

Buddy Martin stated that doing the evaluation is hard for him because he is not around much. He believes Daniel has potential to improve but sees that he is made progress. Buddy noted that when dealing with people, Daniel needs to take their concerns to heart and try to make things more efficient and workable.

In response to Eric's comments Daniel responded by saying that he feels that he is too often micromanaged. He noted that his last evaluation stated that he did not know what he is doing as Town Manager. He has never worked for a harder boss and many of his hard feelings stem from selectboard meetings. He feels that residents should not follow town employees and be conniving and that is why he sometimes loses his temper. He also stated that he must prioritize

things as unexpected things come up sometimes such as the Turning Page Farm grant and filling in for the Town Clerk on election day. Tyler reiterated that Daniel needs to keep things moving forward. The select board signed the evaluation.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm