

# TOWN OF MONSON

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

## **August 12, 2021 – Select Board Meeting**

**Present** –Tyler Adkins, Eric Vainio, Sue Chase, Daniel Swain, John Moore, Brian Turner, Jim Paine, Mike Witham, Sandra Hardy, Nancy Cassella, Annalee Libby, Richard Allard, Rick Clawson

- 1) Meeting opened at 6:00 PM
- 2) Selectboard approves prior meeting minutes and signs warrants
- 3) Tyler Adkins officially opens meeting to public comment

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Tyler noted that at the last meeting Sue mentioned that she needs to be replaced as Appeals Board Member and it was not put in the notes.

Rick Clawson stated that the ditching work done on the roads should have cost \$20,000 and questioned why the town paid \$83,000. He also wondered why the Willimantic Road was not paved all the way to the town line. He feels that a lot of money is being wasted and that the work is not being done properly. He noted that the selectboard should consider finding a new town manager.

Richard Allard asked when the ditching on the Steward Road will be fixed. He noted that the ditches were never seeded and are beginning to wash out. He also noted that rocks were left in the ditches and the contractor used a track machine on the road rather than a machine with rubber tires. He feels that nobody is paying attention to the work being done and agreed with Rick that that a lot of money is being wasted.

Mike Witham noted that the town is in violation of the sign ordinance with the community sign. Libra is also in violation with their sign.

John Moore stated that he has been waiting for over a year for an answer about where 6 months of money went from the 1 ½ year tax bill. Tyler encouraged John to come to the office and talk to Daniel about it.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED**

## **TOWN MANGER REPORT**

Daniel provided updates on the following:

Public Works: Steve has begun to work on the roadside mowing and has also resumed the gravel work on the Degerstrom Road. Rod Bjork owns a grader and is willing to grade the Bjork Road but is unable to grade any of the other roads in town. He will use the town's rock rake. Allstate is working on the chip seal.

Fire Department: The repeater on the communication tower has stopped working so the tower is no longer operational but is being worked on.

Solid Waste: The demo tonnage was double last month but the MSW was lower.

Daniel and Sue have finished the draft of the new bylaws. Eric would like the attorney to look at the draft before it is signed.

Peter Rioux took the town clock to his shop to fix it. He will return and install it in a ASAP, could be early as next week.

Daniel spoke to Vaughn Woodruff about early buyout of the solar panels and Vaughn is open to the idea. It will cost approximately \$57,000 to buy the panels now.

Daniel is now looking outside the local area for contractors to build the ADA ramp and fix the doors at the gym. He has not had any response so far. He also reached out to four fence companies regarding the damaged fence at the transfer station. One company responded and will be submitting a quote.

Tax liens will be filed on Tuesday, the auditors have scheduled an in-person audit in November and the commitment is still on track to be done by August 30, 2021.

## **SELECTBOARD REPORT**

Sue Chase suggested doing a re-cap before adjourning the meetings to set priorities and go over who will be doing what for the next meeting.

Eric Vainio expressed the following concerns:

It is hard to see up the road when pulling out of Hebron St. so Eric suggested possibly making it a one-way street and having all traffic pull out of Pleasant St. Daniel feels that this would create a bottleneck on Pleasant St. and noted that he will order mirrors for the poles so drivers will be

better able to see traffic coming. Tyler suggested putting no parking signs close to the corners of both intersections.

The chip seal was not done all the way to the town line on Willimantic Road. Daniel said that the signs were not out, so the pavers did not know where the line was.

The flashing speed sign is still not working. Daniel reset it today and it did not fix the issue.

The yield signs at the ends of the North Guilford and Willimantic roads need to be trimmed out.

There is a lot of speeding and erratic driving going on in town. Daniel spoke to the sheriff's office, and they will try to increase their focus on speeding in Monson.

The bridge on the Elliotsville Road is now posted for 22 tons. The chip seal trucks were on the bridge today and they weigh more than 22 tons. Daniel noted that the grant program will likely pay for the bridge to be upgraded.

Does the brook on the Steward Road need a guardrail? Daniel will find out.

A few years ago, there was discussion about paving the roads at the hillside cemetery. This still needs to be done.

The road salt was delivered late, and the sand was put in the shed without being properly mixed. Now it will take more time to re-do it. Daniel stated that there had been left over salt and sand and they were mixed and put in the shed.

Eric then noted that a woman from Shirley picked up a stray dog and brought it to the town office because she could not bring it home and didn't know what to do with it. The woman posted on Facebook that she was treated rudely by Daniel and stated that he told her she should not have picked up the dog if she couldn't take care of it. Daniel replied that it was late in the day, and he had things to do and wasn't feeling well. Eric expressed concern about Daniel treating people rudely.

Tyler asked Daniel if he has been working with Bob to get the issues with the town wifi fixed. Daniel stated that he has worked with Bob to get the speed updated. Tyler also noted that there appeared to be an issue with the paving prior to the chip seal. He feels that the pavement looks wavy. Daniel stated that if there is a problem with the paving, he will contact Doug Fowler

Eric mentioned that in looking back at previous meeting minutes, it appears that many items keep coming up multiple times. He feels that it would be a good idea to set timelines and priorities and to keep these items on the agenda for discussion.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**FESTIVAL COMMITTEE:** No report.

**BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE:** The committee met today and is finalizing the logo and schedule of activities for each month. A curator for an art exhibit was hired and Daniel requested permission from the selectboard to sign the contract. The selectboard reviewed the contract, Tyler Adkins motioned to allow Daniel to sign the contract, seconded by Sue Chase. Eric stated that he would like to see the report with the budget item, Daniel said that it is not in the budget.

**BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE:** The dog waste bin is now in place behind the post office, the committee would like to make the pump station at the boat landing look nicer, some of the flags need attention and the committee is working on ideas for winter beautification projects.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Summary of Steward Road ATV Meeting:** Daniel re-capped the meeting with residents regarding ATV use on the Steward Road. He also received about 10 emails from residents and the main concerns were the width of the road, children, and alcohol use. He also noted that no insurance is required for ATVs and the sheriff's office can only enforce speed posted on the speed limit signs. He recommended to not open the road to ATVs.

Eric stated that he also spoke to many residents on the road, and most were not in favor of ATV use on the road. The main reason given was that they do not want the noise. Sue has looked at other town's policies and discussions and feels that the state may release guidelines on the matter. She feels that guidelines are needed. Tyler is uncomfortable opening roads to ATVs one at a time and also feels that guidelines are needed and that it is important to consider the feelings of the residents. Based on feedback from the community, it was decided to not open the Steward Road to ATVs.

**Comprehensive Plan Process Update:** Daniel sent a draft of the comprehensive plan to the consultant. There is more work to do, and he will work on it more and re-send. The public meetings will be held when the final draft is done.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Ed Hoovler – Appeals Board Appointment:** Sue Chase motioned to appoint Ed Hoovler to the Board of Appeals, seconded by Tyler Adkins. The selectboard signed the appointment. The selectboard also signed the county tax papers. Daniel noted that the tax increased by 20%. He will try to find out why.

**Early Buyout of Solar Panels:** Daniel spoke to Vaughn Woodruff who owns the solar panels. It would cost the town approximately \$57,000 to buy the panels at this time. The town would also be responsible for maintaining the panels however, they are still fairly new and shouldn't require much maintenance at this time. Daniel feels that this would be a good lease opportunity and if the town decides to move forward with the buyout, he will get lease figures from the bank.

Tyler explained that the panels have a 20 – 30 year life span and produce less power as they get older (about ½% per year). The payback period would be about 12 years. He feels that now would be a good time to buy the panels because the town will be receiving \$65,000 in stimulus money. Eric would like to compare the estimate to the cost of the electricity since the panels were installed. Daniel noted that these numbers look bad on paper but in December of every year the costs will be reconciled. After a brief discussion about possible uses for the stimulus money, Daniel reminded everyone that \$50,000 has already been promised to the Premium Choice Grant which is why he is suggesting a lease.

Brian Turner noted that there is a spot at the transfer station where the pavement was mixed that would be a good spot to store extra salt and sand. The town has a good quality tarp that could be used which would be better than covering it with plastic. Brian also noted that the sign ordinance was brought up again at tonight's meeting and he reiterated that the town has not done anything wrong by installing the community events sign.

Eric Vainio stated that he would like to have an executive session on the next agenda to discuss concerns that come up with the town manager. Daniel stated that any discussion about his job performance can be done in public.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.