

# TOWN OF MONSON

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

## **April 14, 2022 – Select Board Meeting**

**Present** –Tyler Adkins, Sue Chase, Marti Gagnon, Jade Grenier, Joy Bueschen, Sandra Hardy, John Wentworth, Richard Allard, Rick Clawson, Bobby Crockett, John Moore

ZOOM-

- 1) Meeting opened at 6:10 PM
- 2) Selectboard approves prior meeting minutes and signs warrants

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Rick Clawson asked for updates on the following:

Breach of contract/non-compliance of the snow plow contractor. Tyler explained that this is an active discussion with the lawyer. Rick was concerned that the town is letting the contractor plow with unregistered and uninspected vehicles. Tyler clarified this is a less than optimal situation, roads need to be plowed and there isn't a backup plow contractor.

Repairs on the Public Works truck (Transmission/4WD) - Marti verified that these were fixed.

Audit – Marti stated RHR Smith has provided some training thus far and have enough information to begin the audit. Marti will work on getting them the rest of the information they need.

Flashing Speed Sign - and where the sign came from originally. Marti explained that we were informed that the likely issue with the sign is dead batteries. New batteries will cost \$800.00 so she has not purchased them yet.

Richard expressed concern about a previous discussion regarding sealed bids being opened before the Selectboard meeting and feels they should be handed in in person to the selectboard. Marti explained bids may be dropped off or mailed and would be opened in the meeting, not before. Rick mentioned that the previous Town Manager wanted to pre-open the bids. Marti explained that the prior Town Manager felt it would save time at the meetings if he were to open the bids ahead of time and prepare a recommendation, but this was not agreed upon or put into action.

Richard mentioned that the curve sign on the Willimantic Road (between town line and next driveway) is down in the ditch. Richard then expressed concern about FOAA requests he submitted regarding the roadside mowing contract, which cannot be found. Marti explained that there is a contract for the mowing work that Steve will be doing but she has not been able to find it and Steve does not have his copy either. Everyone agreed that it is unacceptable to not have copies of contracts. A new contract will be written, and electronic copies will also be retained.

## **SELECTBOARD REPORTS**

Sue attended a Webinar by MDOT and explained the Village Partnership Initiative to everyone. MDOT will conduct a site visit to meet with the town, discuss issues, and make recommendations as to what can be done to improve the village area. MDOT will also search for grants for the project. There must be a consensus to move forward. Joy asked what consensus looks like – Sue explained this could be done through surveys, discussions and determining what Monson could benefit from. Sue asked if we should wait for the new Town Manager. Tyler stated that this could be a good fit for the towns issues they would be happy to meet with the town but questioned if it should be the town, the Downtown Collaborative, or otherwise that attends. Joy felt it should be everyone possible. Sue stated it should be the collaborative but should go through the Town Office. Tyler stated he would talk with Dale and keep Marti involved.

Tyler mentioned that this weekend is Town Clean Up. Marti mentioned that Greenville takes tires all the time because they use PERC. We don't have PERC anymore because we went with Fiberright, we do not have other options, and were told that no one does. Sue mentioned discussing it after the next Municipal Review meeting. Tyler asked if the ADA access had been discussed with the lawyer in regards to the wheelchair ramp – Marti has not spoken with them yet but will try to find out what the town's obligations are regarding the access ramp. The money may be better spent putting the ADA access in the front of the office rather than the back. Tyler also believes the bond money that was received for work on the municipal building triggered the discussions.

Tyler asked if grading is on track for the season. Marti stated that this has been discussed during budgeting and determined that Degestrom/Barrows Falls roads need to be graded but Pleasant Street is okay. It was agreed that all the dirt roads in town should be graded as none of them were done last year. Rick mentioned that all roads should be graded in the Spring. Tyler added that we never deviated from the plan, last Spring the roads hardened before a contractor was found, and we should take care of this now. Marti verified she will prepare the bid package and put it out to bid.

Sue asked about the municipal flagpole. Marti explained that it has been mentioned to paint the pole and replace the rope system. Rick asked about replacing the pole as it cannot be

lowered to paint and that the light that is supposed to be on when the flag is hung at night has been out for some time. Rick questioned if there was any grant money to cover the costs – Tyler responded that we would check costs. Richard asked if there was any state money available to municipalities for flags. John Wentworth noted that the Historical Society is installing a new pole and would perhaps be able to tell us how much they paid.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Bicentennial** – Sandra explained that April 23<sup>rd</sup> is the Official Celebration for the Bicentennial festivities. The program is being finalized now with music starting at 1:30 and the celebration beginning at 2pm. There will be cake, music, video messages from state officials and Senator Susan Collins plans to attend. On Memorial Day there will be a dedication of the Veterans Memorial .

**Beautification** – Sue explained that Saturday is the Town Clean Up Day. There would be volunteers from Foxcroft Academy attending to assist and there would be no fee at the dump that day. Sandra asked if the town truck would be parked out front the night before. Marti verified it would be and would be taken to the dump on Monday. Sandra mentioned that they are in the process of purchasing flag holders and flags to place on telephone poles around town. Marti was going to mail the exemption form to Sandra to avoid sales tax. Sandra planned to call the following day as orders are placed by phone. Sue also mentioned that May 28<sup>th</sup> there would be a Plant Sale and a poster will be prepared before May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Municipal Review Committee Update** – Sue stated that in her last email from MRC on March 24<sup>th</sup> they were in the process of bidding to take over the Hampden trash plant, were looking for contractors to run the plant and asking towns to contribute a guarantee to cover expense of the purchase. Tyler explained they need \$20mil for operator costs, need to raise costs to become operational, and want municipalities to sign up as guarantor to the loan. He stated it would be unlikely 200+ towns who create the trash will default. Tyler felt it would be in our interest to be more involved and put some credit on the line but questions how much they need from us. Marti explained we produce 250+ tons of trash each year, putting us in the 2<sup>nd</sup> category (not the lowest group). Sue said she will complete the survey by April 18<sup>th</sup> and come back with more info afterwards.

**31 Water Street** – Marti is working to put the demolition out to bid but mentioned the owner wants to tear it down with their own contractor and that the fire department would be interested in burning it as a training. Marti also discussed the timeline for the project –

mentioning 30-45 days but Tyler felt it should be 10 days allowed to finalize plan and 10 more days to implement. Sue questioned what that plan includes – Tyler clarified there should be a plan in place by next meeting (April 28<sup>th</sup>) and the house should be gone before the next meeting.

**Code Enforcement Officer Appointment** – Marti stated that Kent Rich will be the new appointed CEO if the Select Board signs off then she will have him take his oath. Sue & Tyler signed in agreement.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**North Guilford Rd Parking** – Richard had some concerns regarding the parking situation at the corner of North Guilford Rd & Steward Rd. He spoke to Tim a year ago due to the fact that drivers cannot see up/down Steward Rd and that the traffic speed isn't appropriate for roadside parking. Richard expressed concerns about the younger drivers, motorcyclists, and customer's children from the business being at risk. Joy clarified that they have put in a permit for a parking lot along the Steward Rd (19 spaces). Sandra mentioned that patrons would prefer off-street parking. The timeframe is in the next 6 weeks. Bobby mentioned that having signs to direct patrons on parking would be helpful. Sue questioned the necessity of the stop sign/triangle at that end of Steward Rd. Richard mentioned that trailers and delivery drivers have difficulty utilizing that intersection, and in the past, have had to go to town then turn back. Bobby explained that GPS directs users to use North Guilford Rd rather than Rte 15 to reach Monson. Tyler asked about "No Parking" signs – Joy stated they use them seasonally but will put them out this week. Sue suggested looking in to whether we need "Vehicles Entering" signs.

**Tax Acquired Property** – Marti explained the date for the payment has past and that the town is not really interested in taking peoples homes. Marti provided the list of homes (some homes, land investment group). She explained that some towns send a letter once the property is acquired then the owner has XX days before it is put out to bid. Tyler asked what Monson has done with these properties in the past. Marti explained that the Town Manager calls or writes to clear up any miscommunication, they provide a 30-60 day window to remedy, then once paid they quit claim it back to the owner. Marti asked if they should discuss these arrangements in Executive Session – Tyler affirmed. Marti will send letters providing 30 days from the date of the letter for the owner to clear up.

**Bridge Report** – Marti presented the Select Board with the bridge report and explained that there is work to be done but nothing to indicate a super low rating. If any are in Poor or worse condition, we will receive a letter within 30 days. Tyler stated that a plan should be made to do repairs over time. Rick mentioned that the bridges have been ignored for years due to lack of funding. Marti mentioned that we do have a bridge with a 22000 limit. Tyler questioned if it was just 3 bridges – Marti verified.

**Meeting adjourned at 7:24 pm.**