

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2015

The regular meeting for the Board of Selectmen convened at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room at 110 Main Street. In attendance were Edward S. Harrison and Dr. Richard M. Smith. John R. Morrell was absent. Also present were Town Administrator Evan Brassard and the media.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:

Dr. Smith made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of January 13, 2015 – open and executive sessions. Mr. Harrison seconded and it was unanimously VOTED.

Appointment of New Board of Health member:

The Board of Health recommended Wayne Yee be appointed to their Board. Mr. Yee approached the Board of Selectmen and introduced himself and briefly explained his background, noting he has been a resident of Monson since 2001, and would like the opportunity to see how the town runs, get involved and to give back to the town by serving as a member on the Board of Health. Mr. Yee added he has attended three meetings to see how they are run and to get a feel for it, and is very interested in serving.

Dr. Smith said he wished more residents would get involved.

Dr. Smith made a motion to appoint Wayne Yee to the Board of Health for a three year term effective immediately through June 30, 2018. Mr. Harrison seconded and it was so VOTED.

Mr. Harrison and Dr. Smith welcomed Mr. Yee to the Board of Health.

Monson PTSA 5k Proposal:

Lisa Ronaldson, Treasurer of the Monson PTSA approached the Board of Selectmen and explained the date for the 2nd annual 5k run is Saturday, April 11th with no rain date. The run will go on rain or shine. The route will be the same as last year, beginning at Granite Valley Middle School, to Macomber Road, and back to Granite Valley. The set-up will be between 8:00/8:30 a.m. with the run starting at 10:00 a.m. and with everyone back in by 11:30. They should be done with everything by 1:00 p.m. Immediately following the run, there will be a run on the track for kids, with kids in grade K through 6 free of charge. The funds raised last year, \$1,517.62 with 123 runners went to the High School toward the transition into the 9th grade by allowing the students the opportunity to attending the Adventure In/Adventure Out program, which is a full day experience addressing courage, vision, and vulnerability.

Ms. Ronaldson said she hasn't had the chance to speak with Chief Kozloski yet, but does have a call into him.

Dr. Smith made a motion to allow the Monson PTSA use of Granite Valley Middle School and route as described, contingent upon approval by Police Chief Kozloski, on Saturday April 11, 2015. Mr. Harrison seconded and it was so VOTED.

Tree City U.S.A. Ordinance:

Valerie Beaudoin approached the Board of Selectmen and said she was here to finalize the application of Monson becoming a Tree City U.S.A., as requested at the Selectmen’s last meeting. Ms. Beaudoin stated both the Planning Board, and Tree Warden John Morrell, support this.

Dr. Smith made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Mr. Harrison seconded and it was so VOTED.

Overview of Assessor’s Role:

This was tabled until the next meeting.

Surplus Vehicle Clarification – Car 2:

Mr. Brassard explained Monson originally had two cars deemed surplus by the Board of Selectmen at a previous meeting. One of the cars was used by the Animal Control Officer and the other was Car 2 used by the Fire Chief.

The Animal Control Officer’s car has already been donated to the Town of Wales, which was approved at an earlier meeting, to use for parts since they utilize a car of the same make, they have now expressed interest in obtaining our other surplus vehicle as well.

Dr. Smith made a motion to donate the Fire Department surplus Car 2 to the Town of Wales. Mr. Harrison seconded and it was so VOTED.

110 Main Street Building Use Form:

This was tabled until the next meeting.

Regional Animal Control Facility Grant Proposal – PVPC:

Mr. Brassard explained the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission is interested in undertaking a study for Monson, along with the towns of Palmer and Ware, to look into the possibility of having a regionalized animal control facility. Monson is already sharing the animal control responsibility with the Town of Palmer and other surrounding communities as the ACO also does another town that is not part of the Monson/Palmer agreement. Mr. Brassard said this study will look at the costs with regionalizing, and what we would have to do. Mr. Brassard noted Monson has the small pound on Bethany Road that we’re currently not using as we’re sharing Palmer’s pound.

Mr. Brassard said the way PVPC has set this up is through the Department of Housing and Community Development; it’s a District Local Technical Assistance grant that is a \$15,000 state grant with the PVPC

matching \$1,500. The towns of Palmer, Monson and Ware will be doing an in-kind match, which basically is off-set with volunteerism. Monson's volunteerism portion could include the hours our volunteer firefighters put in, etc. This project has no monetary cost to the towns. Mr. Brassard noted Monson has already met its in-kind commitment, and then some.

Dr. Smith said his only concern with regionalization is he doesn't want to see Monson's services to our residents suffer, and as long as our services stay the same for our residents he's fine with it.

Mr. Harrison said he feels it's worth looking into, especially if we are getting somebody to do that for virtually free.

Dr. Smith made a motion to agree for Monson to participate in the grant proposal as described by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Mr. Harrison seconded and it was so VOTED.

Commonwealth Connect:

Mr. Brassard explained he attended the MMA (Mass. Municipal Association) conference in Boston two weeks ago. One of the speakers at the conference talked about the new world we live in and technological improvements.

Mr. Brassard said one of the things he has tried to look at since last March is to look at how the town is using technology to improve communication with the community, improve systems and make systems easier so they can provide other services with the same amount of money, and so on. In perusing that, Mr. Brassard said he came across a program called SeeClickFix, which is part of a broader initiative called Commonwealth Connect. Commonwealth Connect is sponsored through Massachusetts.

SeeClickFix allows anyone to report and track non-emergency issues through a geo-based app or message. Citizens can report items such as pot holes, branches in the road, streetlights out, graffiti, hydrants that haven't been shoveled, mailboxes damaged by snow plows, and whatever the municipality can handle, via their Android or Apple Phone, or the internet and the town's web site; with the app geo-tags these reports.

A problem is reported or pictures of it are uploaded to the program by citizens; the town can then log on and acknowledge this has been received. We can respond to the resident and say it is being taken care of, or notify them it is on our schedule and it will be taken care of on Tuesday or whenever, and then we can go back on and say it has been repaired on such-and-such-a-date. This will stay on the system for ten days. If another person sees a pot hole and they go on to report it they will see it has already been flagged and they can view the report.

Mr. Brassard explained the person filing the claim can remain anonymous if they wish, and still request and receive a response. This program turns customers' requests into a productive workflow.

The other feature allows inter-office reporting, such as work orders for the custodian, and this can be set up for every building the town owns, it's limitless, so the Water/Sewer Department could use it, as well as the Highway Dept., etc. to track issues, complaints, etc. At the end of the year, the department can go back and track what they have done, by location, by service type, and so on. Mr. Brassard noted basically this program gives you the tools you need to communicate with citizens and staff all in one place.

Mr. Brassard explained this program will streamline the internal piece making it more effective, whereas now it has to be typed, printed, handed to someone and possibly calling a person back, rather than just typing it into the system and responding to it.

Mr. Brassard explained this is a one-year commitment. The service is about \$4,000 a year. Mr. Brassard noted he was able to apply for, and did receive, a grant for \$2,000 off the first year. The remaining balance is \$2,000 with an additional \$650 in start-up fee for a total of \$2,650. Mr. Brassard added if after the first year we can show the town and the public are using this system and getting their money's worth, we would continue the program and it can go into the annual budget. The training component is included with the cost of this program.

Dr. Smith made a motion to allocate \$2,650 from the Gifts to the Town Account for the Common Connect program. Mr. Harrison seconded and it was so VOTED.

In Other Business to Come Before the Board:

- Mr. Brassard said the deficit spending for the Snow and Ice budget has been over spent by \$41,574.78 not including the storm we just had.

Dr. Smith made a motion to authorize \$100,000 in deficit spending for Snow and Ice. Mr. Harrison seconded and it was so VOTED.

Correspondence was read and completed.

At 7:49 p.m. Dr. Smith made a motion to adjourn from open session to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation – pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21 (3), not to return to open session. Mr. Harrison seconded and it was so VOTED.

John R. Morrell, Clerk