

**Select Board Meeting Minutes
August 26, 2020
21 State Line Road, Town Hall**

Open Meeting

Quorum present: Roger Kavanagh, Select Board Chair, Kathleen Keresey, Select Board Member, Eric Shimelonis, Select Board Member, Marie Ryan, Town Administrator

Also present:

DPW Director Curt Wilton,
Police Sergeant Rosario Messina

Review and sign warrants (payroll and vendor)
Approved Meeting Minutes from meetings on:
August 10, 2020 Executive Session
August 12, 2020

Roger opened the meeting at 6:01 PM. He reviewed the agenda, noting that the Board had reviewed and signed warrants (payroll and vendor) before the meeting. Kathleen then made a motion to approve the above noted minutes, Eric seconded and all were in favor.

Police Update:

Sergeant Messina gave an update about the unregistered vehicles at the property owned by Ricky Klein on Great Barrington Road. These vehicles were the property of Alan Becker, Mr. Klein's former tenant, who ran a business selling and repairing cars. The vehicles are now involved in a dispute between Mr. Klein and Mr. Becker which is working its way through the court system. Until the court case is resolved, the cars can't be moved. The Police will provide updates as new information becomes available.

Sergeant Messina also informed the Board that on Monday (August 24th) the Department got a tip about 20 plus marijuana plants growing illegally on a property on West Center Road. On Tuesday, the Department went to that property, found 408 plants which were cut down and destroyed.

Town Administrator Update:

Marie gave the Board the following updates:

1. West Stockbridge Sportsmen Club – This property is currently in Land Court for Tax Taking by the Town, which may take several months to complete.
2. Moscow Road/National Grid Property – The sale of this property to the Town of West Stockbridge is still pending. National Grid has a new attorney who is currently reviewing all the paperwork. He is trying to define the "reserved" easement area for National Grid, which he proposed could be 30 feet on each side of the property.

3. Baldwin Property- This property was cut off by the Turnpike Authority years ago and is inaccessible. Taxes are owed and ownership is in question. Discussion of this items will be on the Sept 9th agenda.
4. Community Preservation Act (CPA) – The Town has previously voted to approve the adoption of the CPA. The next step in the process is to vote for the CPA bylaw (wording provided by the State CPA Committee) at a Town Meeting or at a Special Town Meeting and the creation of the Community Preservation Committee (specific membership is required)

1 Conservation Commission Member

1 Planning Board Member

1 Housing Authority Member

1 Historic Commission Member

1 Parks Commission Member

Members at Large- can be up to 4 more Members

5. Community Health Play Group – This group had used the Gym for play group but hasn't been able to since COVID19. They came up with an outdoor play group plan which the Board of Health has approved. They will be meeting outside at Town Hall through November (weather permitting).
6. Center Street closure on Thursday nights – Coordination between Rouge Restaurant and the Farmers Market has been working out well. Everyone worked together to get signs posted and no issues have come up.
7. Reserved Parking Spaces on Main Street when Center Street is closed – The Board expressed their desire at the last meeting to allow any business open during the time that Center Street is closed to reserve two parking spots on Main Street in front of their businesses. I went to the only other businesses that are normally open during that time period, besides Queensboro Package Store, which were R&R and the Public Market and offered them the same opportunity that had already been approved for Queensboro. Both businesses were very appreciative and R&R (which is open until 6 PM) will be taking that opportunity. Tim at the Public Market will if he needs to at any point.
8. Update on GB Transportation Advisory Committee – I have heard back from Bill Barth who is excited to be the West Stockbridge Representative on this Committee. He will let me know when he needs to be on an agenda in the future to give updates to the Board as this Committee gets started.
9. False Alarm Fees - I have updated the fees in the Town Code which can be found on the website. (no Town Meeting required)
10. Letter to Formel Salvage has been delivered and they will come in and discuss with the Board at the September 9th meeting.

11. Playground Equipment – Has been installed for a cost of \$43,798. The funding for this was from the P&R Playground Account \$24,046, Gifts/Donations \$7,966.47, Youth Services \$5,263 and FY20 Carryover \$5,500. This left a shortfall of \$1,022.53 which will come out of the P&R FY21 operations/Maintenance budget.
12. Animal Control Officer (ACO) – The last Town ACO resigned. Danielle Fillio, Town Administrator in Richmond and I have created an ad that is to be published in the Berkshire Eagle for a shared ACO. Town Meeting approved the salary to be \$5000 from West Stockbridge and Richmond did the same for a total salary of \$10,000.
13. Library Trustees Vacancy – Jayne Benjulian has resigned as an elected Library Trustee. The remaining Trustees are searching for a candidate to fill the opening and will bring their recommendations to the Board for approval.

Up Coming Meetings:

Thursday, August 27 @ 5 PM – Open Meeting Law Training – Town Counsel Lauren Goldberg
Thursday, September 9 @ 6 PM- Regular Meeting
Monday, September 14 @ 6 PM – WS Town Hall meeting with Richmond SB (Fire Chief)
Wednesday, September 16 @ 6 PM – with Finance Com & Tom Scanlon, Auditor
Monday, September 21 @ 6 PM – Regular Meeting

West Center Road and Shared Paver with Richmond:

Shared Paver – Curt Wilton, DPW Director reported that he has taken possession of the paver to be shared with Richmond and asked the Board to sign the agreement covering the financial, operational and administrative details of this shared equipment. The Board members signed the agreement which will be finalized when it is signed by the Richmond Select Board.

West Center Road Paving Project – Curt informed the Board that 4 bids were received for the West Center Road Project. The bidders were: Delsignore, Palmer Paving, LB Corporation and Northeast. The lowest bid was DelSignore and Curt recommended awarding the contract to this company. He noted that the bid is \$70,000 below the initial estimate which means the Town will not have to borrow the full amount approved at the Annual Town Meeting.

Eric made a motion to award the bid to Delsignore, Kathleen seconded and all were in favor.

Berkshire County Bike Share Feasibility Advisory Committee:

Eammon Coughlin, Representative for the Bike Share program, briefed the Board on the Berkshire County Bike Share Feasibility Study, a study that the Board (prior to July 2020) had agreed to participate in.

He asked the Board to approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that provides the details of the Bike Share Feasibility Study. The MOU includes a contribution by each town (\$3000 each from Lenox, Great Barrington and West Stockbridge and \$6000 from Pittsfield) that adds \$15K to the \$60K grant the committee has already received. The total amount will be used to hire a consultant to do the study.

After deliberating on the potential value of this study to West Stockbridge and the fact that this item was not included in the FY21 Budget, the issue was tabled until a meeting with the Planning Board to discuss whether this study could be considered part of the Master Plan process and funded from the grant that is funding the development of the Master Plan.

Zoom Meetings:

Marie told the Board that she has purchased a Zoom account for the Town as well as a new computer with a large screen to be used at Zoom meetings. She asked Eric if the Town should purchase microphones or if he is comfortable with continuing to bring the microphones that he has been providing for the Board meetings. Eric said he is very comfortable with using his equipment for the time being and the situation can be reviewed in the future.

Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program:

Kathleen updated the Board on the work she has been doing to prepare the Shared Streets and Spaces grant application. She has been working with local restaurants and venues to gather details about equipment they could use to facilitate outdoor activities and with Curt Wilton, DPW Director, on equipment that would support traffic flow and traffic calming. The grant application includes plans to add picnic tables and seating for outdoor dining on Town owned property. She added that the grant application is very close to completion and the intent, when funds are received, is to purchase as much of the equipment as possible from local vendors. Roger, Curt and Eric all thanked Kathleen for her hard work on this grant application.

Town Planting/Gardening:

Kathleen asked Lisa Parker, who creates and maintains the seasonal flower displays around West Stockbridge, to give the Board an update on the work she has been doing. Lisa told the Board that she has been planting and gardening all over the Town since 2003. She has been using donations to cover the costs for the materials and has been donating her labor. The Board told Lisa that there is \$8,000 in the current budget to cover costs for materials and labor for Town Beautification and that she should create invoices for materials and labor and submit them to Marie for payment.

Lisa thanked Curt and his crew for assisting her in the clean-up in the fall. Curt thanked her for all her hard work and amazing job she has done over the years for the Town.

Rail Trail:

A new resident, Kevin Sullivan, asked the Board about the possibility of clearing the rail trail from Pixley Hill Road to the center of Town. Kathleen told Kevin that the Vision Committee has a subcommittee, led by Peter Thorne, that is focused on exploring opportunities to develop the rail trail and that Marie could provide him with Peter's contact information.

Putting this topic on the agenda attracted the attention of several residents whose properties abut the rail trail who were in attendance in the audience and on the Zoom call. They gave the Board an education on the history of the former railroad bed, and posited that the "rail trail" is actually private property which belongs to National Grid (NG) and that people who have been clearing the track bed are actually trespassers. They shared stories of people walking through private property to access the NG

property and of people gathering at a former quarry site which is also private property next to the NG property. They expressed concerns that the subject of the “rail trail” continues to be a discussion item as Board membership changes and they made it clear that they are all adamantly opposed to the idea of converting the RR bed into a trail that is open to the public.

Roger told the residents that the “rail trail” is not something the Board is taking action on, that it was only a topic being considered by the Vision committee. He said this topic was on the agenda because a resident asked if there was something he could do to help make the old RR bed more suitable for hiking and biking. Kathleen told the residents that this is part of a bigger process and that no decision is being made at this time. There was no further discussion on this item.

Press Release: Center Street Dining

The Board discussed the draft press release Eric had prepared about outdoor dining on Center Street. They agreed that this topic had already been covered by the local press and that a press release which spoke about the activities of all downtown restaurants and venues would be great information to share. Eric will draft a new press release for Board review.

Master Plan and Berkshire Regional Planning:

Eric handed out a document, prepared by the Planning Board, that outlined the structure of committees that would be formed to guide and support the development of the Master Plan for West Stockbridge.

Kathleen pointed out that the proposed structure of a four -person steering committee and another larger committee focused on outreach activities was not in line with the steering committee structure in the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) consulting agreement or, based on her research, the steering committees set up by other towns that have developed Master Plans.

After deliberating on the proposed structure of the committees the Board agreed to table the discussion and not sign the BRPC consulting agreement until they had an opportunity to meet with Dana Bixby, Chair of the Planning Board, and get her insight on the Master Plan committee structure. The Board asked Marie to set that meeting up.

Select Board Speak:

Roger asked Kathleen to speak about the changes she would like to make to the first draft of the letter that the Board wants to send to trucking companies about the excessive noise created by “j-braking”. She said that the letter should include information about speeding, the noise ordinance bylaw and should point out that the issue exists on all arteries into the Town. She agreed to do an update to the first draft.

Eric showed the Board a copy of a utilities report he generated from the Green Communities website. He told the Board that these types of reports are part of the process outlined in the Green Communities Grant and that the town is still on track to qualify as a Green Community.

Citizen Speak:

Frank Landsberger told the Board he liked the way the Board's table is set up and that it seems like the Board is able to communicate better that way. He also suggested in the future that the Board could conditionally approve signing documents instead of tabling issues as this may save time in the long run.

Joe Roy expressed his pleasure with the Board supporting all the work that Lisa Parker has done for the Town. He also stated that the Vision Committee has never recommended clearing the "rail trail". He suggested that whenever someone in the audience speaks, it would be best if they used the podium so the microphone can pick up what they are saying, since he could not understand anyone that spoke from the floor.

With no other participants asking to speak, Kathleen made a motion to adjourn, Eric seconded and all were in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Y. Ryan

Town Administrator

Documents:

- Memorandum of Understanding for Berkshire County Bike Share Feasibility Study
- West Stockbridge Vision Committee Beautification Budget request paperwork
- Agreement Between West Stockbridge and Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Master Plan and Opened Space and Recreation Plan – Committee Structure Recommendations