



Town of Lee Board of Public Works
MEETING MINUTES of January 8, 2024
Town Hall Courtroom

Members Present: David Forrest, Robert Wright, Jim Ethier, Ashley Shepardson

Others Present: Superintendent Lenny Tisdale, Town Administrator Chris Brittain, Highway Supervisor Zach Sorrentino

Chairman Dave Forrest called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

Forrest asked Highway Supervisor Zach Sorrentino the status of equipment after the last storm. Sorrentino reported that Truck #3 with the turbo, the mid-year F550 received a new diesel particulate filter and needs to go to Ford to get reprogrammed. The newest F550 lost one of the rear bearings but in order to replace it, the body needs to be pulled out to remove the US adjusters on the chain to replace the bearing. Sorrentino also said the White Lightning was used during the whole storm without a single problem. Forrest questioned the need to use White Lightning at all and Sorrentino said that they were three trucks down with eight routes. The fleet currently has 10 trucks total, but with three down, White Lightning was needed. If sidewalks are included, there are 9 routes with only eight employees due to two staff openings in Water Distribution. Sorrentino was able to condense routes from nine to eight last year. Roads are treated as a priority before sidewalks though some employees stay to complete clearing the sidewalks. The Wacker is being used for the sidewalks because the holder locks itself out and won't shift forward or reverse.

Abatements

850 Summer St – A Meadow Wood resident submitted an abatement due to a leaking hose, providing meter readings from his individual meter. The Town bills Meadow Wood using a master meter and the owners of the condominium are responsible for any issues within the community after the master meter. The Board felt that this was out of their jurisdiction and while Meadow Wood, as our customer, can ask for an abatement, the individual residents should reach out to Meadow Wood. Forrest made a motion to leave the matter to Meadow Wood, Ashley Shepardson seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously (4-0).

Town Administrator Chris Brittain commented on the legal status of the Town's negotiations with Meadow Wood over fees that are owed from years ago. The lawyers are still negotiating and it is taking a very long time.

265 East St – a Town resident submitted an abatement application due to a leaky toilet leading to a sizeable water bill for July – October. The leak was fixed by Glenn Wilcox. Jim Ethier made a motion to abate 10% of the resident's water bill. Ashley Shepardson seconded the motion, it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Capacity Fees

20 Washington Mtn Rd – Existing house was only tied in to Town Water. Application came in to connect to Town Sewer. The assessor's records indicated that there are three bedrooms. DPW Superintendent explained that the project was already completed before the Board Meeting because the septic field failed and it would not pass Title V. Rob Wright asked for clarification of the \$5325.00 fee being assessed. It was explained that this is a one

time fee and that moving forward they will get billed quarterly for sewer usage. Jim Ethier made the motion to accept the capacity fee, Rob Wright seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously (4-0).

60-62 Columbia St – Recently, Dewayne Florian purchased the duplex located at 66-68 Columbia Street. He was already the owner of the duplex at 60-62 Columbia Street. 66-68 has been vacant as well as 60 Columbia Street. When performing maintenance on 66-68 Columbia Street, he found that when he turned the water off it also turned off the water at 62 Columbia Street, which currently houses a tenant. Mr. Florian's request was to tie in to the water main for 60-62 Columbia Street as opposed to water feeding through the lines at 66-68 Columbia Street.

Chairman Forrest stated that all the town will do is make sure that there is a curb stop on the main. He suggested reaching out to Tighe & Bond to use their plans to locate a curb stop. He stated that other properties had run into the same issue and were rectified, but some properties were missed. The homeowner would be responsible for any service line installations.

While Columbia Street was the topic of conversation, questions as to the Columbia Mill were brought up. Forrest explained that there were 2 water mains in that area, one private and one public. The public main was replaced but the other line was not, as it is privately owned but is supposed to be shut off. Sorrentino reported that he was unsure if the main was shut off because it was not on any maps, no one could localize a shut off. Tisdale recommended reaching out to Peter Sorrentino because he used to have property up there.

Cemetery Monument – BACV 37-40, 64-65

Members of the Bassett/Holt family asked for clarification for headstone installation and sizes in Fairmount Cemetery. Mary Holt was buried in the summer of 2022 and her husband plans on being interred there as well. Sorrentino provided insight as to the location of the family plot and the existing stones. It was left unclear, due to Admin Assistant Sam Lovett's absence, what the family was looking to do in terms of cemetery headstones. Chairman Forrest recollected that there was no size limit to headstones or flush mount markers in Fairmount Cemetery. Sorrentino informed him that there is. Forrest commented that it looked like an older plot and asked what parameters would have been followed at the time of the last burial in 1918. The discussion was tabled for the next meeting.

Waterworth

TA Brittain was able to give a brief summary of the Waterworth presentation that will take place at the next Board Meeting. Waterworth was unable to attend the meeting due to a last minute time change. Essentially, Waterworth is recommending that the Town increases their sewer rate between 3% and 5% until debt bond repayment is completed in 2027 to avoid deficit spending. Waterworth has said that after the bond payment has dropped off, the Town could possibly lower the rates by 40%. A 5% increase would not greatly affect Town residents, approximately \$.50 per 100 cubic feet. It will also cover increasing chemical prices, future capital projects, and build up retained earnings. Forrest expressed concern that the Town would be working for a profit if the rate was not lowered after 2027. TA Brittain said that some of the retained earnings could be sold and put towards capital. Also, the rate will be lowered after bond payment is completed. TA Brittain also pointed out that our rates are currently lower than some surrounding towns, including those that need to build new plants. Chairman Forrest intimated that the Board would be in favor of increasing rates.

Forrest asked the state of the Water Department finances. TA Brittain explained that it was doing better but there are multiple bond payments that have varying payoff times.

The Waterworth Presentation at the next meeting will be able to clarify more items as well as show live figures with different adjustments.

TA Brittain announced that member Ashley Shepardson has become a full time BPW member and that the Selectboard has approved a new alternate member, Patrick Rooney.

Capital

TA Brittain gave an update on Capital Budgets. He shared that he has managed to scrape together \$900k for paving despite increases in insurance, retirement, education. Paving funds came from new fair share money, 40R, Chapter 90, as well as capital funds and capacity fees from the project at Eagle Mill. There are hints of a possible tax hike but he is still working with FinCom to see if the debt service for the payday loan as well as the firetruck loan can be changed. There is a new plow truck listed, a new sidewalk machine, as well as a hot box.

Forrest shared his experience with having a hot box. During his time working for MassDOT he stated that they purchased one but it sat unused. They were difficult to clean out. Superintendent Tisdale and Supervisor Sorrentino shared their needs: If the highway department needs to use 2 tons to complete a job, they purchase 3 tons so that there are 2 usable tons because of how quickly it cools down. Tisdale made the point that at \$100 a ton, the Highway Department is throwing away 1-2 tons a day and it becomes very costly. Forrest pointed out that they are not doing this every day. Tisdale reported that the Town has purchased over 1000 tons. Sorrentino reported that in October 2023, they went through 2 trucks of cold patch, which is supplied by A Collaruso in New York State. Forrest recommended that we discuss the purchase again before making it a capital request. While Forrest is not totally against purchasing a hot box, he would like to hold off so funds can be used to sand blast more trucks, which will cost approximately \$10k per truck. TA Brittain recommended that if the Water Department decides not to move forward with a trailer purchase, the Town could gather an additional \$2,000 to put towards sand blasting another truck.

Chairman Forrest asked Superintendent Tisdale and Supervisor Sorrentino about the blower that Bobby Piccolo put on the tractor, saying that the blower shifted out and it hammered the drive shaft out because it was tipped. Tisdale stated that the tractor was brought to Piccolo and said that the part needed to fit on the machine. Tisdale and Sorrentino reported that they were looking into options. Forrest pointed out that a brand new machine shouldn't have to lift everything up so the machine doesn't hammer itself apart. Tisdale mentioned the possibility of the machine being bought back or giving the Town something in the off season.

Chairman Forrest questioned the emissions delete kit that was installed in White Lightning, worrying that Sorrentino would end up shooting himself in the foot. Sorrentino defended the choice saying after a number of years, the truck does not need to go through emissions tests. He stated that he would have to assume liability and put somebody in an unsafe vehicle and he would not do that.

Chairman Forrest asked which equipment Sorrentino was using for compaction. Sorrentino stated that he has a plate compactor, a jumping jack, and a two ton vibratory roller. Forrest shared techniques that Sorrentino should be using. He commented on the patching completed on Maple St after a water main break stating that there is a bump even after it has settled. When Sorrentino and Tisdale began to correct him, he immediately wanted to move on to a different subject.

Chairman Forrest questioned the lack of a ditch mower on the capital plan. Tisdale stated that if the Town moves forward with the ditch bank mower, it is under \$10,000 and can fit into our general maintenance – roads account. The horsepower/RPM issue still has to be addressed before purchasing a ditch mower.

Minutes

Ashley Shepardson made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on November 27, 2023, Rob Wright seconded the motion, the vote was unanimously approved (4-0).

Chairman Forrest began a discussion on paving for Railroad Street and Robert Street. Tisdale reported that the paving expense in the contract with Jack Goncalves will be removed because more tons will be needed to complete Robert Street. Railroad Street and Consolati Way came in at \$300 a ton so the Town will save a couple hundred thousand dollars.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Lovett