**Selectmen’s Public Meeting Minutes**

**September 12, 2022**

**7:00 PM** Meeting called to order by Selectman Chairman John **Quinlan.** Also present was Selectman Jack Esposito, Selectman Howard Brown and minute taker Joan Cleary. **Quinlan led** the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Anna Szok was there representing the Historical Society. They have planned an event for a Cemetery Walk on Saturday, October 15th with a rain date of Sunday, October 16th between the hours of 12-3pm. Chief Slavin asked for an email reminder as the date approaches.

The Board decided the shifts they would cover at the State Primary on Tuesday. **Quinlan** will take the morning shift; **Esposito** will do the afternoon and **Brown** will do the evening. The Board discussed Lamson Farm Day on September 24th from 10:00-3:00pm. The Board reviewed the minutes from 9/6/22. **Esposito** motioned to accept the minutes of 9/6/22 as written seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**7:10 PM Department Head Meeting**

**Chief Mark Slavin – Police Department**

* There has been a major connection issue with AT&T for a couple of weeks. They use First Net for their cruisers and have air cards that power their laptops so they can connect with MACC Base. AT&T has gone out and done upgrades to the cell tower and all seems to be corrected.
* Officer Wolf has two more shifts with us and then he is being sent down to the border mission in Texas. We don’t have a firm date of his return; it seems to be anywhere from 9 months to 400+ days.
* Officer Morgan just completed his field training. He will start his first solo shift this week. They are in the middle of another background check with a potential part-time officer to help fill shifts. He does come to us full-time certified from another town; he grew up in Amherst.
* We ordered the new cruiser in March after Town Meeting. We were told approx. 28 -30 weeks to get it in stock. He got the call from the dealership last week saying they could not honor that or the quote they had given us because they cannot get 2022 cruisers in. The best they can do is either a 2023 Ford Explorer at a substantially higher cost or an F-150 which we have no need for in Mont Vernon. He did find a dealership out of Framingham MA that does have some cruisers on site. They have a 2022 Ford Explorer and they can do all the upfitting. The quote given is right around $50,000 including everything. At Town Meeting they had asked for $46,340 so they will be going over budget. However, they will give us $3,500 trade-in on the 2016 Taurus we have now, which will bring us back within a couple hundred dollars of the number we are aiming for. He feels that we might be able to get a little bit more money on the private market, but it will be easier all round to make this deal, have them transfer everything into the new car and just take it. The Board agreed.
* The PD was awarded $3400 in distracted driving OT patrols. The whole idea is to cut the number of distracted driver crashes. This includes people on their cell phone while driving, drunk drivers, people under 18 not wearing seatbelts, etc. The state gave $3400 and it’s an 80/20 match. The 20% would come out of his OT budget line. He’s asking for approval to accept the money; it starts on October 1st. **Esposito** motioned to accept the Highway Safety Grant of $3,400 with 20% matching seconded by **Brown.** All in favor.

**Ben Crosby – Highway Director**

* The Highway Dept. is finally fully staffed as of two weeks ago.
* Paving is completed; they will start shoulder gravel next week.
* Hanson Bridge Co. gave a quote to upgrade the Brook Rd. crossing from a box culvert to a small bridge span. It will be a 24x45 steel bridge span for $245,512 which is approx. 122K less than the bid we got a year and a half ago. It will take 8-10 weeks to build the structure and then 2-3 weeks on site installing. This will be a significant savings; with the paving he figures the total cost would be around 280K. He would like to plan this for June of next year once school is out. The Board would like more detail.

**Bonnie Director – Library Director**

* Registration has opened for the fall programs through November. JoAnn Kitchel has the Police Chief coming to Storytime on October 20th. She would like the Fire Dept. and Highway Dept. to pick a date to join as well.
* They are hosting a brand-new adult program in honor of Hazel Milligan. It will be a water color painting night once a month. Hazel’s family chose the Daland Memorial Library as the recipient of her memorial fund; that money went towards art supplies.
* The library tent is coming down sometime this week; she may need the help of the DPW. They hosted 64 programs under the tent between April – September; the tent has become absolutely essential towards their functioning. They really want to thank the donor for that.
* The Mont Vernon Library Charitable Foundation raised just over $50,000 in the month of August in their fundraiser titled “Battle of the Burbs. There were 150 donors; Margaret Circle won the battle. They raised $7,184 for the library project and they earned themselves a block party which they are hosting on Saturday. All donations were matched by the National Endowment for the Humanities Building Challenge grant.
* The Friends of the Library are hosting their annual book sale. This is normally done on Spring Gala day but they’ve run out of space for the plant/book sale. It will be held at the MVVS on Saturday, October 1st. Book donations will be accepted the night before.
* Tea for the Queen will be held tomorrow in honor of her passing. Drop in to the library after voting for a cup of tea.

**Heather Kennedy – Recreation Director**

* They had a successful summer concert series. Thank you to the Fire Dept. for helping out with the food. She will be turning off the electricity on the green.
* Lamson Farm Day is on September 24th. The Rec Dept. will be doing children’s games, they were able to get ponies as well. Set up will be on Sunday the 18th.
* Exercise classes continue; both by zoom and in-person.
* They have an upcoming meeting tomorrow night to discuss Halloween candy collection and distribution. October 11th there will be a meeting regarding Tree Lighting. JoAnn Kitchel said the Witch Walk Committee has met. They have the Girl Scouts in charge of monitoring the candy monster boxes throughout town. She will put those boxes out on October 1st. She’s also working with the PTA; a box will go out at their ice cream social. The principal at MVVS is letting the witches sort the collected candy the night before the Witch Walk. They have a group of 12 witches and are opening up this year to all who wish to participate. They are working diligently to get the numbers up so that the village people aren’t hindered by the cost of candy. Heather Kennedy stated that she had not heard anything about a Witch Walk meeting nor was she invited and she should have been included in that. She is happy to hear that the community is going to be equally involved and anyone who wishes to volunteer is able to do so. There was a lot of feedback last year from people not being able to take part in it. She does ask that all advertising re Halloween candy collection come through the Recreation Dept. and not be handled separately. They have their meeting re Halloween tomorrow night; JoAnn was sent the zoom link and is welcome to take part and discuss all these points. JoAnn stated that historically, the Rec Dept. does not collect candy. Historically, Rec Dept. purchases candy and Nora Driscoll has purchased it for several years. History tells us that the Girl Scouts collected candy; she reached out and they have agreed to collect all the candy. History shows us that the Rec Dept. gives a symbolic amount of money; it works out to about one bag of candy per household. The vast majority of the candy comes from the collection. JoAnn has been doing it for many years with success. JoAnn stated she did not invite Heather to the Witch Walk planning party because normally Heather does not like to work with JoAnn so she did not see the reason to do so. JoAnn feels she has a really good system. It starts on October 1st. She is a village resident. When she first moved to town it was haphazardly handled. One year she received a little bag of candy on her door; one year the Rec Dept. and Girl Scouts gave her zero bags of candy. Its hundreds of dollars and she and her team do a very good job with it. She feels that they do a very good job of advertising and Heather does not need to do any advertising. Heather stated that when she became Rec Director in 2018, one of the duties on her list was the collection and distribution of Halloween candy. She’s not sure where it’s coming from that this is not part of her duties. **Esposito** stated that it’s a town function that we’ve had for the kids forever. The Rec Dept. has their job to do, the library has hosted this for a while – he doesn’t see why everyone can’t work together, this is ridiculous. **Quinlan** wishes that all interested parties that want to do something for the town can all get together and work it out. There seems to be a communication problem that just continues; that should not be happening. These are public functions; the word should go out to everyone who ever gets involved. There’s no reason for anyone to feel left out or somehow avoided. We are all adults; let’s put egos at bay and get this done. Heather stated that if they don’t want this to be a Rec responsibility, they need to remove it from the Rec responsibilities. **Quinlan** stated that he expects all interested parties to be at that meeting tomorrow and work it out. They can discuss between themselves who should have responsibility for this going into the future and make their recommendation to the Selectboard.

**Chief Jay Wilson – Fire Department**

* Prepping the 2023 budget. The town sprinkler systems need a more intensive inspection which will include an internal camera inspection and a hydro test. The Highway Garage will be about $2,000 and the Fire Station about $3,500.
* This is apparatus inspection month; mechanics will be here on weekends to get trucks ready.
* When the State set up the outside on-line burning program, they didn’t take into consideration the drought conditions. We should not be allowing category 3 permits purchased on-line.
* 2022 budget is on track; supplies are on back order such as pumping gear, couplings, hoses etc.

**8:00 PM Quinlan** discussed the progress of the Strategic Planning Committee. They’ve been meeting since early August updating the Master Plan in order to derive a Capital Improvement Plan Draft by the end of the year. Members of the Committee will meet with the Department Heads to get their ideas on what big projects/purchases they anticipate over the next 10-12 years. We need to do some long-term planning.

**8:10 PM** Jay Wilson came to the Board to discuss the draft of the IMA. He strongly suggests that the three Selectboards – Mont Vernon, Wilton and Milford – all get together to discuss and finalize.

**8:30 PM Esposito** spoke with Town Counsel regarding the recent decisions made for the library staff. The attorney told him that there are a lot of grey areas and with the new Right to Know laws we could be held personally responsible for any mistakes that were made. They are going to send us a letter and then want to meet in person to discuss. **Brown** asked if any one individual from the Board can request to meet with the lawyers. **Esposito** stated that it should be done as a Board but he felt it was important because of the personal responsibility that we’re liable for; he feels the way this whole thing was done was not proper. He felt he had to make the call. **Brown** stated that the liabilities on the Selectboard have been taken away from the RSA’s so we don’t have liability for stuff like this from what he’s read. **Esposito** stated that the things that were done were not done correctly. **Quinlan** stated that he did not take any pleasure in doing what they did; he did not feel they had any choice. **Esposito** disagrees. It should have been put in next year’s budget. We pay these salary increases January 1st. Come town meeting, if it doesn’t get voted in, who’s going to pay the money back? **Brown** stated that the library is its own entity. They have the ability to give out raises etc. If they over run their bottom line, it will be just like if Ben was to come in here and say we had 5 snowfalls and he over ran his budget. **Esposito** stated that over running a budget due to extraordinary circumstances is different than just over running a budget because you want to give people increases.

**8:40 PM** As there was no further business before the Board **Esposito** motioned to adjourn seconded by **Esposito.** All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Cleary