

Minutes for Town of Pawlet Selectboard
Pawlet Town Hall
February 16, 2016

Members in Attendance:

Mike Beecher
Bob Jones
Charles Weeden
Sarah Ludlam
Ed Cleveland

Others in Attendance:

Keith Mason
Alison and Ian Aend
Steve Leach
Charlie Leach
Bob November
Nancy Morlino
Bob Morlino
Jim Becker
Jonathan Weiss
Thomas Best

Item 1: Meeting Called to order at 7:03 pm

Item 2: Introduction of those present

Item 3: Review Past Meeting Minutes of the February 2, 2016 meeting of the Selectboard. Ms. Ludlam made motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Weeden motion carried, voted and approved.

Item 4: Appearances by Local Citizens and Visitors

- In regards to a veterans memorial installed by George Clark, now located on John Haynes property. Charlie Leach is planning on moving the monument and the flagpole and he is informing the town of his plans. He does not want to mention the sites that he has in mind until they are confirmed.

Item 5: Announcements

No Announcements this week.

Item 6: The State of Fire protection in our community

Thomas Best and Jonathan Weiss of the West Pawlet and Pawlet Fire Department presented to the Selectboard on the state of fire protection and the need for more capital resources in the next decade. A summary of their presentation is included in an appendix to these minutes. Afterward there was time for questions from the board and audience members. Here is a summary of the question and answers.

How much will the fire departments be asking for? There is no figure as of yet. The Fire Departments plan to review their budgets and develop a capital plan.

Have you looked into purchasing used equipment from affluent urban fire departments? Yes, however the equipment used by Pawlet and West Pawlet are specialized to the unique needs of rural departments.

Will there be a presentation at Town Meeting? Not this year, however the departments will take the message directly to citizens and present it at next year's town meeting.

More questions on equipment: There are not many miles on the equipment, but they are used often. There are "fly kit" that replaces the equipment and keeps the chassis.

How has membership holding out? In West Pawlet, membership has not fallen off like it has elsewhere. Pawlet's membership dropped to a low 6 years ago and they have been building since.

Item 7: Reports

1. Emergency Management Director's Report

- a. He has updated the 911 maps in the Fire Departments, Emergency Management, Town Highway Department, and Town Clerk's Office
- b. Hazard Mitigation Grant was awarded for the Emergency Generator at Mettawee Community School. The next step is for the school district and Pawlet Emergency management to raise approximately \$16,000. The total cost of the generator installation is \$65,000 and the grant will cover about \$49,000. The goal is to have it installed by September.

2. Road Foreman's Report

- a. Town of Wells's selectboard has elected not to sell the sander to the Town of Pawlet, however they will lend it to the Town of Pawlet for use this winter. The selectboard discussed the pros and cons of borrowing the sander. The discussion included purchasing new equipment or making it through the rest of the winter with existing equipment. In order to ensure some redundancy with equipment and keep costs as low as possible the Selectboard agreed that borrowing the sander from Wells was the best option. Mr. Jones made a motion to borrow and repair the sander from the Town of Wells for the rest of this winter, seconded by Ms. Ludlam, motion carried, voted and approved. Mr. Weeden voted against the motion.
- b. Leon Corey wants slate for his own use, but he will be leaving town with it. Mr. Corey has been more than cooperative with the town, and the board approved his use of the slate for this purpose.
- c. West Pawlet Fire Department is thinking about removing old firehall, removing and capping septic hook-up, and then building a park on the site with a storage

shed around back. This would also help traffic flow through the intersection. This could also be a location for the monument.

- d. Capital Improvement Plan is underway. The town will need to apply for the funding through the Better Roads grant. The capital plan will come together quickly. It will not include traffic studies.
 - e. On Button Falls Road, there is a person who plows snow into the road. A citizen has complained to Mr. Beecher about the issue. Mr. Mason will keep an eye on it.
 - f. Brush work to date has been just storm clean-up.
 - g. Mr. Weeden inquired issues regarding the crew's time sheets.
3. *Zoning Administrator's Report*
 - a. No Memo submitted.
 4. *Energy Group*
 - a. The School board has approved the installation of a ground-mount solar array.
 5. *Town Clerk's Memo*
 - a. Reviewed Town Clerk's Memo
 - b. The selectboard signed liquor license renewal. Ms. Ludlam made a motion to approve the Liquor License Application Renewal for Sheldon's Market, seconded by Mr. Jones, motion carried, voted and approved.
 - c. The Historical Society request the use of the Town Hall Auditorium on May 26th. Approved by the consensus of the board.
 6. *Town Treasurer's Memo*
 - a. Reviewed the Town Treasurer's Memo.
 - b. Tax Collection for this year is comparable to previous years.
 - c. Mr. Weeden suggested that the town should contact Mr. O'Toole regarding delinquent taxes, some of which are significant.
 - d. Mr. Weeden Made a motion to accept warrants. Seconded by Ms. Ludlam, motion carried, voted and approved.
 7. *Selectboard Administrative Assistant's Memo*
 - a. Reviewed Assistant's Memo
 8. *WWTF*
 - a. Mr. Beecher updated the board on the current status of payment
 - b. Another E.Coli violation, still due to the challenges of getting the system back on line.

Item 8: Old Business

-PACE Program. Elizabeth Gibson spoke with Mark Kelly at PACE. The municipality does not fund the grant program, but the language refers to other contracts. Ms. Ludlam is happy with explanations. Ms. Ludlam proposes that the selectboard sign the Resolution, that was read last week and the Interlocal contract, also read last week. Ms. Ludlam made a motion to sign the resolution regarding the Pace program description and guidelines and to sign the Interlocal Contract to confirm enrollment in the PACE program, seconded by Mr. Weeden, motion carried, voted and approved

-Regarding the AOT purchase of the gravel pit, Mr. Beecher is in negotiation with the AOT. At 8:30 pm MS. Ludlam made motion to enter executive session to discuss a potential town real estate transaction, seconded by Mr. Cleveland, motion carried, voted and approved. At 8:43 Mrs. Ludlam made motion to come out of executive session with no decisions made seconded by Mr. Cleveland, motion carried, voted and approved.

-Mr. Weeden reported on tree work completed on the town hall.

Item 9: New Business

No New Business.

Ms. Ludlam made a motion to adjourn at 8:49 pm, Mr. Cleveland seconded, motion carried, voted and approved.

Respectfully submitted by Timothy Hughes-Muse, Select Board Administrative Assistant.

Appendix: Pawlet's Fire Service, Today and Tomorrow Presented to the Pawlet Select Board, February 16, 2016

1. Pawlet boasts a strong, highly cost-effective fire service today

- Pawlet has two fire agencies on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Pawlet has 47 firefighters serving our community without compensation
- Pawlet has roughly \$2 million invested in firefighting equipment, fully equipping both agencies with safe, effective vehicles and gear
- Pawlet has a fire station near each of our two village centers
- Pawlet citizens can dial 911 at any time and expect professional-quality, fully-staffed fire or rescue services on hand within less than 10 minutes
- This costs the taxpayers \$80,000 per year

2. Our departments face a changing landscape of financial and tactical challenges

- Training requirements have increased dramatically. Today's "basic" formal firefighter training is in excess of 200 hours, three times what it was 15 years ago, and forgoing it is a liability.
- The cost of firefighting trucks and equipment have increased dramatically i. New capabilities, technologies, and safety features all add to costs ii. The cost of a new pumping apparatus has roughly doubled since such a truck was last obtained by one of our agencies 15 years ago iii. Modern personal protective equipment costs \$2700 per set and has a service life of about five years for an active firefighter
- Structural firefighting itself has changed, presenting new challenges Now-common engineered composite materials and plastics burn hot and fast, placing new demands on the firefighters and their equipment.

3. Both fire agencies are facing a serious disparity between the funding levels we need to maintain our services in the decade ahead and our actual income today

- 6 of the 7 fire apparatus in the Pawlet/West Pawlet fleet will require significant refurbishment or replacement in the coming decade, which our departments will not be able to afford on current operating budgets
- Other critical gear, such as Pawlet's SCBA packs, are approaching the end of their service life cycle, representing looming major expenses
- Both departments have asked the town for a minimal investment in their agencies for many years, and approached asking for more with trepidation Capital investment has been put off as we make do with what we have. Shortfalls have been covered by fundraising and grants. Fundraising places an increasing burden on our volunteers. Fundraising and grants are both limited and uncertain.

4. We anticipate the need for a substantial increase in funding from the town. We plan to calculate this sum, communicate our need to the taxpayers over the coming year, and then ask for it on the 2017 ballot.

5. Our vision is to provide Pawlet with fire protection services that can grow to meet the needs of the future, and are financed so as to be sustainable in perpetuity. Leveraging our dedicated volunteers, we will continue to provide a critical service at a cost that represents a tremendous value to the taxpayers