



Select Board /Assessors Meeting Summary

June 1, 2022

6 p.m.

Select Board members Present: Wes Daniel, Tom Johnston and Mitch Garnett

Others Present: Mark Ouellette from Axiom Technologies, two representatives from Hawkeye Construction, Broadband Committee members Sara Bullard, Will Darton and Lee Shane, residents Lynn Carroll and Steve Ocean. Via Zoom were Misty Darton, Martha and Bill Orrick and several others.

Mark answered questions and updated Select Board members about the upcoming Broadband project. He said there are a few properties in southeast Washington that are excluded from the NTIA grant because they are considered to already be served by internet provider Spectrum – Mark is protesting the exclusion and researching options.

Tom asked about the make-ready fees, which are being protested by neighboring Somerville – he asked if Washington could pay the fees under protest and be refunded later. Mark suggested waiting until he speaks with Somerville representatives again, adding if it is ruled Somerville is exempt from the make-ready fees, then Washington would be as well. He reminded meeting attendees that make-ready costs and pole licensing fees are different and the town still must pay pole licensing fees. Should the make-ready exemption apply to Washington, Mark said he would have to request a category change under the grant to allow the make-ready funds to be applied to another area of the project.

High costs for materials are expected, as well as long lead times. Mark said he hopes to receive all ConnectME Authority funding at once and invoice for the remaining 90 percent of the project, which will be paid by the federal NTIA grant. He said he still anticipates completing the project at zero cost to the town.

A private contractor could be hired for some of the work, at additional cost to the town – Mark estimated \$25,000 to \$80,000 more – but the work could be completed more quickly than it might be by Consolidated Communications.

The cost of materials and supplies should be known in a few weeks, Mark said; however, there is no guarantee the costs quoted will be held unless it is paid upfront (the grant money will not be available immediately).

Mark explained the need for the town to acquire a line of credit as part of the pole licensing process and said it is not intended to be spent.

As far as timeline, Mark said it is expected to take 10 months to complete the make-ready work and an additional three to four months for additional infrastructure – signups by residents won't begin for months. He said a year in advance of projected completion is the earliest he recommends taking signups. There are informational meetings planned for residents at which Axiom and Hawkeye representatives will be available to answer questions. Sara asked about informational mailings and Mark suggested dual branding from the town and Axiom.

Hawkeye representatives confirmed they have the manpower and equipment for the project. Mitch asked about outages and if the whole town could go down at once. Kevin, with Hawkeye, said it depends on where the breakage occurs – if the Central Office is down, the whole town would be down as well. He said there will be distribution hubs throughout town to help minimize service disruptions in case of fiber breakage. Mark said he intends to hire a local person to respond to individual/small outages/problems as well, but any larger outage would fall to Hawkeye to repair. Hawkeye offices are located just over an hour from Washington.

Tom asked about insurance and Mark said the town will have to self-insure the main trunk lines.

Prior to 6 p.m. Tom conducted a ride-around with Hawkeye representatives to assess Washington's utility poles. As well, Select Board members, Hawkeye and Mark chose the location for a Central Office (behind the fire station).

Wes Daniel called the Select Board meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Select Board members Present: Wes Daniel, Tom Johnston and Mitch Garnett

Others Present: Town Clerk/Treasurer Mary Anderson, Fire Chief Phil Meunier, and residents Lynn Carroll and Steve Ocean.

Approve Summary of May 25, 2022: Motion to approve summary by Tom Johnston, Mitch Garnett seconded; all in favor, motion carries.

Sign Treasurer's Warrants dated June 2, 2022:

P/R Warrant #44: \$5,861.67

A/P Warrant #45: \$18,526.25

Motion to approve by Tom Johnston, Mitch Garnett seconded; all in favor, motion carries.

Road Foreman Report: Written by Frank Jones Jr. and read by Wes Daniel

5/23: Frank went to pick up trailer but it was not registered; marked Fitch Road for ditching (DigSafe contacted); got saws and chipper ready for chipping; Travis Kilbreth came to work on P200

5/24: Frank went to get excavator; helped take down tree in Maple Grove Cemetery; chipped roadway in pit; Steven had a doctor's appointment; Travis continued work on P200

5/25: Chipped brush on Fitch Road

5/26: Chipped on Fitch Road

CEO Report: None

Health Officer Report: None

Town Clerk/Treasurer's Report: Town Clerk/Treasurer Mary Anderson said office staff tested the DS200 voting machine on Friday and have been issuing/receiving returned absentee ballots in person and in the dropbox out front. She noted there are plaques in the office that require updating – Unsong Hero and Boston Post Cane. Mary said new Deputy Clerk Sarah Reynolds is doing well and appears to be a good fit in the office. Planned election training for town residents has been cancelled. Checking account balance is about \$70,000 and, so far, the town has not had to borrow money. Constable Kit Lascoux posted election warrants and sample ballots on Tuesday, well in advance of the June 14 election.

Other Agenda Items: A new written proposal was received from NorthEast Paving. Wes made a motion to accept the \$247,230 paving bid from NorthEast Paving, Tom seconded; all in favor, motion passes.

Other business: None.

Questions/comments: Steve Ocean spoke about a text message exchange with CEO Corey Fortin and said he would like invite town attorney Peter Drum to speak with Planning Board members about Corey's duties with the Board, as Board members and Corey have different expectations. Steve invited Select Board members to the TBD meeting as well.

Phil said he would like to put a "propane tree" training device across the road on a concrete pad. Wes asked if it could go in the gravel pit instead but Phil said there is no water supply there. Wes said across the street was not intended to be a fire department training area. Mitch suggested Phil mark out the area he would like to use for a 12 by 20 concrete pad. He asked if the trainings were because of a recent propane explosion in Waldo County and Phil said not directly, but that trainings have changed because of that explosion. Phil agreed to mark out a couple of potential areas.

Mitch made a motion to adjourn, Tom seconded; all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Grinnell