

Town of Mendon

Selectboard

March 27, 2023

Members of Selectboard present: Val Taylor, Seth Bridge, Lisa Brooks

Town Officers and employees present: Nancy Gondella, Town Clerk & Treasurer, Bill Ellis, Road Commissioner

In person visitors present: Deputy David Soulia, Justin Lindholm, Ann Singiser, Steve Singiser, Brian Gates, Dennis Charles

Remote visitors present: Carol Gates, Alex Johnson, Steve Ellerin, Larry Courcelle, Fred Bagley, Steffanie Bourque

V. Taylor called to order at 5:30 PM in a hybrid meeting.

Agenda:

Motion by V. Taylor to approve the agenda with the addition of Trees and Peg TV. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Announcements

None

Administrative Matters

Selectmen's Orders were reviewed.

Motion by V. Taylor to approve orders for 3/20/23 in the amount of \$34,857.48. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion. Motion by V. Taylor to approve orders for 3/27/23 in the amount of \$15,159.16, payrolls for 3/6/23 in the amount of \$11,518.72 and 3/20/23 in the amount of \$16,237.79. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: V. Taylor moved to approve the minutes of 3/13/23. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion

2023-2024 Goals and Objectives review and development: The Selectboard reviewed and prioritized the goals and objectives.

AOT Annual Financial Plan: Tabled until next meeting so more information can be presented by Town Administrator.

Public Comment

- Justin Lindholm states that video and audio surveillance should be set up in the Town Office. Public comment period should not be listed as 15 minutes, but as 2 minutes per person, beyond that, people should put their comments in writing to the Selectboard.
- Brian Gates states that no one gets back to him. V. Taylor responded that she will not respond to him by text, but that he can contact her via her personal e-mail until town e-mails have been set up. He also questions why the office is open by appointment only. V. Taylor responds it is for office safety.
- Carol Gates wants all meetings recorded. She pointed out that the current meeting was not being recorded. N. Gondella apologized for the error. She thought she had pushed the record button, but inadvertently had not. The meeting was being recorded by PEG TV. Carol Gates revisited her prior request for video recordings of prior meetings.

Business

Appointment of Offices: V. Taylor made a motion to re-appoint the following positions:

Nancy Gondella	Town Clerk	3-year term
Nancy Gondella	Town Treasurer	3-year term
William Ellis	Road Commissioner	1-year term
Sara Tully	Road Commissioner Admin	1-year term
Mary Ann Reich	Town Service Officer	1-year term
Therese Corsones	Energy Committee	4-year term
Harvey Zara	Zoning Board of Adjustment	3-year term
Lisa Brooks	Town Recreation	4-year term
Betsy Reddy	Town Recreation	4-year term
Val Taylor	Cemetery Commission	1-year term
William Ellis	Cemetery Commission	1-year term
Dennis Charles	Cemetery Commission	1-year term
Larry Courcelle	Rutland Regional Transportation Commission	3-year term
Lema Carter	Emergency Management	2-year term
Jesse Bridge	E911 Coordinator	2-year term

Motion seconded by L. Brooks. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Taylor made a motion to appoint the following positions:

Seth Bridge	Route 4 Steering Committee	1-year term
Selectboard Member		
Larry Courcelle	Route 4 Steering Committee	1-year term
Fred Bagley	Route 4 Steering Committee	1-year term
Patti Lancaster	Route 4 Steering Committee	1-year term
Sara Tully	Route 4 Steering Committee	1-year term

Motion seconded by L. Brooks. Motion passed unanimously.

Steve Ellerin introduced himself as candidate for Zoning Administrator and spoke of his experience. He would like to be of service to the Town and has the time available to devote to the position. He requests the Selectboard pay him a starting salary of \$25.00. The Selectboard thanks him for his comments and says they will take a look at the budget, and an appointment could be made at the next meeting.

Motion by V. Taylor to appoint Lisa Swett to the Planning Commission for a 4-year term. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. Motion passed unanimously.

Trees: Road Commissioner Bill Ellis submitted three estimates (he asked Nancy to make copies for the board) for tree work that needs to be done in Mendon. L. Brooks asked B. Ellis to provide the scope of work to be done. Bill explained that tree work needed to be done on Journey's End in connection with a grant the Town had received. A tree also needed to be removed near Brookwood in a town right of way. V. Taylor recused herself from the discussion, as her husband had submitted a bid for the project. The three bids were as follows: Vaillancourt Tree & Landscape Service \$7,170, Trees Incorporated \$5,850, and Taylor Trees \$5,400. Further discussion followed.

B. Gates said questioned whether or not there was an open bidding process and if the Selectboard had received the quotes ahead of time. The Selectboard stated that they had just received them. C. Gates states that Taylor trees should be out of the running. Discussion ensued.

S. Bridge made a motion to accept the lowest estimate from Taylor Trees at a cost of \$5,400. Motion seconded by L. Brooks. Motion passed by S. Bridge and L. Brooks. V. Taylor abstained as she had recused herself.

PEG TV The Selectboard discussed whether to continue having PEG TV record its meetings. L. Brooks made a motion to have PEG TV continue recording its meetings. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

Since premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage, V. Taylor made a motion to go into executive session at 6:16 p.m. to discuss contracts for the Route 4 scoping study and legal review for office safety with Steffanie Bourque, Larry Courcelle, and Fred Bagley present. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Taylor made a motion to come out of executive session at 6:50 p.m. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Taylor made a motion to proceed with awarding the work for design services for the Route 4 Corridor scoping study to VHB, a company procured through the VTRANS At the Ready process, spending an additional \$1,028 from the MEDC reserve fund. The total project cost is \$46,028 with \$36,000 being expended through grant funds, \$9,000 previously approved and an additional \$1,028 to be spent from the MEDC reserve fund. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. S. Bourke will work on drawing up the agreement which should be ready to sign in a couple of weeks. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Taylor made a motion to hire the law firm of Stitzel, Page & Fletcher, P.C. to help improve office safety. Motion seconded by L. Brooks. The motion passed unanimously.

Fred Bagley apologized for not being able to access the meeting earlier. There were technical difficulties. Fred, who is the current Zoning Administrator questioned delaying the appointment of the Zoning Administrator position for two weeks as that would leave no one to do the job. He suggested deleting the requirement for regular office hours, as that is impractical. He believes the Zoning Administrator can come in as needed and handle most things remotely. Further Fred believes the Selectboard should appoint an acting Zoning Administrator, as allowed by State Statute for the times the Zoning Administrator has a conflict or is not available.

V. Taylor made a motion to go into executive session to discuss salaries at 6:59 p.m. Motion seconded by L. Brooks. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Taylor made a motion to come out of executive session at 7:03 p.m. Motion seconded by L. Brooks.

V. Taylor made a motion to appoint Steve Ellerin as Zoning Administrator at a rate of \$25.00 per hour, not to exceed the \$8,000 annual budget. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:04 PM. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard approved the motion.

Date Approved _____

Val Taylor

Nancy Gondella – Acting Clerk

Seth Bridge

Lisa Brooks