

**Ludlow Select Board
REGULAR MEETING**

**Monday, February 3, 2025
6:00PM**

**HEALD AUDITORIUM
AGENDA**

Meeting ID: 963 5236 4337

Passcode: 411479

One tap mobile

+13126266799, 963 5236 4337#,,,,*411479# US (Chicago)

+16469313860, 963 5236 4337#,,,,*411479# US

Dial by your location

<https://zoom.us/j/abJ1grh212>

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Justin Hyjek, Vice Chair
Scott Baitz

Noah Schmidt

George Tucker, Jr.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Brett Sanderson, Chairman

STAFF PRESENT:

Brendan McNamara

Ben Whalen

Jeff Warfle

Melissa Foote

OTHERS PRESENT:

Eric Alden

Fran Kessler

Jason Rasmussen

Gary Blodgett

Karen Kraut

Sherry Tucker

Terry Carter

Neil Martin

Kevin Winter

Nick Gilberti

1. Call to order

- A. Justin Hyjek called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Brett Sanderson was absent... He led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Consideration of any Changes, Additions or Removals to the Agenda

- A. There were none.

3. Approve Minutes from Previous Meeting

- A. Justin Hyjek advised that the minutes are from the regular meeting on January 6, 2025 and the Special Meeting on January 14, 2025.
- B. Justin Hyjek noted that on the minutes from January 6th, he was marked as present and absent. He was absent.
- C. **MOTION BY Scott Baitz and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to accept the minutes from January 6, 2025 as corrected and the Special Meeting of January 14, 2025 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. Comments from Citizens

- A. There were none.

5. Department Heads' Reports

- A. January 2025
 - i. Justin Hyjek congratulated Asher and Mary Clark on the birth of their baby.
 - ii. Justin Hyjek asked if it would be possible to break out Okemo calls on the Ambulance Reports.
 - iii. Brendan McNamara said yes.
 - iv. Justin Hyjek thanked Chief Whalen on his report. He added that Fire and Ice had been successful.
 - v. Justin Hyjek noted that he appreciated the first report from Cherry Nicoll - the grant coordinator. He said that the skate park is 100% reimbursed.
 - vi. Brendan McNamara said they have applied for a grant from Better Back Road. He said that he and Cherry will be getting together to look into the newer grant cycle, to see which ones to focus on.
 - vii. Justin Hyjek noted that the bathroom at the transfer station is 95% complete.

6. Approval of Requests/Licenses/Permits

- A. Brendan McNamara advised this is for the liquor license renewals for the Wine Shop, LLC (Second Class), J. W, Sandri Inc. (Tobacco x 2 and Second Class) and Ballard Hobart Title Holding Corp (OCP). Chief Billings has no issues and recommends renewals be approved.
- B. Karen Kraut noted that the Wine Shop should read YEAH Wine Shop.
- C. **MOTION by Scott Baitz and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to approve licenses as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.**

7. Review and Consider Municipal Planning Grant

- A. Brendan McNamara said we have all of the documents.
- B. Terry Carter said that this was approved by Rose Goings. We received a lot help from Regional. We have done the Village zoning and now we are applying for a grant to do the Town Zoning. They are due in 2027. With the Village zoning, we emphasized Affordable Housing in the Village areas that have water and sewer available. We will also update the maps. The grants can range from \$30,000 to \$40,000 with a \$2,000 town match.
- C. Jason Rasmussen said it is a 10% match. He said they will work on updating the Town Zoning regulations, including adding new legislative changes. We will also update the flood regulations.
- D. Terry Carter said Jason Rasmussen has been very helpful. She added that the Town Plan is also due in 2027, but after the zoning regulations. She said that Flood - Article 6 was last updated in 2014 and must be updated.
- E. Noah Schmidt asked if there are differences between the Town and Village regulations
- F. Terry Carter said we did find things in the Village regulations that were not in the town, but they are very similar. She said that after the floods and the tanks floating down the river, the rules said the tanks had to be raised above flood elevation. But, the fuel companies couldn't deliver if the tanks were too high.
- G. **MOTION by George Tucker, Jr. and seconded by Noah Schmidt to approve and move forward with the Municipal Grant application. Motion passed unanimously**

8. Select board Representative to Planning Commission (Appointment)

- A. Brendan McNamara said that he has spoken to Planning and Zoning and feels that it behooves the Select Board to have a member as a liaison to the Planning Commission. He said that in other towns where this is in place, the member can help guide the Planning Commission and improve communication. This person will work with him, the Planning Commission and Planning and Zoning office.
- B. Justin Hyjek asked if any of the Selectmen would like to volunteer.
- C. Noah Schmidt volunteered.
- D. **MOTION by Justin Hyjek and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to appoint Noah Schmidt as Select Board Representative to the Planning Commission. Motion passed unanimously**

9. Sons of the American Legion Coin Drop Discussion/Approval

- A. Brendan McNamara said that the Legion has requested a coin drop for Saturday, April 26 2025 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The proceeds from this fundraiser will be used to support the Children's' Miracle Network and various Veterans' programs. This will be adjacent to Veterans' Park.
- B. Noah Schmidt asked if they have a rain date.
- C. Brendan McNamara said no.
- D. **Scott Baitz said the Legion does this every year. MOTION by Scott Baitz and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to approve the American Legion's request for a coin drop on April 26, 2025. Motion passed unanimously**

10. Review and Approve Certificate of Highway Mileage

- A. Brendan McNamara said this is a yearly certification and we have had no changes in mileage. Currently we have 7.11 miles of Class 2 roads, 45.59 miles of Class 3 roads, 11.817 miles of State Highway and 3.53 miles of Class 4 roads.
 - i. **MOTION by Noah Schmidt and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to approve and sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage for the year ending February 10, 2025. Motion passed unanimously.**

11. Annual Town Meeting Preview

- A. Budget Overview
 - i. Brendan McNamara said that next month, we will have the Town Meeting, review of the budget and articles and voting.
 - ii. Brendan McNamara said that the budget will be posted on the website tomorrow. Amount to be raised in taxes is \$4,933,795.30 this is a 5.3% increase. Last year the increase was 6.4%. We have kept the increase to a minimum while still providing services.
 - iii. Town Clerk - Brendan McNamara said we will vote on changing the Town Clerk/Town Treasurer from an elected position to a Select Board appointed position. This would give the town a more widespread view for this critical position.
- B. Review of Fire Truck Proposal
 - i. Chief Whalen said they will need to replace 2 fire trucks. He has a power point presentation that he showed tonight to the Select Board and will show at Town Meeting. He said the one tonight is a rough draft. We need to replace Engine #3- it is a Tower Truck.

FLEET**Engine #2 - 2014 Pumper, Rescue**

Should be replaced in 2034

Fully serviced this year

When replaced, tools should also be replaced

Engine #3 - 2004 Pumper

Should have been replaced in 2024.

If ordered now, would not arrive until 2027 - 2028

He said this vehicle is 21 years old and a continuous maintenance issue and also a life safety issue. The pump has died during firefighting operations. We do our best to keep it running. This has to be replaced.

Tanker #1 - 2010

This unit is invaluable - holds 3,000 gallons of water.

Proposed replacement in 2035.

The unit is pretty rock solid.

Tower #1 - 1994

Should have been replaced in 2019

If ordered today, would not arrive until 2028-2029

He said that the department has done an incredible job maintaining this vehicle. It looks good and spent 3 to 4 months in the shop this year. It is having many issues.

Utility #1 with Trailer - 2004

Will be replaced in 2025.

Utility #2 Off-Road - 2019

Will be replaced in 2034.

Chief Whalen continued, saying that the Association paid for Utility #1 and Utility #2 and trailer and donated them to the department.

Chief #1 - purchased in 2024

Replace in 2030.

This unit has a command post in the trunk.

- ii. Chief Whalen described the NFPA 1900 and OSHA CFR 1910.56 regulations. Each type of fire apparatus must have its own chapter for maintenance requirements. There is an annex with special requirements that are "should" as opposed to "shall." OSHA CFR 1910 was adopted in 1980 and the new standards are due out soon. These will be applicable Nationwide with OSHA requiring a 15 year life span for apparatus.
- iii. Justin Hyjek asked about the command post in Chief #1.
- iv. Chief Whalen said it will move to the new vehicle, along with the central console. He explained the Police Cruisers have different specifications than the fire vehicles. They have to have better brakes and suspension. He said for the Tahoe does not have all of the bells and whistles, but it has all of the parts and pieces for additional services: wires; lights sirens He wants to shop local in the future for Chief #1, According to NFPA, all apparatus must be reliable.

FUNDING

Capital Equipment Fund

We need to purchase breathing air compressor at about \$40,000

Radios were purchased with 911 grants and the Association puts in - \$168,000

BOND

For large equipment - 2 engines, tower and tanker. We can secure an interest rate ranging from 2 to 4%.

Engine #3
\$1,487,844

Tower #1
\$2,609,915

If purchased together it would be a 6% cost savings and other incentives, all amounting to about 11.57% cost savings. If we pay upfront, they will give us 5% simple interest per vehicle per day.

PREPAY	\$3,079,550
Prepay interest	\$ 543,450
Total	\$3,623,000

- v. Noah Schmidt asked about maintenance.
- vi. Chief Whalen said the department did the maintenance for the inspection, air leaks, replacement of several parts, rust.
- vii. Justin Hyjek asked to have the slides emailed to the board. He said the cost analysis and breakdown are great. It is also great to have a vehicle replacement plan.
- viii. George Tucker, Jr. said it was a great presentation. He said that the voters will probably ask the balance in the Equipment fund and want a breakdown of the expenditures.
- ix. Chief Whalen said that at this time, he is not interested in increasing the budget, but to continue to put money into that fund yearly.
- x. It currently has about \$460,000.
- xi. Noah Schmidt asked what happens if the tower is out of service and there is a fire on a 3rd floor unit?
- xii. Chief Whalen said we would have to call Springfield or Rutland. He said it is his intention to have all of maintenance done at the firehouse. ATG out of Westminster will do the work. He said that Engine #3 broke the other day. The cost to refurbish it would range from \$1.8 to \$2.0 million and it would have to be sent out for 2+ years. And, when it does come back, it is still a 35 year old truck.

C. Local Options Tax

- i. Brendan McNamara said they will review the Fire Department amount and Flood Control dams. The revenue from the 1% Local Options tax would go to Capital projects. There will be another forum on Wednesday, February 26th.
- ii. Overview, if Passed:
 - a. About \$200,000/year in bond payments
 - b. 7/1/22 through 6/30/23 - If we had the local options tax it would have generated \$998,356.25. 30% of that would have gone to the state, leaving Ludlow with \$698,849.35. That money would help pay for improvements to the infrastructure. He said we are looking at the Dam projects at about \$2,000,000 to the Town. As Town Manager, he would like to have the option to provide relief for

the dams and trucks. They have to be done. This would benefit the taxpayers more than the tax itself.

- iii. Justin Hyjek asked which taxes the \$900,000 is based on?
- iv. Brendan McNamara said retail, rooms, meals, alcohol. Most groceries and medications would not be taxed. Exclusions will be posted on the web.

12. Municipal Manager Updates

A. HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING LEASE TO ESBR

- i. Brendan McNamara said he has a proposed 2-year lease to ESBR for \$12,000/year. He and Pat Pullinen have discussed this and the increased use of the building. Other than a school, what would be other uses for that building? What about in 5 to 10 years. Will the school be the only occupant or will it be cohabitation. We have thought long and hard about this and need to have a plan in place. He will continue to work with Pat Pullinen
- ii. Justin Hyjek asked if the Select Board signs off on the lease.
- iii. Brendan McNamara said this is an agreement between the school and town. He thinks that it was a verbal agreement before.
- iv. Justin Hyjek suggested giving the town manager the authorization to sign the contract.
- v. Gary Blodgett said that this year we have a new head of school, new staff members and 13 students (last year 8 students). The new Head of School, Michael Kell is reaching out to ascending schools and we are holding open houses. There are more students graduating from Mount Holly and Ludlow Elementary schools. Hopefully we will continue to grow. The school gives a local option for students.
- vi. Eric Alden said not to disparage the school, but in 2020, the decision was kicked down the road. At that time, the Select Board said we can't wait 5 years to sell this building. In 2022 they said it was not in the best interest of the town to keep it. So far, there is no plan and it is not fair to the school to have to renew every 2 years or so. You have said that it is not possible to use the building for housing because of its location close to the Elementary School but there are other residences close to LES and also other towns have schools close to residences. To dismiss housing, the board is being short-sighted. There have been no other RFPs for the use of the building. In 5 years, it has cost the town \$500,000 to maintain the building, but you have only received \$20,000. If the town wants a school, it should support it. Stop kicking this down the road. What is the product coming out of the school – college or just getting by. He wants to see a plan to be put in place on what to do with the building.
- vii. Justin Hyjek said the town was saddled with the building. The town did vote a stipend. We should form a committee to explore options for the use of the building. We owe it to the taxpayers. Originally it was 5 years, now it is in year 6. He suggested giving the Town Manager carte blanche to negotiate.
- viii. George Tucker, Jr. said let Brendan McNamara negotiate on behalf of the board.
- ix. Scott Baitz agreed. but added that we also should have a plan for the building over the next few years. We are getting to the point where it should not be up to the taxpayers to subsidize the school.
- x. Justin Hyjek said it takes time for a school to grow. Maybe we have a different building they can use.
- xi. There was general consensus on the part of the board to authorize Brendan McNamara to negotiate the lease options for the use of the high school building.

- B. Dam Rehabilitation
 - i. Brendan McNamara said that we are 30% through the draft engineering/construction. Then we go on to 90% and construction in 2026
- C. Town and Village Merger
 - i. Brendan McNamara said that the final draft will be sent to board by the end of this week. We hope to have the vote on the merger at the Village Meeting. There will be a village vote and town vote on the merger at both of their respective meetings. Once the final draft is approved by the committees, it will be put on the website. He said that operationally, there will be little to no difference.
- D. Police Chief Position
 - i. Brendan McNamara announced that Sgt. Jeff Warfle has been offered and has accepted the position of Police Chief. Sgt. Warfle has been with the department for about 5 years and we are very fortunate to have him. Chief Billings will be retiring on April 6th.

13. Other Business

- A. Fire and Ice
 - i. Chief Whalen said that the Association sponsored Fire and Ice and there was a great turnout. He has not seen the final revenue numbers that this event generated. He said Kathy Burns took the lead and local businesses helped. The proceeds will go toward the \$60,000 to \$80,000 radio project.

14. Possible Items for Next Meeting - March 3, 2025

- A. TOWN MEETING

15. Sign Warrant Orders

- A. Brendan McNamara noted that Warrant Orders have been signed.

16. Possible Executive Session/Personnel/Contracts/Legal Issues

- A. Brendan McNamara said that an Executive Session is needed for Personnel matters.
- B. MOTION by George Tucker, Jr. and seconded Noah Schmidt to enter into Executive Session for Personnel matters. Motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Board entered into Executive Session at 7:28 p.m.
- D. MOTION by Scott Baitz and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to exit Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously**
- E. Board exited Executive Session at 8:13 p.m. No action taken.

17. **Adjourn**

A. **MOTION by Noah Schmidt and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**

B. Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Brett Sanderson, Chairman

Noah Schmidt

Scott Baitz

George Tucker, Jr.

Justin Hyjek