

Minutes, Board of Selectmen Meeting, July 18, 2017

Bill Ezell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Ken Caisse and Gail Cromwell present.

1. Mark Stetson of Avitar Associates Inc. described several Avitar programs that the town might find helpful in preparing required forms for the state such as the MS-1 that is due on September 1. The MS-1 reports the total value of property in the town and is the first step in developing the tax rate for the following year. We have the Avitar software for this now but Mark was not sure if we actually used it. If we are interested they will do an in-office presentation for the staff and select board. The most important data in updating property values is obtained by our office from the Registry of Deeds but Avitar keeps track of our Land Use Change Taxes (LUCT), PILOTS, etc. so it is easy for them to provide the MS-1 data. They also have a tax collection software program which gives residents the ability to track their taxes online. As we go forward with new staffing we should consider this. Mark did not know the cost. Avitar already provides the Equalization Survey for us. There was considerable sentiment that for the long term we need an integrated system of data collection, recording and reporting.

Mark also reminded us that Avitar would begin its annual data verification survey involving about 1/3 of the town next week. Any deed transfer properties are checked as well as the regularly scheduled ones.. We are to print the cards for them in the office. Bill offered to help with that.

2. The Minutes from the meeting of July 11 were approved without change. Motion by Caisse, second by Cromwell, unanimous.
3. Niki McGettigan was appointed as Conval School Board representative to serve until the next election, filling out the term of Dave Martz who resigned due to a change in residency. Motion by Cromwell, second by Ezell, unanimous. Bill to write letter to Sheila Kullgren. Town Clerk Joyce Kullgren will find out whether Niki needs to take a town oath or whether the oath at the school board suffices.
4. Alanna Casey was introduced and her resume briefly described. Motion by Cromwell to retain Alanna on an hourly basis to perform webmaster duties as specified by the select board., second by Ezell, unanimous. The website is in need of improvement to make it easier to navigate as well as providing more information to our town. Committee agendas and minutes are high priority. Bill has been posting information in the interim and it may be desirable for committees to post information themselves. This can be worked out going forward. Bill will be the contact for Alanna regarding any questions.

5. E-Mail Hosting. Bill suggested that we have a uniform set of email addresses and accounts that will belong to the town rather than to individuals. The favored suggestion is through the Google business system. Gary Scholl suggested we move to .gov. instead of .org. Bill is looking into this and will continue standardizing town email addresses.
6. Brenda Wiley of Accukeep, Inc., was introduced. Brenda is a professional accountant. Motion by Cromwell, second by Ezell, to retain Brenda on an hourly basis for our immediate bookkeeping needs, unanimous. Brenda stated that she has 4 hours available weekly available through October and will help train a replacement if necessary. There are some peculiarities in our present BMSI system that need to be addressed.
7. Transition Planning: board agreed to place ads for new positions. It was also agreed to have Melanson Heath conduct an audit of the financial records for which Debra Harling was responsible.
8. Allan Pickman presented the needs of the Planning Board for minute-taking, research, and other duties that have been performed by Betsy Perry. These duties were covered in recent years by Betsy as Office Assistant instead of as Planning Board Clerk at an estimated cost of \$9-10,000 per year. Neither the select board or budget committee were aware of this happening. The Board is presently planning to hire a Municipal Clerk to handle the routine administrative duties needed in the office. This would include handling notices and mailings for both the Planning Board and the ZBA which also has need for administrative help. There would no longer be the Office Assistant position. It was recognized that minute taking is of critical importance for the planning board and that Betsy is excellent at it. Cromwell suggested that for the remainder of 2017 there are 11 meetings for the planning board and asked Pickman if 4 hours for each meeting would get them through the end of the year? That would be a cost of approximately \$800 for 44 hours, of which \$300 remains in their budget. If an emergency need for greater help came up it would be considered. Pickman said he would discuss with his board and get back to us. It was also suggested that the planning board address the BAC with their needs for next year. Betsy apparently wishes to continue with the Planning Board and will work from home.
9. Miscellaneous: The Board agreed to have Cromwell discuss a legal matter with the town attorney, keeping the board informed. The next meeting on July 25 will begin at 5:30 p.m. to accommodate attendance at the ZBA hearing scheduled for that date. The Board signed vouchers for payroll and disbursements.

10. Public Comment. Heidi Jordan asked that the Board set convenient hours for the town office to enable residents to get information. She also wished that more records be scanned to make them available online. Honey Hastings asked why the cabinet outside the town office was locked, making it difficult for committees to post notices. Bill said he would look into it. Bill also announced that he was keeping the town calendar and hall rentals until we hire the new clerk.