

A great deal of issues were dealt with in this board of selectmen meeting, and while a review may at first glance seem daunting and too tasking, as the great and late Robert Frost said, "the best way out is through." The meeting began with Ayer's police force describing a potential new uniform that they would adopt; one that would better facilitate the movement that is required for their duties, as well as add to their sublime aesthetic.

A few pertinent developments regarding the town's water situation arose: Dan Van Schalkwyk, the town's engineer, budgeted a plan which entailed \$75,350.22 for the Change Order 2 for Prospect & Oak St., an infrastructure project for the water mining industries. The National Grid's scope would cover \$26,220.26 of the total payment due.

On the evening of November 11th, in a storage closet, the broiling indoor temperature was 111 degrees, and it activated the sprinklers. As a result, unfortunately, over 500 gallons of water were released in the office, but thankfully minimal damage was dealt. A few documents were impacted in the storage closet for the 3rd floor, though Chuck Shultz and Park Carpenter worked to clear the issue and worked to move people from the Great Hall. November 19th was the last day of dehumidification, and the town will be filing an insurance claim as well as meeting with BCM Control to find what caused the malfunction. On the bright side, though, it was a testament as to just how powerful our emergency facilities are and how handily they are able to deal with such issues.

At the intersection of Groton-Harvard, there have been a number of accidents, and rest assured, the situation is being dealt with. There have been 4 accidents there in the last month, and to mitigate those tragic events, on December 4th, a proposal has been put forth to post an LED stop sign, similar to the one on Central Avenue. If there were any concerns regarding the street itself, this change will not turn the intersection into a 4-way stop. The estimates for the cost of this sign are around \$25k, but the reconstruction of the whole rig configuration would cost about \$250k-\$300k. Plans are being made to enact this construction immediately.

The transfer station has become a point of contention for some time now, and ever since August 26th in 2014, rumors have been circulating that the town wants to close the transfer station, and these rumors have had a resurgence of sorts on October 4th. To put it very clearly: The transfer station is not closing now, not ever, and certainly not any time in the foreseeable future. There are a few lingering issues with it, and the town has decided to fix these issues. One principal issue is that the pricing of the bags is inconsistent with their value and the price that other towns are imposing on the same product. In the same regard, motions have been made to open the transfer station on Wednesdays, as hours can be taken from Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays to deal with the predictable influx of people accordingly. There will be a meeting on December the 7th to further discuss any changes.

With the completion of the parking project, the crosswalks near there must also be illuminated, and it is pertinent to do so as it is a significant safety hazard.

This is also a notice to please stop parking in front of the post office. The space must be open and clear at all times.

On January 15, 6 P.M., the tentative, initial joint budget will be presented to the public. Then, on March 9th, 6 P.M., the finalized budget will be presented again, just to keep the people in

the know. In regard to the budget, a few accomplishments must be acknowledged: Ayer received a certification for free cash on July 21st, 2019, \$1,700,000 for various expenses, \$2,700,000 for water, \$2,000,000 for the sewer, \$21,000 for solid waste, and \$24,000 for our emergency services, ambulances in particular. It's a testament to the strength and fiscal integrity of the town that we are doing far better off than our sister towns.

This is also a message to any Devens residents living or voting in Ayer, or any that live on historical lines. A resident committee is needed to represent the people and advocate for many of the issues that have been plaguing us since 2006. Regarding zoning, split tax rates, vehicular and transportation regulations, we must reach a consensus with both our people and our neighboring towns, such as Harvard. They have set up a list of their rules and regulations regarding their policies, and we should ensure that all is taken care of as soon as possible.

Thank you, and have a wonderful Thanksgiving break. The Ayer Town Hall will be closed on November 28th and 29th due to the holiday.