

Town Infrastructure

Ayer Board of Selectmen Meeting

October 2, 2018

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The Board of Selectmen announced that the Ayer Police will be dawning pink patches on their uniforms in honor of Breast cancer awareness month.

The new director of the Ayer library, Mr. Tim Silva, spoke about his responsibility at the library: building a better relationship with the library and the community. In an effort to reach out to the community, Mr. Silva would like to send out surveys to citizens about what the library can add to benefit them. He expects that his initiative to make the library better for citizens should be completed in a year.

A community garden is coming to Ayer. The project started in January 2018 and has since gained 15 active members and 84 Facebook members. They hope to grow together with the community and have asked to lease a piece of land from the town for their project. They want to be able to host workshops for anyone interested in learning about growing their own food and have come a long way since their start. The group has gained a tax ID and a bank account, they have had the soil tested in their desired location, and have been using local vendors for their supplies. The group aspires to become an autonomous non-profit organization. The board voted unanimously to lease the land to the group until January 1, 2024.

Mark Wetzel, Superintendent of the Ayer Dept. of Public Works, made an appearance at the meeting to discuss several issues. First, he asked for an increase in budget for some of the water mains that have been breaking. The board unanimously voted to add an additional \$10,521.92 to his budget. He also recommended that the town of Ayer join MA WARN, a free program for disaster situations. It is a program created by the EPA for towns in surrounding areas to work together in disaster times to help each other. He explained that the program has no cost to join. The only issue with the program is that the contract to join has a liability clause which holds towns accountable to pre-created responsibilities. However, the board passed a motion to join. Wetzel also made an important announcement that the town will be paving Washington Street from Oct. 9-Oct. 22. They will also be paving Pleasant Street. Both streets will be getting new sidewalks as well. He also mentioned that he will be asking for an added \$150,000 to his budget for paving at a separate town meeting.

The Board spoke extensively about the upcoming Athletic field project for the high school. Chairman Livingston expressed that she was “mad at [the] town counsel” for handling the whole situation poorly. She later gave the advice that they ought to handle it with “speed and discipline.” She expressed her anger that the town counsel was missing key details and waited until days before the election to tell the board. The board decided that the election to see if the fields will happen would be on the ballot for October 6th, and they spoke of a special meeting on

October 22, 2018 to discuss the debt exclusion portion of the project. The board also decided unanimously that they support the athletic fields being built.

Selectman Scott Houde brought up two points before the meeting's close. First, selectman Houde addressed a better way of reaching out to people who do not use the internet often. Houde was approached by a woman at a meeting and since he has been coming up with ideas for helping people get information about town issues. The board came up with several ideas to fix this problem such as, using the town transfer station to post information, the town library, the high school's sign out front, or even posting signs at the rotary. Second, Mr. Houde mentioned creating what he called, the Devens Disposition. It would be a program that links the town of Ayer and the community of Devens. He believes it will positively impact both of us for years to come.