

Summary of comments made by Stanley Garland, Chair of the Board of Selectmen as recorded by the Town Clerk from his informal notes. Please note this is not a verbatim record but a good faith report on the most important points discussed by him.

Stanley welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all the people who serve on town committees for their hard work and service. He then asked that retiring selectman Andrew Girard be given a round of applause for his service.

He then asked for and received a moment of silence for all our residents who have passed since our last Annual Town Meeting in particular Walter Grover, Dexter Nelson and Lillian Deane.

He then explained that it has been a busy year for the Board of Selectman and the Town having worked on and completed a variety of projects such as some of the most important:

- Repaving the Bernardston Elementary School parking lot at a cost of about \$ 100,000.
- Developed plans to replace Turners Fall Road Bridge at a cost of about \$ 350,000 with the hope of having the work completed by the end of this summer.
- Began project to remove dangerous trees on Town owned land and public road ways at a cost of about \$ 20,000 and that project is still in progress.
- Had Transfer Station land fill testing wells repaired or replaced at a cost of about \$ 125,000.
- Due to our Green Community Designation we qualified for a Green Community Grant which enabled us to replace the Town Hall furnace and heating system with a completely new fuel efficient system with no cost to Town residents and tax payers.
- We were able to make repairs and improvements at the Senior Center: floors were refinished, water leaks were repaired, the attic was thoroughly cleaned of years of bat droppings, repaired the cement sidewalk and developed a plan to install “mini-splits” in the basement (see article 18 on the warrant for tonight).

He then reported that Happy Valley Compassion Center has indicated that it is moving ahead with both the Bella Notte and Northfield Road sites for their marijuana growing facilities. It expects to start work on the Bella Notte building in the next month (June) and are just waiting on the contractor and it is also developing architectural and engineering plans for the Northfield Road site with the goal of starting construction on that facility within a year if not sooner.

He then reported that this is the first time in many years that the Selectboard and Finance Committee have proposed a 2 ½% increase in pay for all Town employees. In addition to that proposed across the board increase they felt it was time to give some department heads additional increases to enable the Town to make those salaries more competitive with current pay levels for similar jobs in the area. Therefore it is being proposed that: the Police Chief receive an additional \$ 4,000 annual increase, the Highway Department Superintendent receive an additional \$ 3,000 annual increase and the Town Coordinator receive an additional \$2,000 annual increase. In the same spirit the Police Sergeant would receive a 3 ½% increase instead of just 2 ½% and the most senior highway department worker would receive a \$ 1,000 in addition to the 2 ½% across the board increase.

He emphasized that these folks keep our town running smoothly day in and day out and furthermore even with the increases their salaries still don't come close to their counterparts in neighboring towns.

Finally he encouraged those present to ask questions and share their opinion and also be civil and respectful to each other even if we don't always agree.

Respectfully Submitted June 6, 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul W. Luther". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul W. Luther, Bernardston Town Clerk