

**Mount Holly Select Board Meeting  
August 4 & 10, 2020  
Minutes**

**Zoom Meeting: 836 4339 4585 (8.4.2020)**

**Zoom Meeting: 894 2405 8202 (8.10.2020)**

**Present: Select Board:** Jeff Chase, Jennifer Matthews, Mark Turco

**Town Officials:** Gabrielle Bickford, David Johnson, Jon McCann, Don Richardson, Jim Seward, Clinton Woolley

**Members of the Public:** Jim Corven, Ted Crawford, Craig Hutt Vater (Principal, Mount Holly School), Annette Lynch, Stephen Michel, Rhonda Rivers, Mike Valente

1. **Call to Order** by Mark Turco at 6:32 pm.

2. All recited the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

3. **Changes and/or additions to the agenda** – Jennifer Matthews asked to add a discussion about Municipal Planning Grants to the agenda. It was agreed to do so under ‘New Business.’

4. **Approval of July 14, 2020 Minutes** – Mr. Turco made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Jeff Chase, unanimously approved.

5. **Reorganization (continuation)**

a. **Select Board Chair** – No nominations. Ted Crawford asked why this item continued to be on the agenda if no resolution was possible, and he suggested the item be removed from the agenda in the future if no action was to be taken.

b. **Select Board Admin. Assistant** – Revisions still in process. Select Board members will review the latest revisions and revisit the issue at the next meeting.

6. **Reports**

a. **Highways & Transfer Station Update – Clinton Woolley**

i) **Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program: Equipment Purchase** – Mr. Woolley recommended the purchase of a three-point hitch blower to be attached to the tractor for use in cleaning leaves from ditches and culverts. Ms. Matthews explained that the grant would cover 80% of the cost of one piece of equipment with 20% as a cash match covered by the town. Mr. Woolley said the cost of the blower would be around \$5,100. Discussion ensued. Mr. Chase made a motion to apply for the grant and the purchase of a blower which could be attached to the tractor, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved.

ii) **Transfer Station Fence Repair/Replacement** – Mr. Woolley said he had made several calls about the repair. Mr. Turco asked if it was possible to just get the fence upright again. Mr. Woolley said the guys were working on it in the hopes they could fix it themselves.

iii) **Healdville Road Paving Bids** – Mr. Chase explained four bids had been received with Fuller Sand & Gravel as the lowest bidder on both Option #1 Shim & Overlay at \$49,600, and Option #2 Reclaim & New Pavement at \$105,550, as well as Alternate #1 Shoulder Aggregate at \$2,400. Much discussion followed on funds availability, overlay vs. full depth, future grant funding availability, the \$55,000 available for paving from the previous year’s budget and the \$75,000 available in this year’s budget, the Hortonville Road grant.

**At this point in the meeting, there was a widespread power outage, the Select Board quorum was lost, and Mr. Turco adjourned the meeting at 7:02 pm.**

**The meeting was called back to order on Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:32 pm.**

**After the Pledge of Allegiance, the Healdville Road Paving Bids discussion continued.**

Mr. Chase stated we were debating overlay vs. reclaim. Discussion ensued about what to do with any leftover funds, longevity of overlay, and condition of other roads in town. Ms. Matthews stated she considered this process a bit haphazard. She thought it best to determine the number of miles of paved roads in town, determine their condition, then prioritize their repair, method and cost, and create a schedule/plan for such. She suggested the Select Board take up the bids received for the paving of Healdville Road and make a decision. More discussion ensued about overlay vs. reclaim, funds available, and use of leftover funds in the spring for other paving work. Ms. Matthews made a motion to accept Fuller & Sand Gravel's bid of \$49,600 for Shim & Overlay and their bid of \$2,400 for shoulder gravel work, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved. Mr. Chase will work with Mr. Woolley on a capital plan for future road improvements.

iv) **2011 Ford F-350 Dump Truck Bids** - Only one bid was received for \$12,000, the minimum, from GM Tree Tech. Mr. Chase made a motion to accept the bid for \$12,000 from GM Tree Tech, seconded by Ms. Matthews, unanimously approved.

v) **Land Pride Ditch Mower Bids** - No bids were received. The mower bid notice will be reposted. Mr. Chase will look into equipment auction services.

b. **Rutland Regional Transportation Council Update - Clinton Woolley** - Mr. Woolley reported that most of the meeting was on the Emerald Ash Borer and the need to keep track of it and ash trees. Don Richardson, the RRTC Alternate, also attended the meeting and listened to the presentation by Joanne Garton. He stated the town needed an inventory of ash trees and their condition as well as a budget line item to deal with the coming infestation damage to trees in the town right-of-ways. He also stated the need to communicate with homeowners, especially second homeowners, about the Emerald Ash Borer and possible infestations and damage to ash trees on their property which could impact town roads. Mr. Turco said the town would need an inventory of ash trees in the right-of-ways, their condition, an estimate of costs to deal with infestation damage, and a documentation of those ash trees not in the right-of-ways. Mr. Woolley will do this. Jon McCann suggested it might be a good idea to take some trees down now so as to avoid a massive die off once an infestation arrives.

c. **Treasurer - David Johnson**

i) **Monthly Income & Expense Report** - Mr. Johnson pointed out: the Municipal Property Adjustment Income from the State of \$8,500 with an additional \$1,940 received since the end of July; the State Aid for Roads first-quarter only payment of \$30,201.46; the Solid Waste Labels Sold of \$3,074 so far; and, 3,920 tons of winter sand purchased and hauled to date.

ii) **Financial Management Questionnaire - Received & Reviewed** - Mr. Johnson stated the annual report had the same questions on it as last year so there was nothing new to report.

iii) **Outside Audit** - Mr. Johnson stated he had looked at the VT Society of CPAs website. He found only one firm in our area in Springfield. He said he would have to make some calls to learn if others in our area might be interested. Ms. Matthews asked if it would be possible to have the names of a few firms with cost estimates by the September Select Board meeting in the hopes of having this two-year audit done this fall. Mr. Johnson stated he thought that was possible.

d. **Mount Holly Planning Commission Update - Jim Seward** - Mr. Seward reported on the business of the last Planning Commission meeting: eight building construction registration forms, a Land Use Permit for Okemo on the south side, a discussion on the clerk and Administrative Officer positions and combining the two positions into one. He noted the next regular meeting would be preceded by two subdivision hearings. Ms. Matthews asked about the development of a work plan for the town plan. Mr. Seward said that would occur at the August 31<sup>st</sup> meeting.

7. **New Business**

a. **Mount Holly School Reopening Briefing & Well Update - Craig Hutt Vater** - Mr. Turco reported that after the power outage on August 4th, Mr. Hutt Vater said school would reopen on September 8<sup>th</sup> with many arrangements still to be made. Mr. Turco also reported that the school was still looking at testing the water from the town garage well. Ms. Matthews asked if school would be

held in-person or virtually. Mr. Chase responded they were considering two different options, constantly evolving with the changing circumstances, but would be using both remote and in-person learning.

b. **Carlton Cemetery Tree Removal Bids** – Ms. Matthews reported that two bids were received. GM Tree Tech would cut down the five dying trees and leave the wood for \$3,000, remove the wood for \$3,400. Jason Barrows would cut down the trees and leave the wood for \$5,700, remove the wood for \$10,800. Mr. Turco asked if the wood could be used at the town garage. Mr. Woolley stated it was too difficult to get the wood out of the cemetery. Discussion ensued on budget funds available, budget surpluses, and the costs. Ms. Matthews made a motion to accept GM Tree Tech’s bid to cut down the trees and remove the wood for \$3,400, seconded by Mr. Chase, unanimously approved.

c. **Mount Holly Conservation Commission Formation – Jim Corven** - Mr. Corven gave an overview of what conservation commissions do in VT:

- Provide education & outreach about natural resources
- Serve as a liaison between landowners & a land trust
- Advise the Planning Commission & Select Board about conservation & environmental issues in town
- Do inventories of natural resources, e.g., as previously discussed, ash trees
- Apply for grants for particular projects
- Coordinate with State agencies

Mr. Corven explained that conservation commissions are purely advisory with no regulatory authority; that rests solely with the Select Board. He noted that Shrewsbury, Wallingford, Killington, Weston, Tinmouth and Poultney are other area towns with conservation commissions. Ms. Matthews asked about wildlife. Mr. Corven replied, yes, conservation commissions can provide information on the town’s wildlife and wildlife habitats, water sheds, flood plains, forestry, and recreation areas. He emphasized this was entirely in advisory capacity to the Planning Commission and Select Board to enable both to make informed decisions. Ms. Matthews commented on how a conservation commission could be a very helpful tool for the Planning Commission at present as it works to strengthen parts of the town plan. Mr. Corven also pointed out that conservation commissions do not have a budget. They can apply for Tiny Grants through the Association of VT Conservation Commissions to fund projects. They could also as a group do an ash tree inventory without the expense of a consultant or forester. In response to a question from Mr. McCann, Mr. Corven stated the group could monitor the water quality and do water testing at Star Lake if so asked. Tasks would be assigned by the Select Board and/or the Planning Commission. Discussion ensued about the number of members for the commission with Mr. Turco and Mr. Chase stating five would provide good representation. Ms. Matthews made a motion to create a Town of Mount Holly Conservation Commission with five members, seconded by Mr. Chase, unanimously approved.

d. **Button-Up VT Program – Don Richardson** - Mr. Richardson gave a brief overview of the program which helps educate homeowners on how best to cut energy costs through weatherization strategies, home energy audits with savings of \$150 per audit, and trainings. He is willing to coordinate the program here, working with Efficiency VT and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. The program is primarily educational, sharing information with community members about weatherization opportunities, and at no cost to the town. Discussion ensued on the project. Ms. Matthews made a motion for Mount Holly to be a Button-Up VT participating community, seconded by Mr. Chase, unanimously approved.

e. **Grants – Federal CARES Act & Municipal Planning Grant** - Jon McCann explained that the VT Legislature passed Act 137 to distribute the coronavirus relief funds (CARES Act), including two million dollars to assist towns to digitize land records for easier public access. The State’s rationale is to: modernize procedures; ensure public health & safety with fewer visitors to town offices; protect land records from natural disasters such as floods and fire; provide easier, more user-

friendly access to land records. Mr. McCann said he thought this work would dovetail well with the State's current parcel mapping project and the additional work being done by Russell Graphics which includes digitized parcel maps. Mr. McCann explained the grant allows funding for a scanner or computer, staffing, and/or vendor fees to digitize the records with up to \$20,000 available per grant. The application is due by September first with funds to be spent by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Mr. McCann is willing to take the lead on this grant opportunity if the Select Board concurs. Discussion ensued on the equipment needed and costs, vendors, public records, complexity of the project, target dates, and the inevitable digitization of public records in the future. Ms. Matthews made a motion to pursue the grant funding available through the Federal CARES Act for the digitization of land records, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved.

Mr. McCann stated he would discuss the Municipal Planning Grant with the Planning Commission and then return to the next Select Board meeting with an update on that grant, which is due October first.

f. **Other** - There was no additional New Business.

## 8. **Ongoing & Old Business**

a. **School Tuition Request - Mike Valente** - Mr. Turco stated that after the power went out at the August 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, Craig Hutt Vater stated that Mr. Valente's tuition reimbursement request needed to be presented to the Superintendent at the Supervisory Union and to the School Board. Mr. Valente requested a letter from the Select Board stating as much. Mr. Turco said that the Select Board would draft a letter and send it to Mr. Valente. Mr. Turco also explained that the request for driver's ed reimbursement should also go to the School Board.

b. **Purchasing Policy Revisions** - Mr. Chase stated he had made a number of revisions to the policy, in particular to categories of purchases: incidental, minor, and major. Discussion ensued about templates, bonding, recurring purchases, limits, emergency purchases, and dollar amount thresholds requiring Select Board approval. Additional revisions are forthcoming, and those will be reviewed at the next Select Board meeting.

c. **Swap Shed Reopening?** - Ms. Matthews stated she had heard from the transfer station attendants that there were a number of requests for the Swap Shed to reopen. The Select Board agreed to reopen the shed as long as all health & safety requirements are followed: 6' social distancing, wearing masks, disinfecting of the door handles on a regular basis, and only one person in the Swap Shed at a time. Mr. Chase will make up some signs, and Mr. Turco will drop off signs he has for use at the transfer station.

d. **Other** - There was no additional Old & Ongoing Business.

## 9. **Announcements/Other Business**

a. **Reminder: VT Route 155 Closure for Bridge #7 Replacement - until August 18<sup>th</sup>**

b. **Town Office Health & Safety Requirements: Masks Required, Social Distancing, Contact Log** - Mr. Turco stated all requirements must be followed in the town office.

c. **Reminder: VT Statewide Primary - Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup> - Polls Open 10:00 am - 7:00 pm**

10. **Review & Sign Orders** - to be signed one Select Board member at a time at the town office.

11. **Executive Session: Title 1 V.S.A. S 313(a)(3) - personnel** - Not needed this evening.

12. **Adjourn** - Mr. Turco adjourned the meeting at 8:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted: Jennifer Matthews

Minutes Approved: 9.8.2020