

Mount Holly Select Board Meeting

April 13, 2021

Minutes

In-Person with Zoom Meeting: 898 6126 5487

Present: Select Board: Jeff Chase, Jennifer Matthews, Mark Turco (Chair)

Town Officials: Dennis Devereux, Francis DeVine, David Johnson, Annette Lynch, Jon McCann, Stephen Michel, Renee Sarmiento, James Seward, Carol Woolley, Clinton Woolley

Members of the Public: Martina Barnes (GMNF Manchester District Ranger), Paul Barton, Mel & Buddy Batchelder, Gabrielle Bickford, Zena Gates, Katie Hollebeck, Craig Hutt Vater (Mount Holly School Principal), Judy Hyjek, Mount Holly School Students Jameson and Thomas, Paul Orzechowski, Alice Perry, Donna Seward, Amy Turco

1. **Call to Order** by Mark Turco at 6:34 pm.

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

3. **Changes and/or additions to the agenda** – Jeff Chase asked to move Item #6.a., Improvements to Nature Trail Network, up in the agenda. It was agreed to do so following Item #5.a., Green Mountain National Forest Update. Mr. Turco said a request had been made to add a letter about a Class IV road to the agenda. Jennifer Matthews explained the letter was received on Monday morning, well past the agenda items deadline of Wednesday at noon prior to a Select Board meeting. Mr. Turco said we would discuss the letter at the meeting's end if time permitted.

4. **Approval of March 9th, 2021 Minutes and March 4th & March 26th Special Select Board Meeting Minutes** – Mr. Chase made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved.

5. Reports

a. **Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) Update – Martina C. Barnes, Manchester District Ranger** – Ms. Barnes introduced herself to the community. She spoke briefly about the 3,389 acres of Green Mountain National Forest located in Mount Holly and the ongoing work there of active forest management, wildlife habitat creation, and recreation projects. She mentioned there was a safety concern about the bridge at the end of Greendale Road, and the Select Board agreed to meet with her staff to discuss the issue. In response to a question from Ms. Matthews about specific projects in the GMNF located in Mount Holly, Ms. Barnes said there was an early successional habitat project in the works that would create and promote sustainable habitat for wildlife and birds which would involve some timber harvesting. Ms. Barnes thanked the Select Board for the opportunity to speak, and the Select Board thanked her for the update.

6.a. **Improvements to Nature Trail Network** – Jameson reported on changes to the proposed nature trail. After talking with Road Foreman Clinton Woolley, the students decided to move the trail so that it only crosses the drive into the town garage before returning to school property. Mr. Turco said the Select Board will review the map and the changes and then discuss any liability issues with the town's insurance agency and the town attorney. He thanked Jameson for a very good presentation.

b. **Highways & Transfer Station Update – Clinton Woolley** reported on needed repairs to the loader bucket at a cost of \$2,500 for labor and materials, or \$1,500 for a patch; a new bucket would cost \$13,000. Food scrap collection and disposal is growing with four 30-gallon totes driven up to Rutland County Solid Waste in the past week. A proposal has been received from Music Mountain Compost to pick up food scraps every two weeks at a cost of \$25 per 55-gallon drum with shavings supplied. Ms. Matthews suggested Mr. Woolley find out if a contract is needed and if other towns are satisfied with the service provided.

i) **Computer Replacement** – Mr. Woolley noted his office computer dates from 2012 and needs to be updated. Mr. Turco asked him to look into the cost of a new computer. Ms. Matthews noted that Larry Gold helped the Listers with the purchase of a new computer and the transfer of data from the old computer to the new, and that he might be a resource for Mr. Woolley.

ii) **Structures Grant** – Mr. Chase has prepared a FY22 Structures Grant application for replacement of the Summit Road culvert. A temporary culvert was installed last fall with a new box culvert required by the State for the final repair. Project cost will run between \$160-180,000 with a 10% local match required. If the grant is received, work will take place next year between July and October; a RFP will be issued for design work first, followed by a second RFP for construction.

c. Treasurer – David Johnson

i) **Monthly Income & Expense Report** – Mr. Johnson reported the Culvert Repair Fund is at \$50,740; the Property Taxes Receivables amount of \$113,516 is for less properties but a higher dollar value than a year ago; the Dog License Receipts amount of \$356 is not very high with only 130 dogs registered – perhaps time to do another dog census; the Solid Waste Labels Sold amount of \$22,694 is more than last year and ahead of budgeted amount; Lister Expense of \$3,660 includes the cost of the new computer; Solid Waste Hauling & Disposal Expense of \$42,833 is through the end of March and running slightly over budget; Vehicle/Equip Repair & Maintenance amount of \$16,219 will increase as it does not include a recently received invoice of \$3,100 for new springs for the truck.

ii) **Independent Audit Update** – The audit process has begun with RHR Smith receiving a download of QuickBooks and some initial documents. An on-site visit is planned for the end of the month.

iii) **Health Reimbursement Account Update** – There is \$2,707 in the account, so a deposit is not needed this year.

d. **Mount Holly Planning Commission Update – Jon McCann** reported that an additional correction to the Flood Hazard Area Regulations has been made via a previous Select Board letter; a State law passed in January 2020 requires all boundary line changes to be filed with the State, and a sheet explaining this is now included in the subdivision packet; revisions to the Town Plan continue with a recent review of information pertaining to Mount Holly received from the State geologist and the State archeologist.

e. **Mount Holly Conservation Commission Update – Francis DeVine** reported that they are pulling together a group to work on the Municipal Shade Tree Preservation Plan; a Tree Warden is needed to help with this work; the \$4,500 VT Watershed grant application for education and research on Star Lake was turned down; the community survey generated 109 online responses and seven paper responses, for a 10% response rate; a preliminary report from Castleton University on the survey responses is to come; work continues on updating the town's inventory of natural resources with a visit to look at vernal pools planned.

f. **Rutland Regional Planning Commission Update – Jon McCann** – No update necessary.

6. Ongoing & Old Business

a. **Improvements to Nature Trail Network** – see above.

b. **Mount Holly School/Town Garage Water System Permits & Documents – Review & Sign** – Ms. Matthews briefly reviewed the reasons for the water system and the documents drafted, including a Memorandum of Agreement between the Town and the School which states the responsibilities for and the costs of the water system's design, construction, installation, connection, maintenance and decommissioning fall upon the School District with no municipal tax burden. All documents were reviewed and revised by our town attorney to protect the town from any liability. Mr. Chase read the attached Resolution in to the record. Mr. Turco made a motion to adopt the resolution, seconded by Ms. Matthews, unanimously approved. Mr. Turco signed the Memorandum of Agreement, which will next be signed by the School District. Once the Memorandum of Agreement is signed and the State permits are signed and approved, the Easement Deed will be executed and recorded with the town clerk. Paul Orzechowski, the Ludlow-Mount Holly Unified Union School District Board Chair, and Mount Holly School Principal Craig Hutt Vater both thanked the Select Board and the town for their willingness, and for their time and effort to make this happen.

c. **FY21 Lower Healdville Road, Alpine Drive, Chalet Drive & Station Road Paving Bids – Open** – Mr. Chase opened and read the bids as follows: Bazin Brothers, \$113,254.10; Fuller Sand & Gravel, \$99,325.40; Pike Industries, \$114,602.75; and, Wilk Paving, \$107,571.00. Discussion ensued. Mr. Woolley stated Fuller has done a good job in the past. Mr. Chase made a motion to accept Fuller's bid of \$99,325.40 for the paving of lower Healdville Road, Alpine Drive, Chalet Drive & Station Road to limits shown on the RFP, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved.

d. **Mowing of Town Lands Bids – Open** – Mr. Chase noted three bids were received in three different formats, so they are difficult to compare. He will break down the numbers and put them in a spreadsheet for comparison. Mr. Chase and Mr. Turco thanked Guilmette Landworks, Fitzgerald General

Services, and Norton's Property Management for submitting bids. A decision regarding the mowing will be made at an upcoming Select Board meeting.

e. **Junk Ordinance Enforcement** – Mr. Turco explained that enforcement of the ordinance had been put on hold due to the pandemic, but now with the arrival of spring and businesses reopening, it was time to begin enforcement measures once again. Discussion ensued on previous steps taken and how to proceed. It was decided that Ms. Matthews will consult with the town attorney to determine the proper steps to take in enforcement of the ordinance. Concerns were also raised about trash and junk accumulating at the Blue Spruce Inn. Ms. Matthews will send them a letter letting them know they are in violation of the junk ordinance.

f. **Select Board Admin. Assistant Position** – Ms. Matthews reported she is working with the Leddy Group to find a qualified candidate.

g. **Other** – There was no additional Old & Ongoing Business this evening.

7. New Business

a. **Traffic Safety Concerns** – Mr. Turco reported that the Select Board had received ten emails regarding traffic concerns in town: one pertained to the intersection of Healdville Road and VT Route 103, which is under State jurisdiction and would have to be addressed by the State; there were emails pro and con about removing the grassy triangle at Lake Street and Belmont Road; and, there were many emails concerned about speed in the village of Belmont. Dennis Devereux noted that most of the emails did concern the village of Belmont with general agreement on lowering the speed to 25 mph in the village. He also mentioned concerns about the difficulty making turns at the grassy triangle, the possibility of 'stop ahead' signs both on Lake Street and Tarbellville Road, and the speed on Healdville Road. Discussion ensued with concerns raised about other roads (Shunpike Road, Gates Road), and possible solutions including a traffic study, radar speed signs, other signage, speed bumps, the possibility of holding a hearing dedicated to traffic concerns. Ms. Matthews suggested the formation of a small committee to evaluate and prioritize the concerns and to research the costs to best remedy these issues. Mr. Devereux volunteered to head the committee and then to report back to the Select Board with recommendations. A notice will be posted asking for volunteers for the traffic study committee.

b. **Local Emergency Management Plan – Adopt & Sign** – Mr. Chase explained the plan is to be updated annually. He along with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission made the necessary updates. Mr. Chase made a motion to adopt the 2020/21 Local Emergency Management Plan, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved.

c. **Road Surface Cut Policy – Adopt & Sign** – Ms. Matthews explained this policy stems from requests by property owners and Green Mountain Power to bury utilities, occasionally necessitating a road surface cut. The policy spells out the Town of Mount Holly's conditions when a road surface cut is needed. Ms. Matthews made a motion to adopt and sign the Road Surface Cut Policy, seconded by Mr. Chase, unanimously approved.

d. **Conservation Commission Member Resignation** – Mr. Turco read the email received from Nicole Lewis, informing us of her decision to resign from the Conservation Commission due to time constraints. Ms. Matthews made a motion to accept Nicole Lewis' resignation from the Conservation Commission with regrets, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved.

e. **Sharon Lane Old Recycling Shed Rental Request** – Mr. Turco read Josh Bickford's request to rent the town building on Sharon Lane. Ms. Matthews mentioned she had briefly spoken with the town attorney about this. We do have the ability to raise funds for the Town through rental of town-owned properties. We would need a Certificate of Insurance from the leasee and a signed lease with requirements that any damage done to the property is the leasee's responsibility. Discussion ensued about town equipment currently stored there and town space needs. Mr. Turco will talk with Mr. Woolley about both, and he will talk with Mr. Bickford. This item will be on next month's agenda once additional information is gathered.

f. **Other** – Mr. Chase spoke with Bob Bryant concerning the end of Shunpike Road where drivers are often traveling at a high rate of speed and fail to negotiate the sharp turn towards VT Route 103; as such, cars go off the road. Discussion ensued about the signs currently in place, which are based on State recommendations, the need to repaint the lines on the road, and the need to enter a State highway at a 90-degree angle. Mr. Woolley will talk with VTrans about the right-of-way there and any other possible remedies.

Dennis Devereux spoke of the five trees cut down last year in the Old Mechanicsville Cemetery and the five trees to be cut down in the Carlton Cemetery this year. The house next to the cemetery has sold and he has reached out to the new owner for permission to access the trees via their property.

8. Citizen Comments – Paul Barton spoke of his concerns about the damage being done to the old headstones in the Tarbellville Cemetery by State plows. As the plows go by, slush, gravel and debris are hitting the headstones with damaging force and with complete disregard for those buried there, including American patriot and hero Charles Tarbell who died in 1862 in service to his country defending the Constitution and American freedoms. Discussion ensued about possible remedies to this situation. Mr. Devereux, as a Cemetery Commissioner, will look into this by talking with VTrans and investigating ways to protect the headstones.

9. Announcements/Other Business –

a. Reminder: Household Hazardous Waste Collection @ the Transfer Station on Saturday, April 17th, 8:00 am to 10:00 am only

b. Other – There were no additional Announcements this evening.

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 – Ms. Matthews made the motion to enter Executive Session per previously quoted Statute at 8:36 pm, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved. Ms. Matthews made a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:52 pm, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved. No actions were taken.

12. Adjourn – Mr. Turco adjourned the meeting at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully Submitted: Jennifer Matthews

Approved: 5.11.2021