

Mount Holly Select Board Meeting
April 11, 2022 Minutes
In-Person with Zoom Meeting: 898 6126 5487

Present:

Select Board: Jeff Chase, Diana Garrow, Mark Turco (Chair)

Town Officials: Caitlin Boyle, Dennis Devereux, Philippe Crane, Carol Garrow-Woolley, David Johnson, Jon McCann, Christine Pratt, James Seward, Brigid Sullivan, Clinton Woolley

Members of the Public: In Person: Paul Barton, Zena Gates, Stephen Michel, Via Zoom: Francis and Carol DeVine, Chad Farrar, Barbara & Steve Hazelton, Marianne McGee, Marie Paquette, Renee Samento, Donna Seward, Sue Starr-Adams

1. **Call to Order by Mark Turco at 6:30 pm.**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance:** All stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **Consideration of any changes and/or additions to the agenda:** Mark Turco made one addition re: the Belmont Store liquor license (see New Business).
4. **Approval of March 8, 15, 22 Minutes:** Jeff Chase made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Mark Turco, unanimously approved.
5. **Reports**
 - a. **Auditor Presentation**
 - i. Ms. Brittney Gilman from auditing firm RHR Smith presented a summary of the Town Audit; the firm is auditing FY 19 and FY 20 concurrently. Ms. Gilman summarized the audit's financial statements and noted that RHR Smith did not find any material weaknesses or insufficiencies in the audit.
 - ii. Ms. Gilman called attention to pages 61-67 of the audit, which is a special report on compliance and controls, and compares Mt. Holly's established policies and procedures in comparison to best practices. She noted that the firm found no weaknesses in internal controls but highlighted one minor recommendation: a suggestion that a written pay rate form should be issued as a course of best practice.
 - iii. Overall, Ms. Gilman noted that this was a "clean audit" and representative of the financial position of the town.
 - iv. The audit report will be available for public review in hard copy at the Town Office asked; Mark Turco stated that the audit report can also be uploaded to the unofficial town website for digital access.
 - b. **Highways & Transfer Station Update - Clinton Woolley**

- i. Mr. Woolley reported that the property owner who owns the road at the end of Summit Rd. Extension would like to improve the road to the town's specifications and subsequently turn the road over to the town for ongoing maintenance. Mark Turco suggested scheduling a follow-up meeting for Mr. Woolley and a Select Board member to make a visit to the site to assess next steps.
- ii. Spring grading will begin the week of April 18.
- iii. Mr. Woolley has priced out the cost of running the excavator this year.
- iv. Culverts ordered last year have been received and will be used for spring work; Jeff Chase suggested ordering additional needed culverts now, to prevent delivery delays.
- v. Mr. Woolley reported that Tim Hubbard is interested in purchasing the recycling containers used at the Transfer Station prior to the introduction of single-stream recycling; the Select Board did not see any reason not to proceed.

c. RRPC TAC - VPSP2 - Bridge List

- i. Bridge 64 is on the Bowlsville List. Jeff Chase noted that Bridge 15 is also on the priority list, per the Town of Wallingford's selectboard meeting minutes.
- ii. Mr. Woolley noted that Freeman Brook Road was built circa 1923 and might be a priority. Jeff Chase noted that Hortonville Road was prioritized last year; a grant application was also done for Sawyer Hill.
- iii. Dennis Devereux asked whether there was an effort to put additional guardrails on Maple Hill Road. Mark Turco asked Mr. Woolley to procure poles for this purpose.
- iv. Town will apply for additional VTrans Town Paving (Belmont Rd) and Structures Grants (Sawyer Box Culvert) - Grant Deadline 4/15/22

b. Treasurer - David Johnson - Monthly Income & Expense Report

- i. David Johnson noted that there is a new account for the fire department vehicle fund; the existing accounts will be closed and added to the new one, which will consolidate all fire department vehicle funds in one place.
- ii. Outstanding property taxes are receivable at \$58,000 as of April 1. Three overdue payments have already been received by the Town. This is about the same as last year, and about the same number of properties. Property owners who are delinquent have been notified.
- iii. Mr. Johnson reported the following as notable on the Town's Profit and Loss Statement: 1) building construction registrations numbered 4-5 in March; construction costs are holding many things back, so budget projections are unlikely to be met in this area; 2) Additional lines of revenue include a reappraisal payment from the state and a revenue line for the Equalized Education Grand List payment from the state; 3) Solid waste label revenue is on track to

meet budget projections at ~\$22,000; this is slightly under last year at this time; 4) the Casella bill has also been received.

- iv. Mr. Johnson noted that re: waste disposal, the Transfer Station has received 14 tons less waste to date compared to last year; and about 6 tons less recycling.
- v. Sherri Geimer has been selected for the position of Assistant to the Treasurer. Dennis Devereux pointed out that if David Johnson does not run for the Treasurer position again next year, there is an opportunity for the new Assistant to train for several months under David should he or she be interested in assuming the Treasurer role.

c. Mount Holly Planning Commission Update - Jon McCann

- i. Jon McCann provided an update on the Jeb Porter application for subdivision.

d. Mount Holly Conservation Commission (MHCC) Update

- i. Conservation Commission Chair Fra DeVine noted that the Select Board should have received a restatement of policies and procedures approved by the CC at their last meeting; they elected a new slate of officers who will serve until October. These officers are Fra DeVine (Chair); Phil Leonard (Vice Chair); Fred Garrow (Treasurer); Clerk (Phil Leonard).
- ii. The CC's shade tree inventory is continuing.
- iii. The Star Lake restoration effort is being led by Phil Leonard; he is seeking permission to put in a bottom barrier at Star Lake (similar to what is at Lake Nineveh). The permit is being applied for now; there will be a ~30-day period during which the public can ask questions before the permit is a fait accompli. Mr. Leonard also found an opportunity to apply for a mini grant (\$600) from the Association of Vermont Conservation Coalitions (AVCC) for educating the public about the bottom barrier on Star Lake.
- iv. David Martin and Phil Leonard have put together a list of recreational opportunities in Mt. Holly and will publish a brochure describing these opportunities for Town members and visitors.
- v. The Core Forest Committee has identified areas where there has been significant development between 1992 and 2019 and is assessing how much core forest has been compromised by that development.
- vi. Diana Garrow asked that the MCCC post its meeting minutes at the Town Office; MHCC meeting minutes are also posted online. Jeff Chase agreed to continue to print and post the meeting minutes at the Town Office.

e. Packer Cemetery Agreement and Additional Cemetery Updates - Dennis Devereux

- i. Dennis Devereux reported that the Packer Cemetery funds will remain isolated from other cemetery funds, to be used only for Packer Cemetery; he is seeking volunteers to mow Packer

Cemetery, and is also seeking topsoil to fill in areas that need it; Dennis will oversee re-seeding as needed. Phil Crane will also assess the trees in the cemetery.

- ii. Mr. Devereux noted that the price per lot at Packer Cemetery is \$200 per lot; this is lowest in area (including among other cemeteries in Mt. Holly) and may be among the lowest in state. Dennis suggest that they raise the price to \$300 and advertise plot availability in the Chit Chat. (He noted that area towns charge more and already advertise in the Chit Chat. For example, Wallingford charges \$400; Weston charges \$500 for residents and \$1000 for non-residents; Ludlow gets \$850 per plot, plus additional fees.)

6. New Business

a. **Annual Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) Update** - Due to RRPC by 4/30/22

- i. Jeff Chase reported that he has made edits to the plan prior to its filing by 4/30; edits include adding a tagalong trailer to list; he also made adjustments to the list of official town contacts.
- ii. There was a motion to accept the LEMP Plan as Updated. Diana Garrow made the motion; Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved.

b. **RFP: FY23 Winter Sand**

- i. Jeff Chase noted that he will be making minor edits to the RFP for a Winter Sand contract in time for next regular meeting of the Select Board, and will also post the RFP in public places.

c. **Naming of New Road (formerly Bolalek driveway)**

- i. The property owner who purchased the parcels formerly owned by the Bolaleks is seeking permission to designate the property's access driveway a private road with the name, "Jack Frost Lane Private." The town will measure the road and approve the name (for 911 purposes only). Diana Garrow made a motion to assign the road formerly known as the Bolalek private drive "Jack Frost Lane Private." Mark Turco seconded the motion; unanimously approved.

d. **Scampsville Road Signage**

- i. Dennis Devereux raised concerns that the "Scampsville Road" sign off 155 should be removed, as this is not an actual town road. Paul Barton noted that he thinks the sign is an interesting feature of Mt. Holly and should not be taken down. Marie and Bruce Paquette (joining virtually) also expressed interest in the sign being taken down, as the road abuts their property and attracts snowmobiling traffic. Jim Seward noted that the road may provide state forest access. Mark Turco said he believes this is a state-owned sign that cannot be removed; he will reach out to Brian Sanderson (Agency of Transportation District Project Manager for the State of Vermont) to inquire further.

e. **Temporary Emergency Housing Assistance (897 Route 155)**

- i. Tim Bickford provided information to the Select Board re: state policies regarding Temporary Emergency Housing Assistance; this is in regards to the property known as the The Blue Spruce Inn (897 Route 155).
- f. Personnel Policy**
 - i. Jeff Chase noted that a few items were adjusted in the draft Town of Mount Holly Personnel Policy; namely, two minor bank holidays have been designated as “floater” holidays that can be used at any time as a vacation day by Town employees.
- g. Star Lake Mowing**
 - i. Dennis Devereux reported that the Fitzgeralds are still planning on mowing at Star Lake beach. Diana Garrow will contact them to confirm they have continued interest in the job. (They also provide mowing to several town cemeteries and the museum.)
- h. Liquor License for Belmont Store**
 - i. Jeff Chase made a motion to approve the renewal of the liquor license for the Belmont Store for 2022; Mark Turco seconded the motion; unanimously approved.

7. Ongoing Business

- a. Select Board Administrative Assistant Hiring Update**
 - i. Jeff Chase made a motion to hire Caitlin Boyle for the Select Board Administrative Assistant position; Mark Turo seconded the motion; unanimously approved. The Select Board welcomed Caitlin to the position.
- b. Highway Department Openings**
 - i. There have been two applications to the highway department opening. Mark Turco noted that he would like to set up interviews for the individuals as soon as possible; there will be a special meeting of the Select Board for those interviews, to take place on Friday, April 15th at 3 pm in the Town Office.
- c. Summit Box Culvert Update and Authorized Signer for Summit Road Box Culvert Project**
 - ii. Jeff Chase noted that there are two different head wall options for the Summit Road Box Culvert Project; one will be selected. Mr. Chase and Mr. Woolley have inspected the culvert; proposed contractor Otter Creek Engineering has agreed to host a pre-con as part of scope of work for the contract; Otter Creek has signed the contract but the Select Board has not yet signed it.
 - iii. Mark Turo made a motion to assign Jeff Chase as the authorized signer for the project contract; Diana Garrow seconded the motion; unanimously approved.
- i. Junk Ordinance Enforcement - Rt 103, Rt 155, Gates Road**
 - i. The property formerly known as the Blue Spruce Inn is still in noncompliance with the Town Junk Ordinance. It is not known whether there is anyone currently living there. Jeff has established a

line of communication with the property owner and the Select Board will continue to ticket the property owner; the Select Board will consult with the town attorney re: what to do if ticketing doesn't resolve the issue.

- ii. Linda Miller wrote a letter of complaint to the Select Board re: three properties she believes to be in non-compliance with the Town Junk Ordinance. These properties include 830 Gates Road S; and the two adjacent properties at the corner of Gates Road S and Sharon Lane. Town Treasurer David Johnson noted that the first property is part of an estate and has been for several years; the second two are owned by the same property owner and the taxes are paid. Jeff Chase noted that the properties do not seem to be in noncompliance, according to the ordinance. Paul Barton noted that local custom and culture historically tolerated personal freedoms of property owners, and that the people of Mount Holly have been open-hearted to neighbors, with a sense of humor and kindness toward people in unfortunate circumstances. Mark Turco noted that the care of abandoned properties is not under the jurisdiction of the Select Board, and that abandoned buildings don't fall under the town's junk ordinance. Mr. Turco and Jeff Chase agreed that property owners can be contacted via the contacts on their tax records and asked to take care of any hazards.
- iii. The property in noncompliance with the Junk Ordinance on Route 103 has made some progress on cleanup. Jeff Chase will continue to communicate with property owners.

j. Conservation Commission Appointment – Letter of Interest Due 4/11/22

- i. One letter of interest has been received for the MHCC position from Susan Presson. Diana Garrow made a motion to appoint Susan Presson to the Conservation Commission. Jeff Chase seconded the motion; unanimously approved.

k. ARPA Update

- i. Loss Revenue Acknowledgement
 - 1. Jeff Chase made a motion that “The Town of Mount Holly make the one-time irrevocable decision to elect the standard allowance approach for our ARPA award in the amount of \$371,863.98, to spend on provisions of government services throughout the performance of the grant. Diana seconded the motion; unanimously approved.
- ii. Annual Reporting due 4/30/22

l. Board of Adjustment

- i. Stephen Michel noted that the Town has a subdivision ordinance that references an appeal process for those appealing subdivision decisions from the Planning Commission.
- ii. Mark Turco and Diana Garrow recommended that a letter be prepared to seek a panel of no more than five panelists (plus two

alternates) who can serve as a Board of Adjustment for the Planning Commission.

8. Citizen Comments

- i. Christine Pratt noted that the Mill River Union High School bus picks students up at the intersection of Summit Road and Route 103 and that this is not a safe place, particularly given winter weather, as there is no shelter. Mark Turco noted that this is likely an issue that needs to be raised directly with the Mill River Unified Union School District.
- ii. Andrew Tanger shared that there is an S-turn on Route 155 that presents a traffic hazard; Jeff Chase noted that there is already a speed reduction posted in that area. Mark Turco will inquire with Brian Sanderson about this on his call re: Scampsville Road.
- iii. Paul Barton noted that he picked up the classroom flags and brackets he had previously donated to MHES; Jeff Chase noted that he will follow up with the school re: the donation and believes some classrooms do already have flags hung.

9. Announcements/Other Business

- a. Green Up Day is May 7, 2022. Marianne McGee noted that posters and bags have been distributed, including to the porch of the Town Office and at the community room of the Town Library. Ms. McGee will also post on Facebook and to the Mount Holly Newsflash; Diana Garrow also requested that it be sent to the Chit Chat by 4/22 for inclusion.

10. Review & Sign Orders

11. Executive Session: Title 1 V.S.A. S 313(a)(3)

- a. Mark Turco made a motion for an executive session; Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.

2. Adjourn

- a. Meeting was adjourned at 8:34 pm.
- b. Executive Session was adjourned at 9:15 pm