

**Town of Mount Holly
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday July 9, 2019**

Present: Select Board: Mark Turco (chair), Ron Tarbell, Jennifer Matthews
Town Officials: Sue Covalla, Carol Garrow-Woolley, David Johnson, Clinton Woolley
Public: Paul Barton, Dennis Devereux, Annette Lynch, Jon McCann, Raymond Tarbell

1. **Call to Order** by Chair Mark Turco at 6:00 pm.
2. All stood for the **Pledge of Allegiance**.
3. Consideration of any changes and/or additions to the **Agenda** – None were needed.
4. **Approval** of June 11, 2019 Minutes and June 19th & June 24th Special SB Meeting Minutes – Ron Tarbell made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Jennifer Matthews, passed unanimously.

Question from the Public: Annette Lynch asked about the minutes for the Special Meeting on June 24th, inquiring about what the purpose was of the request by the Vermont Department of Agriculture for placement of mosquito traps at the transfer station, and why did a couple of Select Board members suggest moving the collection place to Lake Ninevah? Jennifer Matthews replied that the Department of Agriculture was interested in monitoring mosquitos for the Zika virus at places where tires and garbage were collected, not in mosquitos' natural habitat. She explained she had not been given this information in the original message she received. In speaking with staff at the Department after the June 24th meeting, she learned of the Zika virus focus at transfer stations, and that a revised Mount Holly decision at today's meeting would be too late. The Department said it would choose another town in Southern Vermont for the study. It was asked if we knew where the breakdown in communication had occurred: an inadequate message from the Department or some loss of message content after the phone call was received in the town office? The answer was not clear.

[Additional note from Jennifer Matthews: The Vermont Department of Agriculture staff responsible for mosquito surveillance stated that the phone call to the Mount Holly Town Office asking for permission to place Zika vector mosquito collection devices at the Transfer Station was made by an intern in training who may have omitted some of the information. She offered apologies and thanked Mount Holly for its interest.]

5. Reports

a. Highways Update – Clinton Woolley

ii) **Paving Bids** – Clinton Woolley reported he had received three bids for paving Lake Street and Healdville Road. Select Board members opened the bids: Pike Industries @ \$72.00 per ton, Wilk Paving @ \$67.91/ton, and Fuller Paving @ \$67.00/ton. Ron Tarbell made a motion to accept the bid from Fuller Paving, seconded by Jennifer Matthews, passed unanimously.

iii) **Road & Bridge Standards** – Mr. Woolley stated that the final draft of the Standards was complete. Ms. Matthews explained that previous Standards were adopted in 2013 and were set to expire the end of July. The new Standards, which include Clean Water Act requirements, were adopted and signed by the Select Board.

iv) **Freeman Brook Road Grant Extension** - Mr. Woolley reported that the Town did receive a 60-day extension from the State and Agency of Natural Resources after a letter from the Select Board was sent requesting the extension due to an unanticipated interruption in the work.

v) **Grants in Aid** – Mr. Woolley reported that the paperwork had been completed and mailed in.

vi) **Ditch Bank Mower Ordered** – Mr. Woolley reported that the mower had been delivered to Middlebury and was being prepped for delivery to Mount Holly.

vii) **Additional Agenda Item** - Mr. Woolley asked for and received Select Board approval to remove the metal pile from the Transfer Station as has been done in previous years with no costs involved.

b. Treasurer – David Johnson

Mr. Johnson thanked the Select Board for its Resolution in recognition of his 50 years of service as a volunteer firefighter. The Select Board repeated its appreciation with applause from the audience. Mark Turco noted that a card had been received from Jim Seward thanking the Select Board for its Resolution recognizing his 45 years of service – applause from the audience.

i) **Monthly Income & Expense Report** – Mr. Johnson reported the following: the bank balance is good and will be better when interest is added in; the Deferred Grant Income is from FEMA for the Freeman Brook Road project that was extended; the US Forestry fee income total received is more than budgeted; the Solid Waste program took in over \$7,000.00 more than budgeted; Officer Salaries were \$737.00 below budget; all General Fund expense categories came in under budget.

ii) **Set Tax Rate** - Mr. Johnson reported that the Grand List grew by over three million dollars, largely due to the utilities, and that this was the first time in at least seven years that growth exceeded 1%. He reported that there were 21 Grievance hearings this year with 18 reduced at Grievance. One property owner has filed an appeal with the Board of Civil Authority. Mr. Johnson distributed a four-page document with information concerning the setting of a new property tax rate. He noted that \$1,086,685.00 is to be raised by tax to meet the budget passed at Town Meeting. He explained that this amount divided by the Grand List equals the tax rate of 39.69 cents. With the Local Agreement of \$3,770.00 at a tax rate of .14 cents, the total to be raised is \$1,090,455.00 with a total combined tax rate (municipal and local agreement) of 39.83 cents. The new residential rates are:

	2018	2019	Increase
Education tax rate – resident	1.4697	1.5509	5.52%
Municipal tax rate	.3940	.3983	1.09%

Mr. Johnson stated that the target date for tax bill mailing is Monday, July 29th with the discount available through August 29th, making the discount available for 31 days. (This year, the due date on taxes is Monday, November 4th.) Mr. Johnson also stated the tax bills will have a new format due to State changes. Ron Tarbell made a motion to set the Municipal tax rate at 39.83 cents, seconded by Jennifer Matthews, passed unanimously.

iii) **Community Bank Recommendation** – Mr. Johnson reported on the proposal received from Community Bank to serve as the Town’s primary bank. He noted the higher interest rate offered and better handling of deposits. Ron Tarbell made a motion to make Community Bank the repository for the Town of Mount Holly, seconded by Jennifer Matthews, passed unanimously.

c. **Delinquent Tax & Tax Sale Attorney Update** – Peter Perrino was not present; item tabled until next month.

d. **Rutland Regional Planning Commission Report** – Jon McCann reported that the RRPC will provide towns in the Region with the statutory framework for public works' mutual aid agreements to ensure local reimbursement of funds used in emergency management. The Town of Mount Tabor joined the RRPC, the last eligible town to do so. Mark Goodwin of our neighboring town of Shrewsbury resigned from the RRPC after many long years of service. The RRPC has adjourned for the summer, will meet again in September.

6. Old Business

a. **Follow-Up Letter to Public Utilities Commission re: Back-Up Phone Battery Power** - Jennifer Matthews reported that H. 513, a broadband/telecommunications bill, was passed by the Legislature. A section of that Act directed the PUC to file a report on the back-up power issue by December 15th. The Town of Shrewsbury requested that the PUC act in a more timely fashion. The Department of Public Service ordered the PUC to continue gathering information on the issue. Ms. Matthews will draft a follow-up letter to the PUC emphasizing Mount Holly's concerns about lack of emergency communication during outages.

b. **Town Office Roof** - Jennifer Matthews reported that she had contacted the individual to whom she was referred for an evaluation of the whole town office roof, as the roof has three parts, each of a different age. She has not received the evaluation. As shingles are missing only from the roof of the front part of the town office, it was decided to solicit roofing bids for only that part of the building. Ms. Matthews will post notices and send a notice for inclusion in the next issue of the Chit Chat.

c. **Propane & Oil Pricing** – Quotes are still coming in; item tabled until next month.

d. **Swap Shed** – Jennifer Matthews reviewed the reasons for the Swap Shed at the transfer station. Clinton Woolley said that he priced materials for a 12x8 shed at \$1000.00, an amount that does not include town road crew labor costs. Ms. Matthews distributed the information and specifications on four different commercially available sheds varying in price from approx. \$2100.00 to over \$4000.00. She recommended the Old Hickory shed at \$2300.00 with the 30/50 year warranty on materials and workmanship. A lengthy discussion ensued with input from the Board and the public. The opinions ranged from Mark Turco who does not see any interest from townspeople and does not want to spend any town money on something that may be used by residents to drop off stuff (junk) for free but being unusable eventually costs the town for disposal, to Ms. Matthews who reports that reusable items are currently set aside from dumped items by the transfer station crew, that Mount Holly once had a working Swap Shed, that neighboring towns have successful sheds (which Mount Holly residents cannot use) and that there have been many requests from residents for the service. The Select Board decided on a petition at the transfer station to gauge support for the Swap Shed.

e. **Other** – There was no other old business.

7. New Business

a. **Cemetery Issues** - Dennis Devereux, Cemetery Commissioner and Rutland County Representative to the Old Cemetery Association, reviewed a number of issues including: tree clearing – some close to wires – at Mechanicsville Cemetery; review of trees at all town cemeteries to identify those that need removal before damage is done by falling branches; replacement of gravestone for Ethel Eddy, age 3 ½ years, as marble lamb has turned into dust. Mr. Devereux has contacted members of the Eddy family for financial assistance with the

replacement gravestone (\$250 for a new slat stone), but he also referred to the State law which requires towns to repair and replace stones in cemeteries that fall to its care. Mr. Devereux also noted: there are large leaning gravestones that need to be straightened before falling; work needs to be done at the Martin cemetery at the end of Perry Road and at the Green cemetery on Route 103 South, including weed whacking on a very steep bank; Hortonville cemetery has two small pine trees that need to be cut down. Mr. Devereux will ask for volunteers to help complete this work. He noted that past tree removal at Tarbellville and Carleton cemeteries took a long time to organize. He would like to see a Town cemetery fund included in next year's budget for funds to help maintain the town cemeteries.

b. Appoint Town Health Officer. Jennifer Matthews reported that the three-year term of the current Health Officer expires at the end of July. She spoke with Tim Bickford, the current Town Health Officer. He stated he would be willing and honored to serve again. Ron Tarbell made a motion to re-appoint Tim Bickford as Town Health Officer, seconded by Jennifer Matthews, passed unanimously.

c. AT & T Cell Tower – Jennifer Matthews reported that the Town had received a 60-Day Advance Notice on a Substantial Change to Certificate of Public Good for Telecommunications Facility in Mount Holly. She noted the need for cell service in town and support for such service. Discussion ensued on the advantages of cell service in Mount Holly with Mark Turco calling it a great opportunity for the town.

8. Announcements/Other Business

a. Board of Civil Authority Hearing – Susan Covalla noted the hearing was set for 6:30 pm the next day. Jennifer Matthews thanked the Listers for all their good work on the Grand List and overseeing property values.

b. Other – Ms. Matthews also noted the terrific job done on painting the town office and thanked the painters for a job well done. She also encouraged residents to support all the great summer activities taking place in town, sponsored by the Community Association, the Community Historical Museum and others. Dennis Devereux asked if the Town could look into purchasing trash and recycling bins for placement at Star Lake beach, the Green, and at the School for use during summer events. Paul Barton noted that replacements for the fox face signs taken from Star Lake had not yet been obtained.

9. Review & Sign Orders – The Select Board reviewed and signed.

10. Executive Session: Title 1 V.S.A. S 313(a)(3) – personnel (if needed) – A motion was made by Ron Tarbell, seconded by Jennifer Matthews, passed unanimously to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel. The Select Board entered Executive Session at 7:15 pm and exited at 7:31 pm after reviewing personnel issues.

Respectfully submitted: Jennifer Matthews

Minutes Approved: 8.13.2019