

Mount Holly Select Board Meeting
July 14, 2020
Minutes

Zoom Meeting: 814 7316 5279

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

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

Members of the Public: Ted Crawford, Steve & Barbara Hazelton, Jim Heald, Annette Lynch, Stephen Michel, Christine Pratt, Don Richardson, 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** – None were necessary.

4. **Approval of June 9, 2020 Minutes & Special SB Meeting Minutes of June 29, 2020** – Jeff Chase made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved.

5. **Reorganization (continuation)**

a. **Select Board Chair** – No nominations.

b. **Select Board Admin. Assistant** – Mr. Chase is working on edits to the job description. He noted per conversations with VLCT, if a Select Board member does the admin work, that individual should not participate in pay decisions for the admin assistant position. Select Board members will review the job description changes and revisit the issue at the next meeting.

6. **Reports**

a. **Highways & Transfer Station Update – Clinton Woolley** – Mr. Woolley reported that GM Tree Tech is due in town on Monday, July 20th to remove previously agreed upon trees along the road and in the cemetery in Belmont.

Mr. Woolley has spoken with an individual interested in purchasing the old ditch mower.

Discussion ensued on the age, initial purchase price, and cost of repairs to the mower. Ms. Matthews asked what the town policy was on the sale of used, no longer needed equipment, a bid process similar to that for the dump truck? The Select Board agreed to put the ditch mower up for sale through a bid process. Mr. Chase will work with Mr. Woolley to put together the bid specifications with a minimum bid of \$4,000. For bids to be considered, they must be submitted in a sealed envelope and in the Select Board office by Monday, August 3rd.

Mr. Woolley inquired about using DD Trucking again this year for hauling winter sand. The rate would be the same paid Gary Norton and the same as last year. The Select Board agreed to use DD Trucking again this year to haul winter sand at that same \$80 an hour rate.

As to the transfer station, Mr. Woolley reported 800 lbs. of food scraps had been collected; it is time to dispose of the tire pile; and, it is time to think about how to dispose of the metal pile. Discussion ensued about when, how, and who would take the metal pile. Mr. Woolley will look into available options for metal disposal at no cost to the town and preferably with some revenue realized by the town.

b. **Treasurer – David Johnson**

i) **Monthly Income & Expense Report** – Mr. Johnson reviewed the Balance Sheet noting there is currently about \$300,000 in cash on hand. He also pointed out the Property Taxes Receivable amount of \$27, 807 comprised of six properties, of which one has now paid and another is in the process of paying. Reviewing the Balance Sheet, Mr. Johnson pointed out the Forestry Receipts of \$9,584 which is \$1,084 more than budgeted; the VT Rte. 155 grant funds of \$10, 226 which have been received and will rollover as deferred revenue to cover expenses to come in the new fiscal year; Solid Waste Disposal costs which are over budget as zero-sort disposal has no real

revenue offset, but cost is still cheaper than disposing of recyclables through the regular trash; and, the Vehicle/Equipment Repair & Maintenance category which is \$7,291 under budget.

ii) **FY'21 Tax Rate Change & Due Dates** – Mr. Johnson reviewed the \$109,840 budget surplus and the ability of the town to lower the tax rate due to legislation passed because of various COVID-19 concerns. With the extension of the federal and state tax deadline to July 15th, tax bills will not be mailed until early-to-mid August, so there will be a three-to-four week delay on tax revenue received. At present, there is enough cash on hand to cover two to three months of expenses. Discussion ensued about previous budget surpluses and the effect on future budgets of a tax rate cut now. Mr. Chase pointed out it would cost \$60,000 to pave one-fifth of a mile of Healdville Road, and there are other roads in town which also need to be paved. He asked if it might not be a good idea to use the remaining highway funds for their intended purpose: paving roads which are in poor condition. After additional discussion, Mr. Chase proposed a two-cent tax decrease, with the remaining \$55,000 surplus to be used for paving. He made a motion to set the municipal tax rate at 37.73 cents, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved. (Note: The municipal tax rate plus the education tax rate puts the Total Homestead Tax Rate at 1.9297, a 1% decrease from last year, and the Total Non-Homestead Tax Rate at 1.8948, a .35% decrease from last year.)

Additional discussion ensued about paving: timing, which roads, tonnage needed, shim coat vs. reclaim. Mr. Turco suggested asking for quotes for both: a top coat, and for reclaim. Mr. Chase will work with Mr. Woolley on a paving bid specification sheet.

Additional discussion ensued concerning the tax bills mailing date and the final tax due date with an awareness of the primary election on August 11th and the general election on November 3rd. The 30-day discount rate is in effect regardless of mailing date. Mr. Turco made a motion that November 30th be the final due date for taxes, seconded by Mr. Chase, unanimously approved.

Ms. Matthews asked Mr. Johnson if he could run the Schedule of Officers' Compensation report for the August meeting. He replied he would do so.

iii) **Financial Management Questionnaire** - Mr. Johnson stated this is an annual report which will be ready for review at the August meeting reflecting the year-end information.

c. **Rutland Regional Transportation Council Update – Clinton Woolley** – Mr. Woolley reported there was nothing that pertained to Mount Holly at the meeting aside from a discussion about chloride and chloride tanks.

d. **Rutland Region Planning Commission Update – Jon McCann** – Mr. McCann reported that RRPC welcomed Gabrielle Bickford as the alternate for Mount Holly. He also reported that RRPC has pledged their full support to help revise the town plan and RRPC staff will be available to help with the revisions when needed.

e. **Mount Holly Volunteer Rescue Squad Update – Kristin Veysey** – As Ms. Veysey was out on a Rescue call, Ms. Matthews read from MHVRS's year-end report. She pointed out that MHVRS ended their fiscal year making 44 calls in a row with an 88% coverage rate. Given the pandemic and the challenging circumstances which exist because of it, Ms. Matthews stated MHVRS was doing an outstanding job. She offered kudos all-around and thanked them for the essential service they provide the community. (Ms. Veysey joined the call shortly thereafter. Mr. Turco repeated what had been stated earlier.)

7. **New Business**

a. **School Tuition Request – Mike Valente** – Mr. Valente referenced the recent Supreme Court decision in talking about his son's need to attend MSJ as well as take driver's ed elsewhere. Mr. Turco stated the Select Board would need a formal request from Mr. Valente to start to research and address the issue. Ms. Matthews asked if this was not an issue for the School Board rather than the Select Board. Mr. Valente stated the School Board deferred to the town when he approached them. Rhonda Rivers asked when did the Select Board ever vote on an individual student's tuition payment, and shouldn't this issue be addressed by the school district? Mr. Turco again stated the need for a formal request in writing from Mr. Valente.

b. **Mount Holly Administrative Officer/PC Clerk - Jon McCann** - Mr. McCann reported on the statutory need for an Administrative Officer (AO) once a town has land use by-laws. Mount Holly's subdivision regulations and flood hazard area regulations are land use by-laws and thereby require by State Statute the appointment of an Administrative Officer. Both VLCT and RRPC confirmed this to be the case. Mr. McCann also inquired about the Zoning Board of Adjustment, which Mount Holly has had in the past, and he inquired about who currently sat on that Board. Ms. Matthews reviewed that State Statutes and affirmed the need of an AO. Discussion ensued about the differences between a Zoning Board of Adjustment and a Development Review Board, the different responsibilities of the AO versus those of the Planning Commission clerk, the ability to combine both positions, funds currently available for the positions, and the need for the Planning Commission to further discuss the Administrative Officer position. The Select Board members did agree that an Administrative Officer is required by State Statute and will wait for a recommendation from the Planning Commission on the best person to fill that role and meet the responsibilities of the position.

c. **Purchasing Policy Revisions** - Mr. Chase stated that some revisions were necessary to the current policy to reflect minor versus major purchases per VLCT's recommendations. Mr. Chase will make the necessary edits and the Select Board will revisit the issue.

d. **Transfer Station Fence Repair/Replacement** - Mr. Turco noted that part of the fence is down at the transfer station and it needs to be fixed. Mr. Chase said he thought it should cost around \$1,000. Mr. Woolley said the fence got knocked down by plowing and pushing the snow in that corner. Discussion ensued on various repair options. Mr. Turco asked Mr. Woolley to get a couple of prices for the fence repair.

e. **Citizen Petition re: Select Board Meetings in Person** - Mr. Turco stated he had received a citizen petition requesting the Select Board return to in-person meetings. He noted the school could be used with health and safety requirements to be followed. Mr. Chase expressed concerns about the recent COVID-19 outbreaks in Chester and Londonderry. Ms. Matthews noted that Governor Scott had extended the State of Emergency to August 15th. Discussion ensued about recent outbreaks and closures. Eric from Okemo Valley TV commented on the difficulty people were having hearing at a recent Ludlow meeting given the need for social distancing and masks. Mr. Turco stated the Select Board would revisit the issue at the next meeting.

f. **August Select Board Meeting Date** - Ms. Matthews explained that the next Select Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 11th which is also the date of the Statewide Primary Election, so the meeting date needs to be changed. Discussion ensued on various dates. It was decided that the August Select Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 4th.

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

8. Ongoing & Old Business

a. **2011 Ford F-350 Dump Truck Bids** - Ms. Matthews explained that the bid deadline was July 7th and no bids were received, but a bid was dropped off today at the town office. The Select Board decided they could not accept that bid at this time and pushed the bid deadline out to Monday, August 3rd. The minimum bid remains at \$12,000, and the minimum bid on the ditch mower is \$4,000.

b. **Junk Ordinance Enforcement** - Ms. Matthews reported that Constable Paul Faenza is registered with the Judicial Bureau as Mount Holly's enforcement officer. She has received the order form for municipal tickets, so those will be ordered shortly. She also reported on her conversation with VLCT about revisions to the junk ordinance to clarify some of the language. VLCT stated that any revisions to an ordinance requires following all the steps for the adoption of an ordinance. The Select Board decided to leave the ordinance as is for the time being.

c. Town Office Reopening? - i) Face Coverings & Social Distancing, ii) Contact Tracing Log - Mr. Turco discussed various health and safety requirements needed for re-opening businesses. Discussion ensued on those requirements: social distancing, number of people allowed per square foot, face coverings, contact tracing logs, disinfecting procedures, and others. Mr. Turco will pull together the health and safety requirements to be followed for the town office to reopen, and he will review these with the town office staff. Mr. Turco made a motion to reopen the town office on Monday, July 20th with adherence to all health and safety guidelines, seconded by Ms. Matthews, unanimously approved. Brigid Sullivan stated that additional masks were available through Rotary, if needed.

d. Swap Shed Reopening? - No, will revisit the issue in August.

e. Other - There was no additional Old & Ongoing Business.

9. Announcements/Other Business

a. VT Route 155 Closure for Bridge #7 Replacement: July 21st - August 18th

b. VT Statewide Primary - Tuesday, August 11th - 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 - Ms. Matthews made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 pm, seconded by Mr. Turco, unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted: Jennifer Matthews

Minutes Approved: 8.4.2020