

**MOUNT HOLLY SPECIAL SELECT BOARD MEETING
JUNE 29, 2021 MINUTES**

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

Town Officials: Dennis Devereux, David Johnson, Carol Garrow-Woolley, Clinton Woolley, Stephen Michel, James Seward, James Heald, Robert Herbst, Paul Faenza,

Zoom: Renee Sarmiento, Phil Crane and unknown participant

Members of the Public: Zena Gates, Christine Pratt, Amy Turco, John Seward, Paul Frazier, Sarah Ladden, Mary-Elizabeth Ladden (9), and Molly Ladden (6),
Alice Perry

1. **Call to Order:** By Mark Turco at 6:30 p.m.
2. **All recited Pledge of Allegiance (not on the Agenda)**
3. Mark opened the meeting welcoming all to a special board meeting regarding the speed and traffic within the Town of Mount Holly. Mark also thanked the undersigned for accepting the position as the Select Board Administrative Assistant. This was added to the Agenda. Motion was made by Jennifer to accept the undersigned as the Select Board Administrative Assistant; seconded by Mark. All were in favor and indicated "Aye".
4. **Changes and/or additions to the agenda: None made**
5. **ARPA Funds Request:** Jennifer said this has to be done by the 15th of July. Mark read, "I move that the Town of Mount Holly accept its allocation of Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funding (CLFRF) from the US Treasury, along with the Award Terms & Conditions and Assurances of Compliance with the Civil Rights Requirements that are requirements of accepting these funds", Mark made a motion to accept the funds and was given paperwork to sign. Jennifer seconded. All were in favor and indicated "Aye". Jennifer had Mark sign as "Authorized Representative".
6. **Fixed Assets Listing:** Jennifer said they had spoken about this last time and there was an error on it and it's been revised. It was for the Audit for Fiscal Year '20. Jennifer verified this with David (Johnson). Jennifer motioned to accept the Fixed Assets Listing; seconded by Jeff Chase. This was signed by Mark. All were in favor and indicated "Aye".
7. **Traffic Safety Concerns Committee:** Mark discussed the Traffic Safety Committee's concerns deferred to Dennis for up-date. Dennis provided an overview indicating he and three others from the Village had gone around Town and up-dated the list. He wants to see a lot of these things put in place. They had focused on two areas: Additional signage and speed limits. Dennis explained more signage, warnings and the State Highway roadway. Mark opened the discussion and permitted Dennis to read the results:
 - Dennis reads #1-Lowering Speed Limit in Belmont Village. Lowering the speed limit in Village is a priority. Would like the Village speed limit lowered from 35 to 25 miles an hour; and installing 4 "Historic District" signs; installing speed bumps; prioritizing slowing people down. Jim Heald spoke stating a year or so ago, when Covid started, they (State Police) didn't want to enforce speed limits, but would come if they were needed for major, major problems like serious accidents. Lately, when the Governor opened the

State, they were around like fleas; not so much now. You could have a sign every 20 feet, but they have to be enforced or money is wasted. Thanks people for looking into this. Jim has lived on Belmont Road since 1966 and believes this is the absolute worst year he's ever seen! Cars pass by his house doing 60-65; recommends hiring the Sheriff and spending some money. Jim knows a lot have perished since he's been here and it's all speed-related. This will keep happening if we don't have enforcement.

- John Seward said he and his wife, Jody, walk the road and have a fear of death! All the new transplants drive like they're still in Connecticut. They should be more courteous towards their fellow community members and not wanting to kill somebody, their animals or their child. Believes they stopped signage about 20 years ago. John explained it's unclear if it's 50 or 35. There's random Police presence. Mentions Bridgewater—no one speeds there!! It all comes down to moving here or living here all your life; going for walks, having dogs off-leash. It would be nice to have that here again. Signage is good, enforcement is absolutely necessary.
- Dennis says the elephant in the room is who will enforce it and what's going to happen. Hiring the Rutland County Sheriff or State Police, recommends 10-20 hours a month, people get stopped, or people seeing other people get stopped. Grant money for signage, unsure about enforcement.
- John discusses Gates Road and the corner of Healdville. Mentions tree trimming to ensure visibility on blind corners and signage.
- Dennis suggests speed bumps in Belmont Village, but hasn't found them in places other than parking lots. He has had trouble finding them in any other towns.
- Alice Perry introduces herself. She volunteered to be part of this group. Discusses children and people doing 50 past signs saying "Slow-Children". Callous disregard towards neighbors. Believes something awful will happen unless we do something. Signage is great as well as enforcement. Talks about Bridgewater and Chester. Some people have offered to pay for their own speed bump.
- Paul Faenza spoke about the Ordinance of 1988, which only affects three parts of roads in Town. If there is not a sign "Speed limit 35" on these three roads; it's 50. Discusses different roads in Town. Should we amend the Ordinance? Discusses a sign posted by State Police on Belmont Road and the sign was found thrown in the woods. Paul said he asked State Police to come monitor the roads here because they were speeding past the school. Paul received phone calls from people asking why they (State Police) were here and they shouldn't be stopping people because they don't have enough money to pay for tickets. Enforcement is huge. Paul believes if you get the Sheriff in here and they enforce the speed limit, it would be fine. Paul states he doesn't like the speed bump idea because they can't be seen at night.
- John asks if there would be revenue for Town if the State Police and Sheriff were here. If it's a State Highway, it goes to the State. Paul and Dennis explain how it works. \$160,000 a year. John said it would pay the State Police to be here; the fines offset the cost of having them here.
- Jennifer explains the Select Board has received numerous emails on this issue, the majority being about speeding in Belmont Village and Belmont. Jennifer asked about the 5 year ordinance with speed limits. If they have an ordinance and if they reduce the

speed limit, it has to be enforceable. Mark states every road needs it and should be on that ordinance to be enforceable. A discussion is held with Jennifer and Dennis.

- Bob Herbst states the possibility of having an ordinance that all roads in the Town of Mount Holly are 35 unless posted. Then post “25” in the village. Recently he saw a sign on the side of the road in Newport, NH, stating “Drive Like Your Children Live Here”. People drive 60 mph on Belmont Road, when he waves for them to slow down, they accelerate. It’s careless disregard for neighbors. Think about everyone’s safety and everyone’s liability in Belmont. John asks Paul which roads are on the ordinance and Paul states: Belmont Road, Healdville Road on either side of each.
- Dennis discussed paved roads vs. unpaved roads. Could be covered under ordinance. Discusses Mount Holly Heights, they want 25-30 mph there. All Town paved roads 40 mph and unpaved, 35 mph.
- Mark discussed dirt roads were 35—named them—there’s room for improvement.
- Amy Turco said people drive 50-60 mph near the sugar house. It’s not okay.
- Jim Heald asked what are we going to do about doing an Ordinance?
- Mark answered we have to draft an ordinance and we have to set speed limits. Also check the costs for the Sheriff.
- Amy asks who’s doing this? The Select Board or the Committee. Mark said the Select Board will look into it.
- Mark stated they have reached out to the Sheriff about an hourly rate.
- Amy asks Paul if they need to be contracted. Paul explained the Troopers are out and will come out and enforce local ordinances.
- Mark said he will reach out and have them enforce it. Human life is important.
- Bovie states we need an ordinance in case someone takes it to court.
- Mark replied, it’s coming. The ordinance is coming.
- John asks how do you know what the speed limit is. Paul explains it is 35 mph to a point and then back to 50 on top of the hill. Discussion is held on this.
- Steve Michel explains where the signs are by Gates Road. He was asked, can you see the signs because of the limbs of the trees. Steve explained where they are.
- John asked about speed limit signs and painting it across the road. You see it when you approach it. Mark agrees. Mark says you see it in a lot of villages.
- Paul Frazier said he is on Healdville Road and has noticed a difference in the last 3 years, especially since last year. Fed Ex and UPS speed too. Everything said here has been on his mind. He explains speeding and how 35 becomes 40 and how you can take advantage. Discusses an accident that occurred from speeding on 103. Believes speed was involved in that.
- Jennifer added on Healdville Road, coming out of Branch Brook, people are flying by that point and get on right by pulling out in front of them.
- Dennis and Mark pulled the discussion in to keep it on point.
- Sarah Ladden said she’s across from Bob, has a 9 year old, a 6 year old and a 2 year old. Believes signs antagonize people, told of a recent experience which occurred recently. Sarah’s daughter, Mary Elizabeth (9 years old), added the cars drive by pretty fast and she gets scared. Explains their porch is close to the road and is scared they’ll

get hit. Cars don't pay attention to the signs. Mary Elizabeth received a round of applause.

- Alice Perry said there's a committee. The roads Belmont Road, Church Street and Maple Hill Road a "Historic Village". Post signs. Appeal to civic pride to do 20-25 mph maybe.
- Dennis specified roads, Shunpike and Nineveh. Should have signs for a 3-way or warn of a side road, especially where it goes to dirt, which is bad for bikers. There's a blind side road which should be posted. Mentions a local couple and how carefully they have to drive to manage these roads.
- Dennis discusses Item 5—Warning Signs: Should be a mirror for Branch Brook Road, but doesn't believe they last. Sign for "Hidden Side Road" so people have a little heads up but for signage, a cost is involved.
- John added maybe we should have something like Fire Station warning lights for Branch Brook Road.
- Dennis mentions Carol Ballou telling him about Flanders Corner, from Hedgehog Hill Road, where there's a grassy triangle, the Stop sign should be closer to the road; one should be moved and one added.
- Dennis discussed Item 7—Belmont Road, Nichols and Teer Road. In 1960, there was an accident where a woman who was a passenger in a car was T-boned and she became an invalid for the rest of her life. Explained how he approaches Nichols Road now; Teer Road isn't as bad.
- Dennis discussed Item 9—Replacing the Yield Sign on Straight Road and Maple Hill Road, Should be a Stop. Bob agreed Nichols Road/Teer Road should be posted as "Dangerous Intersection".
- Dennis said they could do a lot. Possibly removing the grassy triangle. In 1940, the triangle was removed and there were mixed feelings on both sides, houses on both sides. On Lake Street, if two cars are meeting, one would have to come to a complete stop. Alice added there are people adamantly opposed to removing the grassy triangle. Three out of 4 committee members like the knoll.
- Christine Pratt said she was at Jordon's house visiting. People went by her fast and didn't stop. Bob agreed with her.
- Dennis — discussion held of Belmont Road to Lake Street. Four-way stop for Belmont Store. Cars block the view.
- John asks for suggestions regarding the parking in front of the Belmont Store. Dennis tells of Ray Tarbell, about 6 years ago when they were discussing the parking there and if there were cars parked blocking the view. Ray said the cars would have to slow down for the driver's to get a better view. He was right!
- Jim discusses Belmont Store parking. John joins in regarding the lines for parking and how big cars are now. Bovie adds "you should try it with a plow".. Jim Seward said they really hear about it when traffic has to be rerouted that way after an accident on 103.
- Dennis discusses other places such as the State Highway. Zena said she has had several close calls on Gates Road. Dennis asked if a sign would help. Jim said if they're going 35, that's okay.

- Amy Turco said Old Turnpike Road, Camille DeShard's. Mike Blaise has flashing lights on both sides of the road and between the headlights and those lights, they blinded her. It's not safe. It's in the Town in the Right-of-Way and there's 2x4 or 2x8 pieces of wood. If they get hit, they will splinter. Dennis explained this is a crosswalk and it senses when a car is approaching and starts flashing. Bob asked the legality of this. Mark states they will measure it tomorrow. If it's in the Town's Right-of-way, they will send a letter. Dennis and Mark discuss this and how it's constructed. There's more to come on this and it will be looked into, said Mark.
- Dennis added on the State Highway, 103 at the yellow light, you can't see down the road. He has data on the accidents here. He asked 10 years ago to lower it a little bit. The yellow is just a flashing light, trailer trucks are doing 60 mph. Recommends lowering the road a little bit. There's federal money. Have been a lot of close calls.
- Dennis: On 155 coming from Weston, Howland Farm Road. Jeff Chase is very familiar with it. Should be a warning sign "hidden side road" on the right and another for coming out of Straight Road. Write V-trans about these.
- Dennis: A Town Road, "Scampsville Road" is all grass, the bridge that was there fell in, not Town maintained. Mark added, it's a snowmobile road, class 4 road. It's still listed as a Town Road. Dennis wants the Scampsville Road sign for the Museum. There was a school there and boys were hanging around and the teacher came out and hollered at them, saying "You scamps! Get out of here!" There was more discussion.
- Jim Heald thanks the Committee. There's a round of applause. Steve Michel said if they change the rules, maybe they would be able to use some of the grant money from infrastructure.

Mark asked if there was any other discussion. Steve Michel asked future meetings to be put out on the Newsflash since by the time he saw the warning for the last special meeting, it was too late. Mark said he would make that happen.

Mark thanked everyone, especially the Committee, including all people involved. Great stuff. It will do something for all the roads in the Town of Mount Holly and they'd have a little enforceability if anyone takes it to court.

Mark states they're still within the meeting and asks for a motion for Executive Session, Title 1 V.S.A. S313(a)(3)-personnel. Jennifer seconds. All agree and say "Aye". Thank everyone for coming.

The Select Board entered into Executive Session at 7:40 p.m. and was out of Executive Session by 8:37, no action taken. Meeting adjourned with Mark making a motion, seconded by Jeff, at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Brigid Faenza

Approval Date: 7.13.2021