

Select Board Meeting
@ Town Office
September 13, 2022
6:30 pm

MEETING MINUTES

Present:

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

Town Officials: Caitlin Boyle, Dennis Devereux, Fra Devine (via Zoom), Chad Farrar, Carol Garrow-Woolley, David Johnson, Jon McCann (via Zoom), Christine Pratt, James Seward, Mary Surething, Laura Swarz-Hoc, Clinton Woolley

Members of the Public: In Person: Paul Barton, Zena Gates, Kevin Hollebeek. Via Zoom: Carol Devine, Barbara Hazelton, Steve Hazelton.

1. Call to Order at 6:30 pm
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Consideration of any changes and/or additions to the agenda. Mark Turco noted a request to add an item regarding the reappointment of the Animal Control Officer, under New Business.
4. Approval of August 10 and August 31, 2022 minutes. Diana Garrow made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Jeff Chase, unanimously approved.
5. Reports
 - a. **Highways & Transfer Station Update - Clinton Woolley**
 - i. Reclamation has begun on Hortonville Road. It is 4/10ths of a mile complete to date.
 - ii. The Highway Department is working on a grant for maintenance of Freeman's Brook Road.
 - iii. Transfer Station will host a hazardous waste pickup (rescheduled from prior date) in the coming weeks; exact date to be announced.
 - iv. The Transfer Station fall/winter schedule will begin Saturday, October 8; final Wednesday hours will be October 5.
 - v. Diana Garrow noted that there is some erosion alongside Belmont Road above Blodgett's property up to Frost Hill Road. Mr. Woolley noted that this is on their list.
 - vi. Tires and metal have been removed from Transfer Station; compost has been picked up.
 - b. **Treasurer Monthly Income & Expense Report - David Johnson**
 - i. A total of 86.2% of town property taxes have been paid to date.
 - ii. Property tax discounts are similar to last year.
 - iii. The town received a settlement payment from the National Opioids Settlement Administrator.
 - iv. There were \$2,500 in asset sales due to sale of mower.
 - v. Solid waste label sales are at about \$100 more than this time last year.
 - vi. Additional transfer station costs included the cost of tire removal.
 - c. **Mount Holly Planning Commission Update - Jon McCann**

- i. The MHPC created an application form for the Flood Hazard Development Plan, done in collaboration with the state floodplain coordinator and the regional planning commission.
- ii. Work on the Town Plan continues, with this month's focus on mapping and identifying recreational opportunities in the town. Land use will be the focus of next month in terms of Town Plan drafting.

d. Mount Holly Conservation Commission Update - Fra Devine

- i. Shade Tree Plan: Phil Crane and his sub-committee continue work on an inventory of trees on Maple Hill Road. He is also in touch with Vermont Urban and Community Forestry about grant funding opportunities.
- ii. The bottom barrier will be removed this month from Star Lake, as required by the town's Aquatic Nuisance Control Permit. While there is still significant vegetation on the lake, the bottom barrier offered some mitigation in the swimming area.
- iii. MHCC is seeking input from the public on any recreational opportunities citizens would like to see included in a guide to be published for the town.
- iv. Reappointments and Openings: Three MHCC members' terms are expiring; Fred Garrow will resign at the end of his term; Phil Leonard and Fra Devine are interested in being re-appointed for a new four-year term after their current terms end. This puts the commission at seven members, which means there are two open slots for MHCC members.
- v. Jeff Chase made a motion to reappoint Phil Leonard and Fra Devine for a new term of four years. Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.
- vi. The MHCC will send the Selectboard Clerk a brief description of the remaining openings, and she will draw up a posting and post to the Post Offices and Town Office.

e. Town Health Officer Update - Chad Farrar

- i. Mr. Farrar reported that he has filed his report regarding the dog bite incident that took place on Straight Road in May 2022. No further action from the THO is needed at this time.
- ii. Mr. Farrar also filed an inspection of a property on Route 103, after receiving reports of a possible rental housing violation at the address. He conducted an inspection and found several rental housing violations, and notified the tenants, the property owner, and the required county officials, including county fire marshall. The inspection report is filed with the Town Clerk, as required.
- iii. Mr. Farrar noted that he is also seeking a time to meet the property owner of the former Blue Spruce House at 897 Route 155, for possible rental housing violations.
- iv. Diana Garrow noted that she was informed that there is standing water underneath the mobile home located at 1559 Route 103. Ms. Garrow asked Mr. Farrar to investigate that situation; it was previously investigated by the former Town Health Officer.

f. Animal Control Officer Update - Laura Swarz-Hoc

- i. Ms. Swarz-Hoc has made 46 calls to dog owners whose dogs were previously registered but did not register again on April 1. She's had about 20 residents return calls or update their records. She will continue to make progress on the list.

6. New Business

- a. **Cider Days Road Closures:** Kevin Hollebeek, on behalf of the Mount Holly Community Association, asked the Selectboard to approve several road closures near the Belmont Green for

the weekend of Mount Holly Cider Days. He noted that one additional closure was requested for the area in front of the Belmont Store, above and beyond the historic closures.

- i. Mark Turco made a motion to approve the Mount Holly Community Association's request to close the roads it has historically closed for Mount Holly Cider Days, but to keep the road in front of the store open for traffic; Jeff Chase seconded; unanimously approved.
 - ii. Mr. Woolley noted that in future years, the MHCA might consider hosting Cider Days on Lake Street, utilizing the area of Star Lake Beach, which would require fewer road closures. Mr. Hollebeek agreed that could be considered for future years.
- b. **Vermont Journal as Paper of Record:** *Vermont Journal* is no longer being delivered to Belmont addresses, and may no longer be the most suitable "paper of record" for future public notices, given that it is not accessible to all residents of the town. The Selectboard Clerk will reach out to the *Vermont Journal* to determine how it might support reestablishment of the Belmont delivery area.
- c. **Listers' Errors and Omissions Report:** The Board of Listers are filing an Errors and Omissions report to correct an error made on a property at the time of the last assessment. The Errors and Omissions report must be approved by the Selectboard and filed with the Town Clerk. Diana Garrow made a motion to approve the report as submitted; Jeff Chase seconded; unanimously approved.
- i. On the subject of the Board of Listers, Town Treasurer David Johnson noted that the Listers met with the District Advisor; they went through the checklist provided by NEMRC re: what services they NEMRC provide as part of their proposal to conduct assessor services for the town. Mr. Johnson noted that most of the items on the checklist will be done by NEMRC in collaboration with the Board of Listers. The Town will need to adopt a new computer system and additional related software to facilitate the re-assessment.
 - ii. Mr. Johnson also noted that the District Advisor said that Vermont homes are selling, on average, at 60% higher than assessment values. Mark Turco noted that rising home values are concerning as they will price older folks out of Vermont.
- d. **ARPA Funding Request for Oddfellows Hall Renovations:** The members of Colfax Lodge #21, represented by Dennis Devereux, requested the Selectboard's support for ARPA funding to complete the foundation project and other repairs at the Oddfellows Hall in Belmont Village. Mr. Devereux noted that this request is meant to initiate the dialogue with the Selectboard, and suggested that the agenda item be kept on the monthly meeting agenda as Ongoing Business for several months to provide a forum for Selectboard questions and concerns as they consider the request.
- i. On the subject of ARPA funding, Mr. Johnson noted that the town receives \$10,400 from the state each year to go toward a town reappraisal. The reappraisal will likely cost an estimated \$24,000 beyond this state-provided amount.
- e. **Reappointment of Animal Control Officer.** The Selectboard noted that it failed to appoint or reappoint an Animal Control Officer at the beginning of FY23, as planned. Current Animal Control Officer Laura Swarz-Hoc agreed to continue in the role. Jeff Chase made a motion to re-appoint Laura Swarz (retroactively) for Animal Control Officer for FY23, in a term that will last one year, ending at the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2023). Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved.

7. Ongoing & Old Business

- a. **Set Meeting for Fuel/Heating Bid Review:** The meeting has been set for Wednesday, September 21st at 2 pm at the Town Office.
- b. **Public Access Computer Update:** Carol Garrow-Woolley is working with Jon McCann to get the public records computer finalized for access by the public. The computer set-up is complete, and Ms. Garrow-Woolley will be placing it in an accessible spot at the Town Office in the coming week.
- c. **Speed Limit Enforcement Update:** Mr. Woolley noted that he is short 18 signs for speed limit enforcement, and asked whether ARPA funding could be allocated to purchase these additional signs. The Selectboard and Treasurer noted that this is a qualified ARPA expense. Mark Turco made a motion to utilize ARPA funds to purchase infrastructure road signs, not to exceed \$3,000. Jeff Chase seconded the motion, unanimously approved.
 - i. Jeff Chase noted that the town received the first invoice from the Sheriff's office; Deputy Gregory Ricketts has been enforcing in town.
 - ii. Dennis Devereux noted that 4-wheelers go down Route 155 to get between two dirt roads, often going as much as 35 mph.
 - iii. Jeff Chase noted that a post-mounted speed sign could be installed to help with enforcement.
- d. **Junk Ordinance Enforcement:** A complaint was received from the Residents and Taxpayers of Station Road regarding a property on Station Road that may be in violation of the town's Junk Ordinance. Mark Turco noted that complaints about possible Junk Ordinance violations should come in with specific information about the address of the property, and should be signed by name by the concerned resident and include contact information, so the Selectboard can follow up on the request.
- e. **Openings: Board of Listers, Constable and Treasurer:** Openings have been posted in the Town Office, in the *Chit Chat* and on the Town Website for these listings.
 - i. **Town Treasurer Opening: Elected vs. Appointed Position:** The Selectboard voiced some concern regarding whether a qualified candidate will run for the elected position. Mr. Devereux noted that ideally a candidate will spend some months training with or shadowing the current Treasurer prior to taking office. The Selectboard Clerk noted that according to state guidelines, a Town Treasurer may be appointed by the Selectboard for a year until the next election, if no one is elected. Mr. Turco noted that interested candidates are encouraged to inquire about how to run for the office.

8. Citizen Comments

- a. Dennis Devereux noted that the guardrail posts on Maple Hill Road may need to be replaced, as there is a 20-foot drop from the side of the roadway. Mr. Woolley noted that in order to install new guardrail posts, the bank will need to be rebuilt (about 50 feet) with concrete to form a retaining wall of sorts, so that the posts can be installed. Mark Turco noted that this item can be added to future agendas for action.
- b. Steve Hazelton asked about the status of the cell tower. Mr. Turco noted that he will inquire and provide an update when he has new information.

9. Announcements/Other Business

- a. The final Wednesday of the spring/summer Transfer Station schedule will be October 5. The first Saturday will be October 8.

10. Review & Sign Orders

11. Executive Session: Title 1 V.S.A. S 313(a)(3) - personnel (if needed)

a. No executive session needed.

12. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 pm.