

Select Board Meeting
@ Town Office
December 15, 2022
6:30 pm

MEETING MINUTES

Present:

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

Town Officials: In Person: Caitlin Boyle, Dennis Devereux, Phil Crane, Carol Garrow-Woolley, David Johnson, Steven Michel, Christine Pratt, James Seward, Clinton Woolley. Via Zoom: Jon McCann

Members of the Public: In Person: Paul Barton, Elizabeth Karle, Donna Seward, Zena Gates.

- 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 two items: FY24 plowing charges for Wallingford and Plymouth, and the review of a draft grant prepared by the Conservation Commission. Diana Garrow made a motion to approve the additions; Jeff Chase seconded; unanimously approved.
- 4. Approval of November 15, 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:** Mr. Woolley noted that drivers need to slow down and pay closer attention now that we are in winter driving conditions. He noted that the town should look into a part-time back-up transfer station attendant in the event that one of the attendants is out or unable to work.
 - i. Summit Road Box Culvert Update: Jeff Chase noted that we have the invoices in hand from the engineers and all is up-to-date.
 - ii. Mr. Woolley noted that he and Mr. Chase will apply for the Vermont Better Roads Grant Program for reclamation of Perry Road; the maximum grant amount is \$40,000, and the town will request the maximum. Mr. Chase made a motion to apply for the Better Roads grant for Perry Road for FY24. Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.
 - b. Treasurer Monthly Income & Expense Report - David Johnson**
 - i. Monthly Income and Expense Report: Mr. Johnson noted that property tax receivables are \$182,929.77; he has not yet received the delinquent tax report this month, but the largest outstanding tax payment to the town has been received. The Cott System has received \$92 in fees to date. Group Health benefits are going up \$653 per month, but overall the Town will stay within the budget. Mr. Johnson noted that if the Town wished to extend Traffic Ordinance Enforcement, the budget could be found within existing budget line items; Mr. Turco concurred. Mr. Johnson noted that the Casella bill was received today; while the expenses for solid waste exceed last year's expenses to-date, the costs are evening out. Vehicle repairs are at a little over half the budgeted amount, but this includes items like plow blades for the year, which are already accounted for. We

have spent about half of our budget for fuel gas and oil. The Town also made its usual payment to the fire department and rescue squad.

- ii. **NEMRC Contract Update:** The Selectboard had a special meeting on December 13 to review the draft contract from NEMRC, which is proposing its assessor services to the Town; the meeting included reviewing a few minor items flagged by the town's attorneys. Diana Garrow noted that she was comfortable with the contract given the clarifications and assurances from NEMRC. Mr. Turco noted that the Board of Listers should review the list of itemized services and expenses and determine which need to be retained now, and which can be deferred to the new fiscal year. Mr. Johnson noted that there is about \$10,000 remaining from prior years' budgets to cover startup costs; Mr. Johnson recommended that the remaining fee could be covered with ARPA funds. The proposed contract may include up to ~\$18,000 in fees, depending on which options are included. Mr. Johnson further noted that about 80% of the state uses the software program recommended by NEMRC. In addition, the appraiser who would be assigned to the Town is local, and so would not require additional hours to travel to perform services. Ms. Garrow noted that she is encouraged by the fact that the Town would be billed by the hour as opposed to a flat fee. Mr. Chase noted that the training line item in the contract is the most costly, and the Town can be mindful of limiting those costs. Ms. Garrow made a motion to accept the contract as drafted; Jeff Chase seconded; unanimously approved.
 - iii. **Audit Update:** The auditing firm sent two representatives to the office two weeks ago. The depreciation and fixed asset schedules were completed. They have not yet sent any follow-up questions. Overall, the auditors were easy to work with and have not raised any major concerns..
- c. Animal Control Officer Update:** Town ACO Ms. Swarz-Hoc submitted a written update to note that she has been making her way through the list of unlicensed dogs, and is reminding dog owners to register their dogs in January for the new licensing year.
- d. Town Health Officer Update:** The Selectboard urged the Town Health Officer to seek state guidance regarding the property formerly known as the Blue Spruce House. The Selectboard has received complaints regarding the property's compliance with rental housing regulations, and neither the current tenant nor the property owner have been responsive to attempts by the Town Health Officer to inspect the property.
- e. Mount Holly Planning Commission Update - Jon McCann:**
- i. Jon McCann noted that the MHPC had a hearing regarding the Special Flood Hazard Area on December 7.
 - ii. He further noted that the AT&T tower does appear to be working as announced.
 - iii. Ms. Garrow inquired as to whether the Commission could provide a list of all residents who are in the Special Flood Hazard Area, so that those residents could be made aware of any changes that might affect their properties. Mr. McCann noted that that was possible, but that these residents were not dramatically affected by the new state statute, which primarily addresses properties in the River Corridor. Mr. Turco asked how many towns had already adopted the latest River Corridor model proposed by the DEC; Mr. McCann noted that Mount Holly would be the first in the county to adopt this particular most recent model, but that other towns in the county are using other previous models. The advantage of using the most recent model is that a) it is pre-approved by FEMA and does not need special approval by the state or by FEMA, and that b) it is a stand-alone model that is not entangled with other zoning bylaws. Jon McCann noted that about 30-40 properties are in "Zone A," which are special flood areas without any engineering

and are already subject to the state bylaws regarding special flood areas; they will be impacted minimally by the new bylaws and have not been contacted directly by the Planning Commission. Jon McCann did contact the ~40 property owners in the River Corridor, who would be affected by the new River Corridor bylaws. Mr. Turco asked whether the names of all property owners could be provided to the Selectboard so that they could be notified about the new bylaws. Mr. McCann noted that the next step is for the Selectboard to host its own public hearing on the new bylaws, and that the Selectboard could send those property owners a letter inviting them to the hearing.

f. Mount Holly Conservation Commission Update – Phil Crane

- i. A letter of interest has been received from Jeanmarie Fitzgerald to the Conservation Commission; she was also recommended by the Commission. Jeff Chase made a motion to appoint Ms. Fitzgerald; Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved.
- ii. The Conservation Commission notes that the trash receptacle at the Star Lake Beach is not being regularly maintained. The Selectboard Clerk will reach out to the Community Association regarding maintenance of the trash receptacle at the beach.
- iii. The Conservation Commission submitted a draft grant to the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program (UCFP), for the Selectboard’s review. The grant is intended to begin the work of restoring and renewing the trees planted in 2006-08 with funding from the UCFP. The work in 2023 will be limited to the fertilization and pruning of about 60-80 trees, most of which are young maples on Maple Hill Road. The Selectboard recommended asking for the grant maximum of \$1,500; Mr. Chase offered to support the Commission in editing the grant and made a motion to accept the grant at the maximum request of \$1,500. Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved.

- g. Plowing Budget for FY24:** The Town of Wallingford has requested an updated quote for FY plowing and grading. Mr. Chase recommended increasing the fee by approximately 5% for FY24, to an increase of \$150. Mr. Turco recommended increasing the cost by the same percentage for Plymouth. Mr. Chase made a motion to increase the rate as discussed; Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.

6. New Business

- a. Bowlsville Bridge Special Meeting with VTrans:** VTrans has proposed an Alternatives Presentation Meeting to discuss repair and replacement of the Bowlsville bridge, including the existing conditions of the bridge, site constraints, the options considered in the Agency’s scoping report and the recommended alternative(s). The Selectboard decided to schedule the meeting with VTrans for 6 pm on January 24.

7. Ongoing & Old Business

a. ARPA Funding Requests

- i. A/V Equipment for Town Office: Patrick Cody at Okemo Valley TV has received another quote from a second vendor to upgrade A/V at the Town Office (a previously approved funding request.) The quote does not include one necessary piece of equipment; Mr. Cody will request an updated quote.
- ii. Oddfellows Hall Renovations: Dennis Devereux noted that the Oddfellows will meet tomorrow and provide an update at the next meeting.

- b. Traffic Ordinance Enforcement Update:** The Selectboard agreed to continue to fund traffic ordinance enforcement beyond the original end-date of the contract with the Sheriff’s

Department. The effort is generating ticket revenue for the town, and winter conditions make speeding enforcement important.

- c. **Junk Ordinance Enforcement Update:** The Selectboard noted that progress has been made to clean up two of the three properties that are in violation of the junk ordinance, and that fines will not be issued for these properties at this time. A fine will be issued for the Station Road property that is still out of compliance with the ordinance.
- d. **AED Survey and Quote:** Stephen Michel has sought a quote for AED units to be installed in Town buildings; an initial quote has been provided by one vendor, and additional quotes for necessary training and servicing will be sought.
- e. **Openings: Board of Listers, Constable and Treasurer:** Elizabeth Karl attended to officially express interest in running for the role of Treasurer in March, and shared her ten-year background in nonprofit finance, as well as experience in overseeing IT administration.

8. Citizen Comments

- a. Diana Garrow noted that the Town Office furnace has needed to be repaired; the capacitor was replaced. A cleaning and service is also needed.
- b. Les and Linda Lampert submitted a letter asking for the Selectboard's guidance regarding whether tree removal on their property was their or the Town's responsibility. Mr. Turco noted that he and Mr. Woolley would inspect the property in order to make a decision.

9. Announcements/Other Business

- a. The Town Office will be closed on Monday, December 26 and Monday, January 2.
- b. The Transfer Station will be closed on Sunday, December 25.
- c. The Swap Shed will be open Saturdays only through March.
- d. Dog licensing renewal will begin January 1.
- e. The Selectboard reminds Town residents that residents cannot plow snow from their properties into the traveled portion of the road, per state statute.
- f. The Town Budget Workshop is set for 5 pm on January 3.

10. Review & Sign Orders

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

- a. Diana Garrow made a motion to go into Executive Session. Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved.

12. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm.