

Select Board Meeting
Town Office
September 12, 2023, 6:30 pm

MINUTES

Attendance: Diana Garrow, Mark Turco, Jeff Chase, Caitlin Boyle, David Johnson, Cody Hesse, Bret Harlow, Erik Hanson, Anna McGee-Hanson, Steve Hazelton, Barbara Hazelton David Venter, Dennis Cointreau, Dennis Devereux, Phil Crane, Jennifer Burrows (Zoom), Kevin Hollebeek, Jon McCann, Steve Michel, Denise Young, Megan Blais.

1. **Call to Order** at 6:35 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Consideration of Any Changes to the Agenda.** None.
4. **Approval of August 8 and 31 Minutes.** Mark Turco made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.
 - a. **Approve Revision for Clarification Re: Cook Fund on July 11 Minutes.** Mark Turco made a motion to approve the July 11 minutes with a minor revision for clarification re: the Cook Fund; Jeff Chase seconded; unanimously approved.
5. **Reports**
 - a. **Highways & Transfer Station Update:** Clinton Woolley was not able to attend the meeting due to a fire call.
 - i. **Summit Road Culvert Construction Update.** Mr. Chase noted at the close of the meeting that the Summit Road Culvert construction should be complete by the end of the month.
 - ii. Mrs. Garrow noted that a resident asked whether an increase of hours at the Transfer Station would be possible. Kevin Stillwell suggested a possible increase to 2-7 pm on Wednesdays in the summer, and 9 am-2 pm on Sundays in the winter. The Select Board will consider budgetary impacts of a change in hours and revisit at the next regular meeting.
 - iii. **Transfer Station Winter Hours** will start October 14-15. The last Wednesday is October 11.
 - b. **Treasurer Monthly Income & Expense Report:** The Town's cash flow has significantly improved, with an impressive number of taxpayers submitting payment this month, as well as interest rates providing a boost to all funds. Due to flood-related expenses, the Town shows larger than usual accounts payable of ~\$136,000 this month. Regarding tax payments, the Town has exceeded the budgeted number of discounts taken by residents and are just shy of \$10,000 over budget (meaning reduced revenue) as of September 11th. Interest income is almost 50% of the fiscal year's budget as of the end of the month. Of note in Intergovernmental Income are two additional quarterly State Aid payments, paid in advance of the normal timing, in order to assist towns with road damage fees related to the July storm. The Town also had a boom in Solid Waste labels sold for the month of August, in anticipation of the increased rate, with just over \$8,000 in labels sold (28.7% of the budget). Summer labor expenses are significantly lower than usual, as many hours of time will be allocated to the flood/storm damage total. Winter sand, as approved, has begun to be stockpiled as well.
 - i. **FEMA Public Assistance Update:** The biggest expense to date is flood damage, which currently sits at \$363,057.61. This number will continue to climb as the Town finalizes more of the damage repair. FEMA has estimated a reimbursement timeline of up to two years. This timing will be impacted by other disasters occurring in the country at the same time, as well as the mechanisms of government funding, both Federal and State, as the Town will eventually need to apply to both for final payouts.
 - c. **Mount Holly Planning Commission Update:** The Belmont Village Plan is underway and progressing on schedule; the application for a Municipal Planning Grant for FY24 is available if the Select Board wishes to apply.
 - i. **Research on Camper Ordinance:** Mr. McCann noted that he did research with VLCT on the powers the Town has to address the effects of campers, trailers or campgrounds; because the Town does not have any zoning bylaws, the only ordinance authority that appears applicable in this situation is the Town's nuisance ordinance, but VLCT wasn't

aware of any other Towns using the nuisance ordinance to regulate effects of campers/trailers. Mark Turco noted that the primary question is whether the Town can levy a property tax on campers/trailers under certain circumstances; Mr. McCann noted that he can do further research.

- d. **Mount Holly Conservation Commission Update:** Phil Crane noted that Fra Devine has resigned from the Commission; they are seeking to fill the position. The MHCC is delaying the ash borer mitigation plan (injection of ash trees) until spring; no ash borers have been detected in the Town yet. The resurrected Friends of Star Lake are raising funds to acquire the equipment to do mechanical harvesting of milfoil and other invasive species from the lake and will present their plans at a booth on Cider Days. Mr. Crane noted that there are invasive phragmites in the Star Lake area; the state recommends that no mowing be done in these areas to reduce spread.

6. New Business

- a. Open Fuel Bids: The Town received one eligible bid for on-road diesel and #2 heating oil bids, from Marcel Oil Company. On-road fuel is offered at .20 over the rack price; #2 heating oil is offered at .20 over rack price with a price cap of #3.95. Diana Garow made a motion to accept the bid as proposed; Jeff Chase second; unanimously approved.
 - i. Mark Turco made a motion to accept the Cota & Cota propane quote as submitted.
- b. Consideration of Rutland County Solid Waste Reduction & Diversion Grant: This is an opportunity to apply for a grant to support education and community engagement regarding waste diversion in the Town of Mount Holly. The Select Board Clerk will send information to the Conservation Commission in case they would like to pursue the grant.
- c. Consideration and Approval of Personnel Policy Updates. Mark Turco made a motion to adopt the updated Personnel Policy as drafted; Diana Garow seconded; unanimously approved.
- d. Cider Days Planning
 - i. Road Closure Requests - MH Community Association. Kevin Hollebeek shared a map of requested road closures for Cider Days, to take place October 8 and 9. Mrs. Garrow noted that the road closures should provide for a fire lane/emergency access. Jeff Chase made a motion to accept the traffic control plan and road closures as drafted, with the provision that there is access for emergency personnel alongside Maple Hill Road. Mrs. Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.
 - ii. Consideration of Vendor - Mount Holly Beer Company (MHBC). Mr. Tilly represented his son, Dan Tilly, owner of MHBC, to describe his plans regarding sale of beer at Cider Days. The Select Board Clerk noted the liquor board's requirements regarding festival permits: these include that 1) any one of questionable age is carded; visible boundaries (physical or natural) must be in place to demarcate the festival and liquor must stay within those boundaries; if there are more than 200 people, the location must have double fencing around the boundary, with the fences six feet apart; the maximum serving for beer must be 12 oz, and no more than 60 oz/pp; the permittee must keep track of amounts served per person. Mr. Kevin Plew asked whether the MHBC would be providing restrooms. Mr. Chase noted that a written proposal from MHBC to describe the liquor control plan would be helpful. Mr. Turco asked that MHBC provide a written plan to the Select Board to describe the plan for liquor control, and recommended that a porta-potty be included in that plan, and that security personnel be provided to watch the boundary. Mr. Turco noted that the plan should be emailed to the Select Board within a week, and that the Select Board would support the license being approved by the Town Clerk, provided an acceptable written plan is submitted on that timeline.

7. Ongoing & Old Business

- a. ACO Search Update: The position remains open; interested parties are invited to apply. The current ACO will continue to do the field work aspects of the position, and to be paid the FY24 monthly stipend, until a new ACO is appointed.
- b. Dog License Registration Update: Christine Pratt began with a list of 105 unregistered dog owners in June; there is now one owner (two dogs) remaining on the list. Prior to issuing a warrant to impound unlicensed dogs, the Select Board will issue a letter to the dog owner notifying him of his lack of compliance and requesting immediate registration.

- c. July 9th Storm Recovery.
 - i. Infrastructure Repair Update. Jeff Chase noted that the annual paving is complete; patchwork and repair is yet to be done.
 - ii. FEMA Public Assistance Update. The Town Treasurer noted this update in her remarks (above).
 - iii. VEM Hazard Mitigation Program. There are two properties in Town interested in the flood buyout program. Mr. Chase made a motion to apply for the program for the properties; Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved.
- d. MPG Draft Village Master Plan. The closeout for reimbursement is the end of September; the certified planner will also close out his work at the end of September. The month of October will be dedicated to completing documentation.
- e. Mount Holly Volunteer Rescue Squad Update. Ms. Anna McGee-Hanson noted that the rescue squad has been designated IRS 501(c)(3) status with a NEET code of Ambulance. The squad has sought 501(c)(3) status in an attempt to improve membership and increase response times. Mr. Turco noted that he had asked for a quote from Ludlow Ambulance regarding contracting emergency rescue services, as an alternative to Mount Holly Volunteer Rescue Squad, should that prove a viable alternative option. Mrs. Garrow noted that she had also reached out to Rutland Regional Ambulance Service.
 - i. Ms. McGee-Hanson noted that come Town Meeting Warning time, Rescue would be asking the Town voters to fund \$57,000 for operating expenses, plus \$15,000 for the Ambulance Sinking Fund. She noted that they hope to hire one full-time person to cover calls, and to be located at the building Mon-Fri during work hours; an additional full-time position would be filled by multiple per-diem personnel, in an attempt to increase response times.
 - ii. Ms. McGee-Hanson noted that Rescue has been receiving an unprecedented volume of calls this quarter; response rates are currently between 30-40%, which she noted is “not great.”
 - iii. Mr. Plew asked whether selecting Ludlow as the emergency responder would eliminate the Mount Holly Volunteer Rescue Squad Update; the answer is yes.
 - iv. Ms. Zena Gates asked how much each patient is billed when an ambulance transports them; Ms. McGee-Hanson noted that Rescue bills \$880 per transport, but that the amount Rescue is paid/reimbursed depends on the patient’s insurance policy. For Medicare/Medicaid patients, the reimbursement rate to Rescue, per transport, is less than \$350. For privately insured patients, the payment varies depending on insurance contracts.
 - v. Jeff Chase recommended that Rescue provide a detailed plan and budget to the Select Board, as well as a call log reflecting response rates over the last reasonable period (fiscal year, calendar year, etc.).

8. Citizen Comments

- a. Kevin Plew asked how new owners of commercial buildings would know whether there were state or local requirements for building or operating. Mr. Turco noted that it is the owner’s responsibility to research and follow local and state regulations.

9. Announcements

- a. Transfer Station winter hours will begin the weekend of October 14-15th; the last Wednesday will be October 11.

10. Review & Sign Orders

- 11. Executive Session:** Title 1 V.S.A. S 313 – Grievances. Mr. Chase made a motion to go into executive session; Mrs. Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.

12. Adjourned at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Caitlin Boyle, Select Board Clerk