

Select Board Meeting
Mount Holly Town Office
January 9, 2024
6:30 pm

Attendance: Mark Turco, Diana Garrow, Caitlin Boyle, Carol A Garrow-Woolley, Elizabeth Karle, Christine Pratt, Billy Austin, Zena Gates, David Johnson, Jon McCann, Jeremy Gildrian, Amy Turco, Gary Norton, Lori Norton, Tiffany Norton, Abe Leber, Glenn Kreig, Stephen Michel, Andy Schulz, Fra Devine, Brigid Sullivan, Andrew Tanger, June Capron, Peg Glezen, Phil Leonard, Jordan Ludwick.

1. **Call to Order at 6:35 pm.**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Consideration of any changes and/or additions to the agenda.** There are two additions: Fire Department Update, Sign Certificate of Highway Mileage.
4. **Approval of December 12, 2023 Minutes.** Diana Garrow made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved.
5. **Reports**
 - a. **Highways & Transfer Station Update.** Road Foreman Clinton Woolley is unable to attend due to the snow storm. He did ask Treasurer Elizabeth Karle to share two quotes for town trucks to replace the truck that is in need of replacement. The Select Board will review.
 - b. **Town Treasurer Update.**
 - i. **Monthly Income and Expenses Report:** Elizabeth Karle noted that the flooding events in December may be designated as a FEMA flood emergency; she will keep the Select Board apprised. The biggest December spending item was for payments due to the state education fund. ARPA funds are transferred into the General Fund, as approved in November. The Town has started to receive delinquent taxes; a little less than half of what is due has been received. Otherwise, it's a quiet time of year.
 - ii. **Finalize and Approve FY '24 Meeting.** Mr. Turco noted he would move this item to the end of agenda.
 - c. **Lister's Report.** A preliminary report has been filed by the Listers. The appraiser is making progress on converting the Town's lister cards into CAMA [software] format. The state has released new CLA numbers, but the Town has not yet received official notice; almost every town in the state will be mandated to do a reappraisal.
 - d. **Planning Commission Update.** Planning Commission Chair Jon McCann noted that he is happy to meet with the Select Board members individually if they have notes or comments to share with the Commission regarding the Town Plan. Mr. Turco noted that he could meet Thursday at 3 pm; Ms. Garrow noted that she could meet Thursday at 1 pm, both at the Town Office.
 - i. **Municipal Planning Grant FY24 Accepted:** The state has granted the town the MPG grant for FY24, for the purposes of conducting a housing study grant. Jeff Chase is listed as the MAO/signer. Ms. Garrow made a motion to accept the FY24 MPG; Mr. Turco seconded; unanimously approved.
6. **New Business**
 - a. **Set Date to Sign Warning for Town Meeting Day and Election.** Town Clerk Carol Garrow-Woolley proposed signing the warning on Thursday, January 25 at 6:30 pm. Mr. Turco and Ms. Garrow agreed; the Clerk will confirm with Mr. Chase. The election is March 5, 2024.
 - b. **Geese Depredation Permit Request FY2024.** Ron Unterman requested permission to apply for a geese depredation permit for 2024. Mr. Turco made a motion to proceed with the geese

depreciation permit for 2024; Ms. Garrow seconded; unanimously approved. Mr. Unterman noted that he would be eager to turn this role over to a new person.

- c. **MERP Mini Grants:** The Town is invited to apply for the up-to-\$4,000 state grant; the funds can be applied to anything related to public outreach regarding municipal efforts for capacity building and active participation in energy resilience initiatives. Ms. Garrow made a motion to apply for the grant; Mr. Turco seconded; unanimously approved.

7. Ongoing & Old Business

- a. **Opening for Transfer Station Attendant:** The Town has received one application for employment.
- b. **Sign Certificate of Highway Mileage.** The Clerk noted that Mr. Woolley confirmed there are no changes to the Town's highway mileage; the Select Board will sign and submit the certificate with no changes. Ms. Garrow made a motion to sign the certificate of highway mileage; Mr. Turco seconded; unanimously approved.
- c. **RFP for Auditors.** Ms. Karle noted that she will ask the current auditing firm to submit a bid for auditing services.
- d. **Fire Department Update:** Mr. Austin noted that he wanted to address some rumored concerns about Fire Department spending on the annual Christmas party and award ceremony. He noted that the event included the Town highway crew, past auxiliary members, former MHVRS members, and the Select Board. Total event costs, including venue rental, catering, gifts for members, and awards, was \$5,023.60; Mr. Austin wanted transparency for the Town and residents regarding the cost of the event. He also expressed continued interest in the fire department taking over maintenance and use of the former MHVRS building; Mr. Turco noted that the Board would make a decision on this once all assets and supplies from the prior occupants had been turned over to the Town. The Clerk noted that the Town's attorney had drafted a follow-up letter to the MHVRS to request the final transfer of assets and materials.

8. Citizen Comments

- a. Mr. Turco noted that the Town Clerk and Select Board had received a complete and properly submitted Voter-Backed Petition for the addition of a ballot item regarding the formation of a five-member Select Board for the Town. He confirmed that the ballot item would be put to voters on the Annual Town Meeting ballot in March. The Clerk confirmed that VLCT's staff attorney reviewed the petition, and confirmed that if the measure was approved by voters, the Town would be obligated to hold a special election for voters to select two additional Board members; the Board would have two vacancies until such time that additional Board members were elected by Australian ballot. Mr. Turco invited citizen comments on the issue.
 - i. Christine Pratt asked about projected cost to the Town for a special election; the Town Clerk noted that the cost would likely be between \$2,000-3,000 dollars. Ms. Pratt also asked whether the Select Board knew of the petition before receiving it; Mr. Turco noted that they were aware only via rumor, not through formal communication.
 - ii. Fra Devine noted that if there were five members of the Board, then two Board members would be permitted to discuss issues as a subcommittee, outside of a publicly warned meeting; he further noted that having a larger board would make it possible to reach a quorum even if two members were absent from meetings.
 - iii. Zena Gates noted that the cost of an additional election was substantial, especially given rising budgetary costs across the board.
 - iv. Brigid Sullivan noted that the issue could be discussed further from the floor of the Town Meeting; Mr. Turco agreed.
 - v. The Clerk noted that the petition was not signed by a lead petitioner, with whom the Select Board could communicate regarding the petition; no lead petitioner was identified.

9. Announcements/Other Business

- a. Dog License Registration Deadline is April 1

- b. Town Plan Legislative Hearing January 16, 6:30 pm
- c. Town Office Closed on January 15 for MLK Jr. Day
- d. Town Officers' Consent Form deadline is January 29.

10. Review & Sign Orders

11. Executive Session: Title 1 V.S.A. S 313(a)(3) - personnel (if needed). The Clerk noted that there was a personnel item for the Select Board to discuss. Diana Garrow made a motion to go into executive session; Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved. Upon further review, it is noted that the item was not of a nature that requires an executive session. The item regards a change in the wording of the overtime policy in the Town's Personnel Policy for highway employees. The overtime policy will be amended to indicate that highway employees may earn time-and-a-half overtime pay for any hours exceeding 40/week that are either worked or taken as holiday, vacation or personal time.

12. Adjourned at 7:45 pm.

*Note: Mr. Turco noted after the adjournment that he had forgotten to revisit the FY24 budget finalization agenda item. A new meeting was set for FY24 Budget Finalization for January 11, 3 pm, at the Town Office. Clerk will warn as a special meeting.