

**Select Board Meeting
Town Office
October 10, 2023, 6:30 pm**

MINUTES

Attendance: Caitlin Boyle, Mark Turco, Diana Garrow, MariAnne McGee (via Zoom), Diane Deegan (via Zoom), Randall Dapron (via Zoom), Faith Tempest (via Zoom), Billy Austin, Tiffany Norton, Carol Garrow-Woolley, Lori Norton, James Seward, Christine Pratt, Dennis Devereux, Russ Garrow, Clinton Woolley, Elizabeth Karle, Zena Gates, David Johnson, Stephen Michel, Ted Crawford, Barbara Hazelton, Steve Hazelton, Anna McGee Hanson, Mark Shea, Grant Thurston, Erik Hanson, Katherine Heald, Amy Turco, Mary Surething, Philippe Crane, Andrew Shulz, Jon McCann

1. **Call to Order at 6:35 pm**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Consideration of Any Changes to the Agenda.** None.
4. **Approval of September 12 Minutes.** Diana Garrow made a motion to approve the minutes as drafted; Mark Tuco seconded; unanimously approved.
5. **Reports**
 - a. **Highways & Transfer Station Update:** Road Foreman Clinton Woolley noted that the town needs new radios for the highway crew; he received a quote from CVC Paging for up to nine new radios, including radios for each truck and two base stations. The quote is \$3,132/year. Mr. Turco noted that the PACIF equipment grant, and/or ARPA funding may be able to cover the cost. Mr. Clinton further reported that paving is done with the exception of shoulders. Mr. Clinton also received a quote for new guardrails for Healdville Road/Branch Brook Road; VT Rec sent the lowest quote.
 - i. **Summit Road Culvert Update:** The project is complete. The remaining guardrail will be installed by G&N Excavating's subcontractor, VT Rec.
 - ii. **Response to VT Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC):** Select Board Clerk Caitlin Boyle noted that the Town submitted its response to the state DEC, in reply to its inspection of the Transfer Station. The Town is now in compliance with the state's requirements. New signage has been installed at the swap shed, recycling compactor and shed, and a summary of disposal guidelines has been posted to the Post Offices, Town Office, Newsflash and Chit Chat. Awesome Graphics provided a quote for a new burn pile sign at \$146.50. Mark Turco made a motion to approve the signage expenses as quoted; Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.
 - b. **Treasurer Monthly Income & Expense Report:** Town Treasurer Liz Karle noted that property taxes continue to come in. Transfer Station sticker purchases have also remained steady, even at the higher price point. Ms. Karle has continued to document and compile flood-related expenses for FEMA reimbursement and has met with the Town's FEMA liaison; FEMA reimbursement will not be affected by a potential federal government shutdown.
 - i. **Banking Updates:** Ms. Karle reported that she has consolidated and moved funds within the Town's existing bank to take advantage of the best interest rates. She estimated the Town will gain ~\$150,000 in interest as a result of the changes and current rates.
 - ii. **FY Audit Report:** The town's auditing firm has completed audited financial statements for FY22, and the report has determined that the Town is in good financial health.
 - c. **Lister's Update**
 - i. **Errors and Omissions:** There is one request from a single property owner for an error and omission. Diana Garrow made a motion to accept the Errors and Omissions certificate as presented; Mark Turco second; unanimously approved.

- ii. **Maintenance Agreement:** Lister David Johnson presented the Select Board with a new Maintenance Agreement from NEMRC. Mr. Turco made a motion to renew the assessor's service agreement for FY24. Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.
- d. **Mount Holly Planning Commission Update:** Jon McCann noted that the Planning Commission has completed its draft of the Town Plan and will hold a public hearing at 6:00 PM on November 15, 2023, at the Mount Holly Town Office and via Zoom, to solicit public comment on the proposed plan.
- e. **Mount Holly Conservation Commission Update:** The MHCC had a successful recycling education booth at Cider Days. They are considering opportunities to apply for grants through the RCSWD and Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program.

6. New Business

- a. **Open Transfer Station Bids:** The Town received two bids for collection and disposal of solid waste, recycling and other materials from the Transfer Station, from Casella Waste and from Hubbard Brothers. Complete bid details are available for review at the Town Office. Mr. Turco noted that the Select Board will need to review the bids more carefully to make an apples-to-apples comparison of each vendor's quotes for collection and disposal of mixed solid waste, Zero-Sort recycling, compost, and scrap metal. A decision will be made at the next regular meeting. Apart from submitting their bid, Hubbard Brothers also asked whether the Town would be interested in selling the two empty 30-yard waste containers that have been unused at the transfer station for several years. They'd like to offer the Town \$2,400 to purchase them, if the Town agrees. Randy Dapron at Casella Waste noted that the containers may belong to Casella; he will review his records to check on ownership. Mark Turco made a motion to sell the containers to Hubbard Brothers for \$2,400, conditional on Town ownership; Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved. Mr. Woolley will also determine whether the Town owns the containers and will report back.
- b. **FY24 Municipal Planning Grant - Housing Study:** Treasurer Liz Karle recommended that the Town apply to the FY24 MPG to perform a housing study that would survey the town's housing. Mr. Turco noted that the Select Board would meet Tuesday, October 17 at 6:30 pm to discuss whether or not to pursue the grant.
- c. **Social Services Policy:** Select Board Clerk Caitlin Boyle noted that the Town does not have a recorded policy to describe the Town's approval of social services requests for the annual town meeting. Mr. Turco noted that the Clerk can draft a policy using other town policies as a guide, for discussion and/or approval at the next regular meeting.
- d. **.Gov Domain Registration.** Ms. Karle noted that the Town is entitled, as a municipality, to request a .gov website domain. Ms. Karle has prepared a draft request for the Select Board's review. Ms. Garrow made a motion to request that mthollyvt.gov be delegated to the Town; Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved.
- e. **Renewal of Town Employee Health Insurance and Health Reimbursement Accounts.** Renewals for town employee health insurance and health reimbursement accounts are due before the end of the year. Monthly costs for health insurance premiums for all covered Town employees in November 2023 were \$5,778.34. Estimated costs for the same plan for 2024 are \$6,580.35—a ~13.9% increase (\$802.01), assuming the same needs for coverage, and the same plan. Mark Turco made a motion to renew the policies as estimated; Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.
- f. **Belmont Village Designation Renewal.** The Select Board discussed the need for renewal of the Belmont Historic Village Designation. Diana Garrow made a motion to apply to renew the designation; Mark Turco seconded; unanimously approved.

7. Ongoing & Old Business

- a. **Rutland County Solid Waste District Update.** Mark Shea reported on the RCSWD’s outreach grant, which supported their survey of residents regarding recycling, composting and other solid waste diversion activities in Town.
- b. **TH17 Bridge Project - Feedback to State.** VTrans has completed work on the conceptual plans for the reconstruction of the Bowlsville Bridge. The state will accept Town feedback on the plans through October 20, 2023. The next step in the process is to progress the plans and work on obtaining the necessary permits and ROW required for the project. Affected property owners have been contacted by the Select Board to solicit feedback and questions.
- c. **VEM Hazard Mitigation Program Update.** Three property owners are considering the VEM Hazard Mitigation flood buyout offer. Jeff Chase will continue to follow up with all three property owners to determine whether they will go forward with the buyout process. If the property owners decide to move forward, a board member needs to be appointed to be the authorized agent for the VEM Hazard Mitigation property buyouts; Mr. Chase noted he is willing to be that agent if needed. Mr. Turco made a motion to appoint Jeff Chase as the authorized agent; Diana Garrow seconded; unanimously approved.
- d. **Mount Holly Volunteer Rescue Squad Update.** Mr. Turco asked MHVRS to provide an update regarding its budget for, and intention to operate under the auspices of, a new, 501(c)(3) entity that will provide emergency medical services (EMS) to Town residents through both volunteer first responders as well as paid, daytime staff.
 - i. Anna McGee Hanson noted that the budget for the new organization is still being deliberated and is not yet final.
 - ii. Ms. Garrow noted that she had only received one page of the organization's Articles of Incorporation and asked if there were more. Ms. McGee Hanson noted that the Articles were only one page and asked if the Select Board would like to read the full bylaws. Ms. Garrow asked for those to be provided.
 - iii. Mr. Turco shared a draft proposal for the possible provision of EMS services via Ludlow Ambulance Service, as an alternative to EMS services being provided for by a local rescue squad. Marianne McGee noted her concerns regarding the possibility of shifting to a Ludlow-based ambulance service, which may take longer to respond to calls than a local service, citing the concept of the “golden hour” of time that is optimal for emergency response.
 - iv. Erik Hanson noted that as of last week, MHVRS is staffed during the day by a paid first responder. He and Ms. McGee Hanson noted that response rates by the MHVRS squad have been at ~30% in the last year, due to a decrease in volunteers and an increase in call volume. He noted that Rutland Regional Ambulance Service is also understaffed.
 - v. Ted Crawford noted that he has concerns regarding the details of the MHVRS’s transition to a new 501(c)(3), and in particular, that the transition to a new entity was not shared openly with the Town government or residents prior to the change. He noted that many residents are unaware of the changes, or confused about them, and that he would be interested in seeing minutes for the last two years of MHVRS’s minutes. Mary Surething noted that she agreed that Town residents need more transparency regarding potential organizational changes and costs for the rescue service. Steve Hazelton added that his background is in EMS, and that in his experience of volunteer squads that have shifted to a system of paid, daytime help, the shift can lead to additional overtime costs, and squads can struggle with the increased need for organizational management, among other concerns.
 - vi. Mr. Turco asked that a special meeting be scheduled to discuss the provision of emergency medical services in Mount Holly. Mr. Turco proposed that this meeting be held on November 21 at 6:30 pm.

- vii. Amy Turco noted that she suffered a personal loss recently; no local EMS responded to the 911 call; she asked that the MHVRS take a broader view of the issue to consider the impact not only on the rescue squad, but on the community. Ms. McGee Hanson and Mr. Hanson noted that they agree with Ms. Turco's concerns regarding response rates; the organizational changes they have initiated are intended to respond to that concern. Zena Gates also expressed her dismay with the MHVRS's lack of response to her 911 calls.
- viii. Katherine Heald asked how the meeting on November 21 would be advertised so as to promote broad attendance by Town residents. Mr. Turco noted that it would be published in the Vermont Journal, in addition to the Chit Chat, Newsflash and public posting sites. He confirmed that Jim Finger at Rutland Regional would be invited to attend, as would a representative from Ludlow Ambulance Service. He asked that no further comment be made at this meeting, and that residents with questions and concerns attend the future meeting.
- ix. Diana Garrow noted her gratitude for the MHVRS's efforts over the years.
- e. **Dam Inspection Report.** The state's post-flood inspection of the dam has been received. No action is needed at this time.
- f. **Junk Ordinance Complaints:** The Select Board received one complaint regarding a property on Shunpike Road. The Select Board Clerk will prepare a letter informing the property owner of the updated junk ordinance, his apparent violation of the ordinance, and the new fee schedule for violations.

8. Citizen Comments

- a. Joan Connor noted the need for handicapped-accessible parking at the Belmont Store, if and when it reopens.

9. Announcements. None.

10. Review & Sign Orders.

11. Executive Session: Title 1 V.S.A. S 313. None.

12. Adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Caitlin Boyle
Select Board Clerk