

Select Board Meeting

Town Office

July 16, 2024

****6:00 pm****

Attendees: Mark Turco (Chair), Diana Garrow, Jeff Chase, Carol Garrow-Woolley, Clinton Woolley, Elizabeth Karle, Bill Austin, Paul Barton, Gary Norton, Lori Norton, Chris Pratt, Zena Gates, Tim Morton, Bob Brandt. Via Zoom: David Martin, Andy Schulz, Adam Karle, Donna Seward.

1. **Call to Order** at 6:00 pm.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Consideration of any changes and/or additions to the agenda.** Mark Turco noted that the Board would add a new item regarding the Junk Ordinance and a new item regarding Animal Control.
4. **Approval of June 11 and June 19 minutes.** Diana Garrow made a motion to approve as drafted; Jeff Chase seconded; unanimously approved.
5. **Reports**
 - a. **Highways & Transfer Station Report - Clinton Woolley.** Mr. Woolley recommended that the Town consider maintaining Ninevah Road through the winter season, as requested by the postal service. He approximated the cost to bring the road up to the appropriate standard to be ~\$7,000. He also noted that repairs would commence on Greendale Bridge; the Town will allow access via the town road. The Town received a structures grant to install the Sawyer Hill box culvert, and will open bids for the Shunpike Road shim and overlay scope of work on July 30 at 4 pm, at a special meeting. Mr. Woolley noted that the e-waste pickup is complete at the Transfer Station, and that Casella will deliver a metal container for metal scrap. Mr. Chase discussed progress on the Shunpike culvert replacement (estimated completion in two weeks); Stewart Lane (completion due in September to meet requirements of MRGP grant); and Beaver Meadow (the Town is seeking bids for engineering).
 - b. **Treasurer's Report - Elizabeth Karle.** Ms. Karle reported that the Town has received its first FEMA cash payment for reimbursement of damages incurred during the July 2023 flooding events. The Town budget is at a \$317,000 deficit at the end of the fiscal year, but given that the Town incurred more than \$500,000 in disaster recovery expenses, this deficit is moderate. Ms. Karle noted that the Town has continued to receive interest income, and that solid waste label revenues are over-budget, which offsets the costs of running the Transfer Station.
 - c. **Fire Department Update - Bill Austin.** Mr. Austin reported that while the Fire Department now has a first response team and uses the ambulance for those services, he would like to remind residents that the Department does not perform transport; all ambulance transport is done by the Ludlow Ambulance Service. He

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added that the Department now has a boat and can perform boat rescues as needed. He also noted that he would like to clarify the Town's policy on fireworks displays. The Clerk noted per state law, fireworks are illegal in Vermont and all private displays are also illegal. An exception is public displays presented by trained professionals and permitted at least 15 days in advance by the local Fire Chief/Department. Mr. Turco noted that the Clerk could ask VLCT for guidance on drafting a local policy to help communicate the state law to residents.

- d. **Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation - Okemo State Forest - Tim Morton.** Mr. Morton discussed the State's plan to remove ash trees in the Okemo State Forest near Healdville, in anticipation of emerald ash borer infestation, which is predicted to reach Mount Holly and to destroy 99% of ash trees. The mitigation effort is focused on the areas of the forest that are used for sugaring and that are near hiking, VAST and Catamount trails.

6. New Business

- a. **Sign Municipal Mitigation Grants in Aid FY25.** The board signed the \$17,750 grant agreement; work must be complete by September 30, 2025.
- b. **Sign Promissory Note: Municipal Equipment Loan Fund.** The board signed the promissory note for the 5-year, \$110,000 loan.
- c. **Establish FY'25 Tax Rate.** Town Treasurer Elizabeth Karle discussed the state tax rate and budget calculations that allow her to arrive at a proposed tax rate. In order to fund the Town's voter-approved budget, the Town will need to set a tax municipal rate of .4063. Ms. Garrow made a motion to approve the tax rate as proposed; Jeff Chase seconded; unanimously approved.
- d. **Appoint New REMC.** The board discussed appointing Fire Chief Bill Austin as the new REMC. Mr. Turco made a motion to approve the appointment; Mr. Chase seconded; unanimously approved.
- e. **Appoint Board of Adjustment Representatives.** The board received letters of interest from two current representatives and one current alternate. The board unanimously re-appointed Christine Pratt and Dennis Devereux as BOA representatives, for three-year terms, and David Johnson as BOA alternate, for a three-year term.
- f. **Discuss Transfer Station Employee Hours.** The Clerk recommended discussing the specifics in the Executive Session given that it involved particulars of employee compensation.

7. Ongoing & Old Business

- a. Discuss Formation of a Recreation Committee - David Martin. The Board discussed the Mount Holly Conservation Commission's recommendation that it

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form a recreation committee, as proposed in the Town Plan. Mr. Chase and Ms. Garrow noted that the committee should only be formed if there was sufficient interest in participation. The Clerk suggested that Mr. Martin draft a short description of the committee members' proposed role, and that she could disseminate that posting to gauge interest. Mr. Turco noted that if there were sufficient interest in serving on the committee, the Board would form it; if not, the Board would table the request. Mr. Martin agreed to draft a description for the Clerk.

- b. **Dog Licensing Census Update.** This item was omitted.
- c. **Animal Control.** The Board reported that it was in receipt of a report from Animal Control Officer Adam Karle; it thanked Mr. Karle for his work and reporting. Mr. Austin and Ms. Norton noted that one of the calls listed on the ACO's report involved their neighbor's dog, which she and her family had observed being vicious. The Clerk noted that the Town's dog ordinance outlines procedures for reporting and evaluating vicious dogs, and fining and ticketing residents with such dogs. Mr. Turco noted that a report of the dog's vicious behavior should be provided to the Town's ACO and Town Health Officer, so that they can take the appropriate action per the ordinance.
- d. **Junk Ordinance.** Mr. Turco reported that the Board had received notification that several properties on Route 155 were in violation of the Junk Ordinance. He noted that he would provide the physical addresses to the Clerk so she could send letters to the respective property owners.

8. Citizen Comments

- a. Zena Gates noted that some nearby towns have noise ordinances that commence in the evening and are strongly enforced.

9. Announcements

- a. Green Up Coordinator Needed
- b. Transfer Station Attendant Needed

10. Review & Sign Orders

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

12. Adjourned at 8:30 pm.