

SELECTBOARD MEETING

Approved Minutes

October 31, 2011

7:00pm Town Hall

Attending: Denise Wheeler, Mike Garand, Toby Talbot, Scott Bassage, Cy Lamberton, Alfred Larrabee, Sidney Griggs, James Corson, Peter Harvey, Donna Fitch, Jack Russell, Gary Root and Rose Pelchuck.

Absent: John Brabant

Actions:

WEC Permit to Work in the Town's Right-of-Way – Cy Lamberton reviewed the permit application from Washington Electric Co-op for work on East Hill to move poles and relocate them closer to the road. Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the permit application as presented. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

Approval of the October 10th Meeting Minutes – The Selectboard reviewed the Minutes and made a few changes. Scott Bassage made a motion to approve the Minutes as amended. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-0.

Approval of the October 20th Joint Meeting Minutes – The Selectboard reviewed the Minutes. Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the Minutes as written. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-0.

Approval of the October 24th Special Meeting Minutes – The Selectboard reviewed the Minutes and made a few changes. Toby Talbot made a motion to approve the Minutes as amended. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-0.

Review of Fiscal Year 2011 – Donna Fitch, Town Clerk & Treasurer, provided the final figures for the Selectboard to review. Donna called attention to the Long Term Liabilities (restricted funds) column. Jeff Fothergill, CPA, suggests getting the Trustees of Public Funds together and investing funds for a better return. Other highlights included: the Delinquent Tax receivable amount has grown by about \$45,000.00 since last year; the Selectboard will need to put an article to the voters next March asking for permission to put the surplus highway money from FY 2011 in the designated highway fund (see Article 11 from 2010 annual report). Jim Barlow, VLCT attorney, said you could also reduce fiscal year tax rate with this extra money. Scott Bassage's new motto, "raise it this year and spend it this year". The Auditors will audit the books after the treasurer's report is complete.

The current budget from July 1st to October 6th was discussed. Donna Fitch advised the Selectboard to plan for an assistant town clerk in the next budget year and subsequent years. Donna will do the hiring and the job description is outlined in State Statute. Alfred Larrabee would like salt and chloride to be separate line items in the Highway Budget.

Town Invoices and Orders of the Day – were reviewed and processed in the usual manner.

Proposed Changes to Zoning – Jack Russell, Planning Commission Chair, and Gary Root, PC Member, presented the proposed changes to the Zoning Regulations to the Selectboard that will be presented to townspeople on Town Meeting Day for a vote. Highlights of the areas to be changed included: Extraction Section 4.4D regarding surety bond, the Planning Commission recommends changing from shall require a bond to may require a bond. Jack explained the cost of a bond is prohibitive and allows only the "big boys" in the game. Jack said some other changes are meant just to clarify the wording about banks and erosion. Section 6.3 change is to encourage someone to come and sit with the Zoning Administrator with a pencil drawing and get guidance about an idea for development. The Planning Commission wants to strongly encourage this very preliminary review; looking at preservation of natural resources. They have added more pictures in the proposed Zoning Regulations.

Section 6.12 Impact Sensitivity: what are high priority areas for natural resources – they are identified town wide; the Planning Commission is working with the Conservation Commission to get specificity for a natural resources inventory (applying for a grant to do this work). The Selectboard will hold a public hearing on the proposed

changes to the Zoning Regulations.

Town Tax Maps – Gary Root voiced urgent concern that the town tax maps are not being managed in a thorough way. Gary Root would like to make a concrete recommendation to the town towards moving in the right direction and giving these tax maps the attention they need. Planning Commission Chair, Jack Russell, said, “It is a mess”.

Continued Discussion Health Insurance – Options were thoroughly reviewed on 10/24/11 Special Meeting with VLCT representative, Larry Smith. The Selectboard decided on offering a health reimbursement account to town employees. Donna Fitch figured the cost of the current plan and compared it to a prospective plan and estimates a savings of \$18,200.00 (town fully funding the deductibles). Mike Garand explained his experience with health accounts and employee contributions for health insurance. Denise Wheeler explained the Selectboard has not decided how much, if any the employees may be asked to contribute. Alfred Larrabee clearly stated that health insurance is very important and views it as a huge benefit. Alfred went on to say it has been such a very good plan and feels like your taking candy from a baby. Denise Wheeler responded by saying it is not easy being on this side of the table either, not easy at all. It’s not far fetched to have incremental employee contributions for health insurance over the next several years.

Roads Update – Denise Wheeler reported earlier today, Vermont Circuit Rider, Steve Jerome, Denise Wheeler, and Alfred Larrabee drove around and looked at road conditions around the town. Attention focused on roadside ditching, culverts, use of non-woven road fabric and adding much more gravel to the roads. Steve Jerome estimates the town would need to put 90% more money in the highway budget than what is earmarked for gravel at present in order to make the roads up to textbook standards. Other recommendations Steve Jerome suggest include:

- Perform an sieve test analysis on gravel to know what you are getting
- Put more gravel on the roads
- Recommend using liquid chloride rather than dry chloride for dust control
- Update the culvert inventory
- Put in grant requests for funding to do a road inventory
- Complete a form for each road to keep track of what you have done on each road
- Add bigger aggregate into winter sand, which helps lessen mud season
- Use bigger stone in general due to the lack of material in this area and educate the public about driving on bigger material on the roads
- Devise a Roads Policy for Class 3 Roads (may have a template to forward to the town)

Steve Jerome commented positively on the work done last year on Sadie Foss Road. It was noted that you loose 1.5 inches of gravel per year per road. You need to get to the bottom of a pothole to dig them out. Mike Garand spoke about the advantages of using an all-wheel drive grader since it is heavier and all the wheels turn; it is easier to dig deeper with a heavier machine. Before too much longer, Calais will be replacing a grader. Donna Fitch will check to be sure we have the latest version of the Town Road and Bridge Standard Policy. Toby Talbot will email the list of town roads to Rose and Donna. The information obtained today will be shared with the Roads Advisory Committee, Mo Cerrutti, Chair.

VLCT Dues – The Selectboard received notice that the annual dues are going up by \$117.00 for FY 2013.
Draft Personnel Policy – postponed until the next meeting.

Finalize Tax Explanation Document – Scott Bassage drafted the town portion of the tax explanation letter. Scott Thompson wrote the school side explanation. The Selectboard approved the letter as written for public distribution.

Toby Talbot made a motion at 9:35pm to continue the meeting to Monday, November 7th at 3:30pm at the Town Office to discuss healthcare choices. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-0.

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Respectfully submitted,

Rose Pelchuck, Selectboard Administrative Assistant