

April 1, 2020 Selectboard Meeting Draft Minutes

Present: Emily Grube, Steve Chamberlin, Scott Woodward, John Peters, Chuck Gunderson
Public: Frank Perron (Fire Warden), Ellen DesMeules (Treasurer), Jim Potter (Road Foreman), Ben Brickner (Auditor & Zoning), Cy Benoit (Tree Warden), Bob Crean, Pat Fault, Richard Martin, Bill Overbay (School Board), Karen Hewitt Osnoe (Zoning Administrator), Bob Coates (School Board), Cynthia Hewitt (Selectboard Assistant)

1. Call to Order 7:05 pm
2. Public Comment. Frank Perron was interested in hearing about the poor reputation with VTrans that was discussed at the last meeting. He felt he had a great relationship with District IV. Emily explained that the incident happened prior to his appointment as road commissioner. Frank also wanted to know if the Labounty Intersection project would be included in this year's work. Emily explained that with the predicted short-term short-falls in tax revenue we must keep an eye on the budget prior to making such a decision. Frank completed the RFP while still serving on the Board
3. Agenda Review: Scott added Rules of Procedure for Agendas; Zoom account; and Chris Bump. Emily added FEMA EM 3437; Zoning Hearing; CD reinvestment. Scott moved and Steve seconded; unanimous roll-call vote.
4. Recurring Items
 - a. Approval of 03/04 & 03/18/2020 Minutes
Scott will send edits to Cynthia and these will be adopted at the next meeting.
 - b. Scott moved approval of payment for the following Warrants, Chuck Seconded, Unanimous roll-call vote.

Warrant 19097	\$38,025.30	Accounts payable.
Warrant 19096	\$10,227.07	Payroll
5. Items for Discussion or Vote
 - a. Road Foreman's Report
Jim and the Crew are working on pot holes, Bunker Hill plans, tractor repair, necessary road clearing. Keith Sawyer would like to do the roadside mowing, 3 days/week, during the summer. Justin is out for two weeks. Jim has spoken with Pike (no Covid-19 problems) who are on board for Howe Hill culverts (with Mike Avery). Jim also has spoken with the crack-sealing company who plan to complete the work in May (2nd & 3rd weeks). If there are additional locations that need sealing those may be added on. He is in touch with GMP re: tree removal. Jim asked John Peters to add a scan channel to the new radios, which are working out well. Steve commented that the tree removal done on Howe Hill to date looks great.
 - b. Tree Removal Bids were received from Henderson's (\$4500/day), Timber Tenders (\$1800/day), and Chippers (\$3100 day). There is \$10,000 in the budget for tree work (only \$400 has been spent). After discussion, Emily moved that Timber Tenders be contracted to remove trees on Howe Hill first, to be funded by the paving reserve; Scott seconded, roll-call vote resulted in one abstention and 4 ayes. Cy will notify Timber Tenders. Motion passed. Further tree cutting will be postponed while the board analyzes budget considerations. However, Timber Tenders will be asked to submit a bid for the tree work from Woodstock line to Howe Hill with closer estimates on how long it will take with help from our road crew. Steve feels the dead elms closer to the Prosper Valley School are a safety issue and removal should not be

put off indefinitely. Cy Benoit, the Tree Warden, suggested that Jim and the Crew remove the oversized wood stockpiled on Howe Hill, which will enable Timber Tenders and GMP to work more efficiently.

- c. Covid-19 Sick Pay. Justin was out sick March 23, 24 and 25; although he did help Jim plow snow on the 23rd. He felt better and returned to work on Wed 25th; Jim and Emily urged him to stay home 25th and 26th, he took sick leave the 23rd and 24; was paid for 25th and 26th. On doctor's recommendation he also did not work the week of March 30th. Justin received sick leave for 30-31; the rest of the week will come from the 10-day Federally mandate sick pay. Emily and Jim felt he should be paid for March 25-26 since he was told to stay home. Emily reports that the Federal Government has mandated 10 sick days in instances of suspected/confirmed Covid-10, beginning 04/01/2020. Scott moved and John seconded that the Board also establish the mandated 10-day sick leave for Covid-10, in addition to current sick pay policy; Unanimous roll-call vote.
- d. Supervisory Union Board Member. Interested parties for this vacancy include Bill Overbay and Doug Tuthill. Emily, John, and Chuck feel it is important for the school board member to have children in the school system. Bill has 3 children in school. Scott moved and John seconded that Bill Overbay be named the WCMUUSD Board member; unanimous roll-call vote.
- e. Possible Start-Up FY 2021 Tax Shortfall. Ellen reports that the IRS has postponed due date for income taxes to July. Thus, the paperwork on homestead exemptions will be late and we will not be able to collect taxes until much later in the year, causing a short-term shortfall. John cautioned that with the Covid-19 shut downs we may indeed have a serious, potential, long-term short fall. Emily informed the board that the Rainy-Day Fund may not carry us through and we may need to borrow money (at 0% interest) and still possibly have a deficit. Scott feels with the daily changes in the economy there are more unknowns. The Board needs to keep a close eye on the budget and strategize in any way possible. Scott then asked Karen Osnoe about delinquent tax activity. She has received a substantial payment from Clifford; Donovan may sell in order to pay the taxes, and she is also working with Levinson and "Catherine" who bought Linda Potter's house.
- f. Zoning Hearing. Emily would like to schedule a date for the Zoning hearing so we do not have to start from scratch. This will be done via live streaming. Scott moved and John seconded the hearing be scheduled on May 4th. Roll-call vote unanimous. Notices will be put up by April 9th, also in the Standard, and on the web-site.
- g. Painting Town Garage. Emily has received an estimate from Dennis Wright to paint the garage for \$8600; the shed \$875; Steve received a bid from John Morgan to do the carpentry repairs on the garage, including sill replacement and clapboards, for \$7800. Dennis Wright also bid the back of the Town Hall for \$3200. These are the only current bids. Steve moved that John Morgan be contracted for the bid price, Emily 2nd; roll-call vote unanimous. Emily moved and Steve seconded that Dennis Wright be awarded the painting contract at the garage for \$9475, roll-call vote unanimous. Emily moved and Scott seconded that Dennis Wright be contracted to paint the Town Hall \$3200, roll-call vote unanimous. Emily will contact Mr. Wright; Steve will contact Mr. Morgan.
- h. TA-60 discussion tabled until the next meeting

- i. Compensation Policy. Scott and John have recommendations for a compensation policy. They will continue to meet and further develop. Today's report:
 - We would start with a basic three level structure with skills associated with each level
 - For merit increases where someone might be in-between levels, the board would make a judgement call on what the appropriate increase would be
 - We can take one of two approaches:
 - time performance appraisals and merit increases, and cost-of-living adjustments, to be done just before budget season so that those increases can be factored into the budget, or
 - put a separate line item in the budget for pay increases which would allow us to make wage increases as necessary throughout the year
 - But cost-of-living adjustments should be done for everyone at the same time each year
 - Open issues:
 - What's the rationale for paying some elected or appointed officials a stipend vs. an hourly wage?
 - How would the compensation plan apply to those who may not be "employees," but receive an hourly wage or stipend?
 - How will we decide what the wage amounts are for each level? For example, do we take a simple low, median, and high for each position in the VLCT compensation survey (filtering out anomalies)? Does the size of the town matter? (John pointed out that in smaller towns, employees actually have to be more versatile)
- j. Davis and Lavaleley Tax Payments – Emily wanted the Board to be aware of these complaints; nothing is to be done because it is a BCA function.
- k. Scott reports that VLTC is setting policies and offering feed-back on the Covid-19 effects on municipalities. This will be monitored.
- l. We are required to have a road commissioner; Scott suggested that Jim Potter be appointed to fill that position. The board feels this needs to be discussed with Jim prior to an appointment. He has been Commissioner in the past. It was also suggested he have a liaison point of contact with the Board; Emily is currently fulfilling that role.
- m. Rules of Procedure. Scott would like to arrange a conference call with the board to set agenda items ahead of them being posted. He feels the agenda should be a collaborative effort. Emily pointed out that setting agenda for the next meeting is actually an agenda item. The board agreed to try this process; Scott will set up a call.
- n. Emily moved and Chuck 2nd to appoint Neil Lamson as the liaison for FEMA EM3437-VT, for potential claims from Covid-19. Unanimous roll-call vote. Neil will be paid \$17/hour and be reimbursed for mileage at the current federal rate.
- o. Fire Department Large Equipment CD. John moved and Emily seconded that the CD be reinvested based on Ellen's judgement. Roll-call vote unanimous.

- p. Winter Vacations. Our current policy does not allow winter vacations; thus, the Road Commissioner has discretion to say yes or no.
- q. Scott spoke with VLCT and learned that a copy of meeting minutes is all that is necessary for Ellen to pay warrants. Signatures are not needed.
- r. Town Zoom account. Marge Wakefield needs a platform to conduct her Public Fund meetings. Scott suggested that the town use what is available for free via Microsoft Teams. He will let Marge know.
- s. Scott moved to invite Chris Bump to attend a Board meeting. No second. Scott moved to include Chris Bump's email with the minutes. No second.
- 6. Meeting Wrap-Up
 - a. No Selectboard Correspondence
 - b. Review of Assignments
 - Emily to contact Dennis Wright and research TA60
 - Steve to Contact John Morgan
 - John & Scott to continue developing a Compensation Package
 - c. Agenda Items for next meeting
 - TA-60
 - Rolls And Responsibilities within Town Government
 - Compensation Recommendations Continued
- 7. Adjournment – John moved and Chuck seconded adjournment at 10:25 pm