**Selectboard Meeting**

**Richford, Vermont**

**Approved Meeting Minutes**

**January 15, 2024**

Chair Pond called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm with members Sherry Paquette, Wally Steinhour, Alan Fletcher, Kristin Sheperd present. Guests at the meeting were Town Administrator Marissa Tessier, Joey Randall, Justin Randall, Rowena Brown, John Libbey, Robert Wetherby (zoom), and cameraman Gerry Vaisey.

The board said the pledge of allegiance.

Chair Pond recognized guests. He started with John Libbey who asked if the board had signed a driveway permit. The board recalled signing a permit but couldn’t say if it was the church street property permit. He also wanted to make the board aware that after the windstorm some paint had peeled off the steeple of the town hall.

Rowena asked the board if they had considered extending the sidewalk down Noyes Street by the wood chip plant when they re-do the water line and repave. The board stated that there had been no discussion on extending the sidewalk. Rowena also asked when the revised guidelines and regulations for the water and sewer were going to be available to the public. Selectmen Fletcher stated that since they have some loose parameters for the special district, he would like to try and get legal boundaries for the special district in the new guidelines if the board agreed. If the board decides to have those put in, it is just a matter of having a legal review and the board review and then posting for 60 days. She updated the board on Davis Park, they took down the garland but left the lights, and noticed that the gazebo had some chipped paint.

Rowena also stated that she noticed at the Post Office the railings are rusting out and starting to move by the ramp. She asked if the parking lot was on the list to be paved. There was discussion amongst board members, and it was determined that Selectwoman Paquette would need to put that in her buildings budget. Rowena also asked if the supervisory union parking signs would be replaced with NorthCountry signs. New signs will be placed. Selectman Steinhour stated that he spoke with Jason, and he will be able to put a sidewalk from the front of the Post Office building to the back of the building for easier access to the back of the building. It is also on the list of projects this spring to fix the leaning wall out back.

Rowena also wanted to mention that there are residents not getting zoning permits, and when they get the permit and fill it out there should be a penalty for getting one after. She stated that the board could set the fine. She said it would show that zoning has some teeth and maybe residents would start respecting it and doing the permits. Selectwoman Paquette asked if there was a by-law stating that the selectboard could set this fee. The board discussed and they will take it into consideration.

Robert Wetherby was wondering when a member of the board was going to answer the questions he sent via email. Selectman Fletcher said the whole board has dedicated time towards the situation with the fire department. There have been conference calls with the attorneys and meetings. Selectman Fletcher stated they will respond to all his requests, but they want to make sure things are done legally, and he also said they may need to create new policies to ensure things are being done in compliance with how the charter reads. Once the board figures out how to do that they will respond, and the reason there has been no response is because they want to make sure they are not giving inaccurate information. Selectman Steinhour commented and said another reason for the delay in getting this resolved was due to the holidays and town council being out sick. Mr. Wetherby stated he has waited too long and has contacted AG and the district court for papers.

The board moved to approve the 1/3/2024 meeting minutes.

Selectwoman Sheperd motioned to approve the 1/3/2024 meeting minutes. Selectman Fletcher seconded. Motion passed.

Highway Report – Selectman Steinhour stated last week’s windstorm created down trees, overall wasn’t too bad, there is cleanup to be done this coming week as time permits.

Buildings Report – Still working on getting quotes for EMS roof and siding for the library. Also going to work on getting some quotes for the heating system at the town hall.

Water & Sewer – Marissa passed out the warning for the Special Election for the board to sign.

Update from Town Administrator – Marissa attended the planning commission meeting on January 8th. They asked her to check on the status of the assistant zoning administrator position. At this time, it has not been filled. Renee asked if Marissa could do some research on the EV Charging Station grant. The ideal location for the charging station would be the park and ride.

Parks, Playground, & Cemeteries Report – The big pine tree in the Troy Street cemeteries came down because of the windstorm. The tree was donated. Selectman Steinhour stated that they put some money in the budget to remove the rest of the pines in that cemetery. Chair Pond said the ice rink in Davis Park is up and running.

Other Business – Selectman Steinhour asked John if he has had a chance to work on the change of zoning for the new location of the town garage. John said that is Planning, but he told Kiley he would help with it. Selectman Steinhour asked if he could put that in motion because they may potentially use ARPA money for that project. John will put it on their agenda for the next meeting. Marissa also had an agreement that needed to be signed by Chair Pond to allow Northwest Regional to assist the Planning Commission with the Municipal Planning grant.

Selectman Steinhour spoke with Bethany Remmers about the town’s financial obligation if they chose not to go ahead with the rail trail extension. 126,000 has been expended and the town’s match would have been 10%. The town’s potential obligation could be up to 113,000, some can be forgiven depending on the circumstances. Selectman Steinhour is going to meet with Bethany at some point this week to start crafting a letter to see what the town’s official obligation will be to walk away from that project.

Chair Pond made a motion to adjourn Selectwoman Paquette seconded.

Meeting adjourned 4:22 pm

Submitted by

Marissa Tessier – Town Administrator

Attest: