**Selectboard Meeting**

**Richford, Vermont**

**Approved Meeting Minutes**

**January 16, 2023**

Chair Pond called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with members Wally Steinhour, Alan Fletcher, Sherry Paquette, and Kristen Sheperd present. Guests at the meeting included Rowena Brown, Carl Wetherby, Tim Green, Joey Randall, Zoning Administrator John Libbey, Town Administrator Michael Olio, and Cameraman Gerry Vaisey.

The board said the pledge of allegiance.

Chair Pond recognized guests. Rowena Brown started the discussion and informed the board that the library railing has been damaged. She then asked who empties the trash cans in Davis Park? It is currently full. Selectwoman Paquette said she would talk to Wetherby’s Rubbish Removal about emptying the receptacles.

Joey Randall discussed the end of year report for ambulance. There were 104 more calls this year than last. The current call volume for 2023 is starting off similar to 2022. He said almost 14 percent of their calls were for mutual aid to other towns. 41 calls were from their Unit 2, and there were 24 return calls.

Carl Wetherby wanted clarity on the winter parking restriction. He thinks it is not right for the Selectboard to tow if they aren’t following their own rules. As of right now he thinks the winter maintenance policy is wrong, and the signs posted around town are incorrect. Carl handed out Richford’s ordinance related to parking. He pointed to section 5308: parking as a public nuisance from subchapter 5. This would be where authority to tow is given. Chair Pond said he interpreted this section for an incident like cars parked in front of a fire hydrant. Carl explained towing for the winter parking restriction is enforced through section 5308. If not, then there is no authority to tow. He continued saying someone must give permission to tow vehicles, and the selectboard does not have that authority. Selectwoman Paquette said the Highway Foreman can decide. Carl then said the restriction was not warned in the newspaper either. Selectwoman Paquette said it is posted on the electric sign, flyers were posted on cars, there are signs around town, and it is on the website. Carl pointed out the ordinance says it must be in the newspaper. He thinks the selectboard is taking advantage of people. Why should people follow the rules when the Selectboard does not? Selectman Steinhour said as of right now the attorney said we are within the rights to tow, and the board will continue to research. Carl said the attorney has been wrong before. Chair Pond said everyone is still learning. Carl explained the selectboard needs to equally do it right as the people who got their car towed.

Carl brought up another point. He disliked how the Selectboard told the Town Administrator to limit time with him / taxpayers. The board said the Town Administrator reports to them, and they felt time needs to be spent on projects. Appointments could be made.

Tim Green joined the meeting at 6:23 to discuss the representative on the Northwest Solid Waste District. He explained there is not a residency requirement and would like to continue being the representative for Richford. Chair Pond asked how many meeting dates are there? Tim said there are approximately nine per year. Chair Pond said they would take it into consideration.

The board moved to approve the 12/19/22 selectboard meeting minutes, the 12/21/22 budget meeting minutes, and the 1/4/23 budget meeting minutes. Selectwoman Paquette made the motion to approve the minutes. Selectwoman Sheperd seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Update From Town Administrator – Have been working heavily on year end reports. Sent in the project commitment form for the Park & Ride grant that the town was awarded. Continuing to do rail trail extension outreach.

Highway Report – Selectman Steinhour said the crew did a lot of cleanup after the Christmas storm. They cut down a dead tree at the Post Office. The crew has collected 2 ½ years’ worth of firewood that they do not need. They would like to consider doing an event that could give people firewood. Selectman Steinhour said he will work with Jason on it.

Buildings Report – The Credit Union is working on renovations in their section of the Post-Office building. They found a large inventory of scrapped trim in the basement that they will use to keep a historical look inside.

Water and Sewer Report – Chair Pond said it has been a quiet week. The hydrant at Vermont Natural Forest Products was backed into again. He said this is an important hydrant to preserve. Selectman Fletcher said he is going to focus on updating the water and sewer policy. Selectman Steinhour asked how do we work on it? Selectman Fletcher said it will be a collaborative effort with the Chief Operator and Town Clerk.

Parks, Playgrounds, and Cemeteries Report – Selectwoman Sheperd said it is wonderful to see everyone skating on the rink. The Rec committee is working on a winter games event. Chair Pond said a downed tree was removed from the cemetery on Troy Street.

Other Business – Carl asked for more clarification as the ordinance is a step-by-step process, but the attorney is saying the board doesn’t have to follow it? Chair Pond said nothing is final, and they will continue to work on it with the attorney. Carl said he is more confused than when he first came in. Selectman Steinhour said thank you for bringing it to their attention.

Meeting adjourned 6:52 PM

Submitted by

Michael Olio – Town Administrator

Attest: