**Selectboard Meeting**

**Richford, Vermont**

**approved Meeting Minutes**

**November 6, 2023**

Chair Pond called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with members Sherry Paquette, Wally Steinhour, and Alan Fletcher present. Guests at the meeting were Town Clerk Kiley Deuso, Assistant Clerk Marissa Tessier, Joey Randall, Robert Wetherby (Zoom), Jim Gourdon and his friend Stephan, Tim Smith, Rowena Brown, and cameraman Gerry Vaisey.

The board said the pledge of allegiance.

Chair Pond recognized guests. He started with Jim Gourdan who recently purchased 503 Golf Course Road. There has been damage to the barn over the years due to half the barn sitting on the town road. He would like to claim back the dead part of the road that is used for plow turn around. Jim’s idea was to relocate the turnaround. Mr. Gourdan had come to the selectboard to get some of their ideas on how to fix the issue. Selectman Steinhour had talked to the road foreman about the idea but asked for me clarification on where the turn around would be. Rowena Brown asked about the border patrol agents being able to access the end of the road. If the town does not plow down there it would be up to the landowner to make it accessible for Border Patrol. More research needs to be done to make a final decision.

Rowena Brown wanted clarification with the decorations. Decorations have been purchased and she wanted to know if the old wreaths are going to be used with the new ones. The was discussion among the board and Rowena about electrical outlets on the poles. Rowena explained that she has tried many times to get a quote from VT Electric but was told it was going to be expensive. Beautification was going to look into getting solar wreaths, to not have to do electrical on the poles. Kiley is going to work with Rowena on getting a hold of VT Electric. Rowena asked about the Towns responsibility for paying for ambulance, and about ARPA funds, Chair Pond, and Selectman Steinhour both stated those topics would be talked about later on in the meeting.

Joey Randall was just visiting.

Tim Smith from Franklin County Industrial Development Corp (FCIDC) gave an update on the Notch visit with the Ag group, there are a few grant opportunities for them. There is a grant opportunity for the Historic Preservation Trust, which is due December 12th, the funds available are up to 100,000. Many eligibility options if it is community oriented. There was also discussion about a building that was being looked at for purchase. Tim asked the board about the Town Administrator position, and if they are advertising. Selectman Steinhour asked Town Clerk how many applicants, and she stated there was 8-10. FCIDC hosted a Maker Day at MVU, this was to educate students and parents about what other options there are if they chose not to go to college. Tim also mentioned the discussion with Peoples Trust Company about the green piece across from the notch overlooking the river, and they are willing to donate to the town for a park.

Robert Wetherby was looking to find out about the status of the Richford Fire Department. He asked how you come a part of the Fire Dept. Chair Pond stated you would fill out an application, it is brought to the association and then there is a 90-day probationary period, and then with the association’s approval the person is brought on board. Robert stated that was wrong and proceeded with how someone would come onto the Dept. Chair Pond asked if it would be ok if Joey as Vice President of the association could speak, Robert did not want to talk to the association he wanted the board to speak about it. Mr. Wetherby asked how many officers were on the Dept. Chair Pond stated there are 3 chiefs and then whoever the chiefs decided to bring on as captains. There was discussion amongst Chair Pond, Selectman Steinhour and Robert about how the chiefs are elected. Robert stated the chief was supposed to send letters to fireman that have been fired. Robert asked Joey to name the officers of the association. Joey stated there is the President, Vice President, Secretary, and the Treasurer. More discussion was had about the officers of the association and the Fire Dept. Selectman Steinhour is willing to find out more information if that is what Robert wants.

Ambulance Report – Chair Pond talked to the insurance company about the next step, there is a deductible of $1,000. Quotes came in just under $20,000. Chair Pond wanted to reach out to the board and get their opinion on what to do. Kiley suggested getting a quote from a few different places. Rowena asked if there was a loan and if there was GAP insurance on the ambulance. Insurance is willing to cover the damage, the deductible would have to be paid.

The board moved to approve the 10/16/23 meeting minutes.

Selectwomen Paquette motioned to approve the 10/16/23 meeting minutes. Selectman Fletcher seconded. Selectman Steinhour abstained. Motion passed 3-0.

Highway Report – Road Crew is prepping for winter; plow equipment has been put on and maintained. Notice of the parking ban will be in the paper this coming week. The towing company will be getting insurance information. The car in the park & ride area has been moved, but to a different location, will have to look into who owns the property. The archaeological study for the park & ride location passed, can begin work next spring. Trash day was a success, worth it to the town to have properties cleaned up. Due to the volume of garbage, it was a little more costly this time. Kiley asked if the TAPS Grant for the sidewalk along Route 105 towards Elementary School was something Selectman Steinhour was working on with Michael. Kiley asked for a volunteer from the selectboard to work on this grant. Selectman Steinhour stated he will try to be a part of the discussions. Selectman Steinhour distributed the updates to the parking ban, he was told by the town attorney that the fees and the towing can be included. If the Selectboard has no objections or additions, they will submit it to Northwest Regional Planning Commission for review, and then it will come back to the board for a vote at a later date.

Buildings Report – Overhead door is coming for yearly maintenance on the ambulance bay doors. Bill O’Brien is going to do the work on the library and in the boiler room at the Town Hall. The Brookfield contract needs to be filled out and sent in. Selectwomen Paquette stated the two different prices for the services. One annual service if paid by November 10th is $3255.00.

Selectman Steinhour motioned to approve the Annual Service contract with Brookfield. Chair Pond seconded. Motion passed 4-0

Selectman Steinhour received a call from the elementary school stating the Town Garage was on the list for a safe place to go during a bomb scare. It was determined the town garage would not be a suitable place.

Chair Pond let Selectwoman Paquette know that there was a lot of water damage in the back hallway of the EMS building, due to the roof. Selectwoman Paquette asked for suggestions on a roofing company or who to get quotes from. Joey Randall asked if the thermostat could be changed. Selectwomen Paquette has already spoken with D&D Electric and next time they are in the area, they are going to stop in.

There have been reports of someone staying in the bank’s vestibule. Kiley has sent a message and has not heard back. Chair Pond also stated that there are people staying behind the old fire building as well.

Water & Sewer Report – Replacing the curtains down at the sewer plant, that was budgeted for. Moving forward with finding an engineer for the project to replace the water line on Noyes Street, due to water leaks. Going to replace the curb stops. The fire hydrant located at the wood chip plant is a private hydrant. Chair Pond stated they are looking into putting a hydrant down by Parsons. Selectman Steinhour stated that was a good idea considering they are looking into potentially purchasing land down there for a new Town Garage with ARPA money. There will need to be sprinkler systems put in the new building. Selectman Fletcher stated all the capital improvement money will not need to be used for the Golf Course Rd, so that will free up some money for the Noyes Street project.

Parks, Playgrounds & Cemeteries Report – The playground has been winterized, all the portalets have been picked up. The netting on the baseball field has been taking down. There was discussion on changing the way it is put up next year.

Rowena Brown asked when the board would be talking about ARPA money. Kiley stated the recommendation was to have the money allocated by early spring of next year. The town has until 2026 to use the money.

Selectman Steinhour motioned to go into executive session for personnel at 7:07 pm. Selectwomen Paquette seconded.

Selectman Steinhour motioned to come out of executive session at 8:07 pm. Chair Pond seconded. No decisions were made as a result of the executive session.

Meeting adjourned 8:08 pm.

Submitted by

Marissa Tessier – Assistant Town Clerk

Attest: