**MINUTES**

**SELECT BOARD MEETING**

**Monday, October 21, 2019 @ Town Garage 6:00PM**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Present: Selectboard: Chair Joe Pollio, Cathy Siano-Goodwin, Al Sands, and Chris Wallace, Absent was Stan Mack.

Others present: Dottie Cannon, Joan Lake, Christine Tattersall, Don Dougall, Galen Pinkham, Peter Jeziorski Meg Gonzales, Suzanne Welch, Danny Taylor Highway Foreman, Kim Record Clerk/Treasurer and Bill Kearns – Town Administrator.

FACT8 TV Matt Farkas

1. Adopt Agenda. The Chair asked that two items be added to the agenda: To the school generator item, add invoice school district for the costs incurred by the merger and delay in settling on the tax rates. Add an Executive session for personnel. As amended, motion by Chris Wallace, second Al Sands to adopt the agenda. Motion passed 4-0.
2. Approve Minutes: Minutes of October 7, 2019. Al Sands moved, second Chris Wallace to approve minutes as written. Motion passed 4-0. Minutes of October 17, 2019, both the Hearing and the Meeting. Chris Wallace moved, second Al Sands to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed 4-0
3. Warrants. None to present this meeting.
4. Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, the action arm of the Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies, Sarah Lang Talent Specialist/Internship Coordinator and Adam Grinold, Executive Director. Adam addressed the meeting. BDCC is the Development Commission for the Region. He spoke of the programs and the challenges in economic development and how they are striving to overcome them. He acknowledges that state policies are sometimes difficult for businesses to deal with. However, he did cite industries in the Region that are thriving and growing and cited their jobs program run by a licensed teacher, who works in the four high schools in the area, as a success in getting local youth to work. He spoke of the financial and other resources available through BDCC for helping entrepreneurs get business started. As for the program encouraging persons to move to VT for a Stay at home high tech job and receive $10,000 for doing so, he said that program has been taken advantage of by about 100 people and he personally knows three families that settled in the Bratt area in that program. Sarah Lang talked of her work including the “Young Professionals” group that helps newcomers to the area feel more welcome, at home, and introduces them to their peers. She mentioned the loan programs, teachers guide, annual report as resources for help to entrepreneurs. She runs an internship program for employers/employee in the region and cited data available from BDCC to help people understand the economy and challenges the economy faces here. There are webinars – e.g. labor market topics, building communities, work with access TV stations. They then presented the Board with a funding request. Peter Jeziorski asked what the funding was for, and they responded, the “young professionals” program, and for Grafton the Cheese factory and in general opportunity contacts for the business community. The Chair thanked them for their being present and talking to Grafton about BDCC. They thanked the Board for the opportunity.
5. Highway. Danny Taylor stated the crew was grading and preparing for winter. Al Sands asked about the power outage and response from GMP and if there was cooperation. Danny Taylor stated, Bill Kearns called in the 6 or 7 downed trees. Only one road was blocked, and that was Middletown Road. By the time GMP came to Grafton the crew had gone home and the landowner wanted to take care of the tree with persons he hired. And that was done. Bill Kearns said he was not happy with GMP. He understands we had few problems, but there was no outreach to let the Town know what an expected response time or any other information would be. He called in 7 incidents of trees on the line and outages. On the last three calls he asked that GMP contact him at the Town Hall for coordination of response. Nothing came of those requests. The driver of the truck that showed up at the Middletown Road site was from northern Vermont and had no clue of the area, who was working in the area or where and could not tell me if anyone was fixing the outages on Chester Hill or Wright Orchard Road. Asked about failure of anyone to call in Middletown Road (as someone reported they were told by GMP operators) Bill stated all the outages and downed lines were called in as soon as discovered and all were called in before noon. Not happy with GMP. Bill said he knows they are busy, and our issues were small, but not to have one person able to gather info and call us is not right and not what was promised. Asked about the excavator Danny Taylor responded about a month out for delivery. As for the grouting of the culvert on Rte. 35, Nathaniel will be asked again about when it will be done.
6. GIA using Ledge Road. Discussion over the use of the Town class 4 road for hauling logs from the GIA land atop Kidder hill to the highway at Rte. 121 East and ledge Road. SB member Al Sands, Town highway foreman Danny Taylor and the logging supervisor will inspect the road, note culverts, bridges and other spots that need special treatment, and agree that the road will be in as good condition after as before. GIA and logger will take out a permit for the use of the ROW and alteration as needed of the ROW and cleanup of ROW afterward, which permit will include a $500.00 security deposit. Accepted management Practices will be met.
7. School Generator and Generator Contracts and invoicing School for costs incurred with NEMREC due to school tax changes due to the merger.
   * Generator contracts. After discussion which included a report that no provider could be found to replace Brook Field for annual maintenance of the school generator and the cost of the highway generator annual maintenance by Brook Field was not significantly higher than any quote for other provider, and out good opinion of the work of Brook Field it was recommended to the Board that we continue with Brook Field. Motion by Al Sands, second Cathy Siano-Goodwin to contract with Brook Field for the annual maintenance of both the highway and school generator. Motion passed 4-0.
   * School Generator – should the Town continue to service the School generator, or should the town turn it over to the school to service or remove it from the property. Discussion included the history of the installation – the purpose was solely because the school was the designated and contracted American Red Cross shelter for the Town in the first decade of 2000. That was all arranged at that time. However, as Bill Kearns, as EMD, stated at this meeting, in the future it will never be used by the American Red Cross as a Shelter. Their VT response plan calls for shelters in White River junction and Brattleboro. Not even Springfield will have a Red Cross Shelter. Our experience is that a. Red Cross will not open a shelter here, and b. if one were opened (as in Irene) no one will use it. We will keep the TH as a warming shelter but have no residential shelter. The Town cannot open on its own due to liability insurance costs and exposure of the town to liability claims. Thus, we do not need the generator for the purpose for which it intended when it was installed. The discussion then went to the uncertainty, unfortunately, of the future of the building and concern that, should the District close the Grafton School and it reverts to the town, we may want the generator there. No further action was taken.
   * The merger and the uncertainty in the property tax due as a result of the merger led to excess costs for NEMREC to reprogram the computer program to accommodate the changes. There was a $1000 charge for programming changes and $570 cost for new/amended tax bills. The Town had asked Westminster Town what it was doing and were told that it was charging the District for unplanned excess costs due to the merger. Kim Record requested that the Selectboard authorizing invoicing the School District for the costs incurred by the Town due to the merger. Motion by al Sands, second Cathy Siano-Goodwin to authorize the Clerk/Treasurer to invoice the school district for those costs as requested. Motion passed 4-0.
8. Water Quality Report. Suzanne Welch, Chair of the Village Water-Wastewater committee, accompanied by Meg Gonzales with Stan Mack and Chris Wallace of the committee also present, presented a report on the status of the Water Quality in the Village per the testing results and conclusions drawn from those results and the next steps to be taken by the committee. The tests show the village water is good and commented that the pumping ordinance is a reason the quality is so good. The committee is now investigating the age and status of the septic systems in the Village, when installed, if re-done after installation, etc. The records are not complete. That analysis of age and history is their next step. Al Sands then led the discussion to “what if’ there is failure, and can the systems be replaced. Experts are coming to the committee to answer that question. Al Then asked about effect of the current situation of economic development in the village and asked whether growth was dependent on having a system. The response was that was on the agenda for study.
9. Discussion Ash Borer beetle. Al Sands led the discussion and stated that the Ash Borer beetle is in the state and in particular in Londonderry, and his concern is the cost to the Town of removing dead trees in the town ROW, and the necessity of having an inventory, a count, of Ash trees in the ROW so that such a cost can be estimated and budgeted for. Chris Wallace agree that it was prudent to do such an inventory. Then the discussion led to costs of inventory and who would do it. That question will be put to Tracy Lake the Tree Warden. A discussion of trees in the ROW then ensued and Bill Kearns will check state law about Town control over such trees.
10. Schedule Budget Workshops. The chair asked if these should be started in November, should they occur during the day and which days. The Board informally agreed to Mon. Tues. and Thurs, during the day and to start in November. Dates will be discussed. All departments have been alerted of the need to get budget items and requests into SB.
11. Request for Support Letter: Windham Region Broadband Feasibility Study and Business Plan. There was a short discussion and a motion by Al Sands, second Chris Wallace to send the letter of support as presented to the SB by the Town Administrator, and that letter was signed by all present.
12. Public Comment. Al Sands stated he had been thinking about the Town Plan and the requirement in the version now proposed for hearings of “no idling signs” being posted and he wondered where they would be posted. On private buildings? And then wondered who would enforce the no idling? And would that apply to keeping dogs warm or cool, and keeping truck warm while in the store, etc. Implementation and enforcement are problematic he commented.
13. Other Business. Bill Kearns stated that it had come to his attention that the GIA film presentation for the Veterans was to be on Nov 7th the same date of the Town hearing on the Town Plan and wondered if the SB would like to change the date of the hearing so as not to interfere with that event. Bill was concerned to act when not on the agenda. After discussion it was moved by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, second Al Sands to move the Hearing date to Nov 6th instead of Nov 7th at the same time and place. Kim Record reminded the Board that the Board of Abatement hearing was tomorrow evening at Town Hall.
14. Date of Next Selectboard Meeting: November 4, 2019.
15. Personnel – Executive Session – Cemeteries and Health Officer and Windham Foundation. Motion by Al Sands, second Chris Wallace to enter executive session for personnel and real estate matters at 7:50 PM. Motion passed unanimously. Executive session included the Town Administrator, Town Clerk/Treasurer and Highway Foreman.
16. The Motion to exit Executive Session by Al Sands, second Cathy Siano-Goodwin at 8:10 PM passed 4-0.
17. The SB reported the following discussion from the executive session and took the following action: Discussion concerning health care coverage and change of provider due to high cost of coverage from current provider and a good savings in premium by switching to new provider. Motion by Al Sands, second Chris Wallace to authorize the change of medical insurance carriers for employees to MVP from Blue Cross Blue Shield, and to allow the employees to select the Platinum Plan, that is, the same coverage from MVP as they have now with BCBS. Motion passed 4-0.
18. Executive Session – real estate. Motion by Al Sands, second Cathy Siano-Goodwin to enter executive session for real estate matters at 8:15 PM. Motion passed 4-0. The session included Town Administrator.
19. Motion to exit Executive Session by Al Sands, second Chris Wallace at 8:40 PM. Motion passed 4-0. No action was taken.
20. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM on motion by Al Sands, second Chris Wallace.

Respectfully presented,

William G. Kearns

