**MINUTES SELECTBOARD MEETING**

**Monday 3:00 PM, June 1, 2020**

**Town Hall – Selectboard Office**

**Attendance of Selectboard by Electronic Devices**

**Meeting being held electronically pursuant to 1 VSA 312, including The Legislature’s H.861 (2020) “Temporary Suspension of Designated Physical Meeting Location Requirements” (see attached)**

**Public, wishing to attend the meeting remotely were invited to email** **townadmin@graftonvt.org****, request to be invited to join in on the meeting on Microsoft Teams, and provide the email address to which the invitation should be sent. Instructions on connecting to the meeting accompanied the agenda. See agenda**

1. The Chair opened the meeting at 3:05 PM.
Present at the meeting electronically were:
Selectboard members: Chair Joe Pollio, John Gregory, Stan Mack, Al Sands, Cathy Siano-Goodwin.
Others present: Charles Bonin, Suzanne Welch, Danny Taylor (highway foreman), Michelle Dolloph (Collector of Delinquent Taxes), Kim Record (Clerk/Treasurer) and Wendy Martin (Assistant Town Clerk). FACT TV present on Microsoft Teams and live streaming the meeting.

2. Adopt Agenda. Joe Pollio suggested adding the following to the agenda: Town Pool (Rich Thompson). Kim Record said that Rich Thompson would also like to provide a CIC update. Motion by Al Sands, seconded by Stan Mack, to adopt the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approve minutes of May 18, 2020 meeting. Stan Mack noted that under item 9 (Village Park), it should be “invasive plants,” not “invasive fees.” Kim Record noted that in two places under item 6, it should be “Board of Abatement,” not “Board of Adjustment.” Motion by Stan Mack, seconded by Al Sands, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Warrants. Warrants signed by Joe Pollio on June 1 were presented to the Board and acknowledged by them.

5. Highway Report.
• Open Bids on Chester Road paving and bomagging, location near Town Highway #3. Town Clerk Kim Record was in possession of the sealed bids, showed the envelopes to the board and proceeded to open the bids.

• Bazin Brothers bid $165,860, Certificate of Insurance (COI) included in bid.

• Sunapee Paving LLC (Springfield Paving) bid $175,980, COI included.

• All State Asphalt bid $185,194.60, COI included.

Highway Foreman Danny Taylor noted that the town had sent out nine requests for bids. He’ll review all of the bids and the board will award the bid at the next meeting on June 15.

Taylor asked if the board was in favor of the purchase of winter sand from Eastman Sand and Gravel, or would it prefer to bid it out. He said that the price was the same as last year (and the town crew trucks it themselves). The budget for winter sand is $60,000. Motion by Al Sands to purchase winter sand from Eastman Sand and Gravel at the same price as last year, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin. Motion passed by a vote of 4–1.

Joe Pollio said that he had heard that Eastman Sand and Gravel wanted to extend its pit to make it easier to extract gravel and thought the town should support this action. After discussion, a motion was made by Al Sands, seconded by Stan Mack, to ask Town Administrator Bill Kearns to draft a letter of support on behalf of the selectboard for Eastman Sand and Gravel. Motion passed unanimously.

• Weight permit, United National Foods. Motion by Al Sands, seconded by John Gregory, to approve the permit and authorize the Town Administrator to issue it. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Town Clerk/Treasurer Report.

• Budget Review FY 2019–2020. Kim Record reviewed the budget sheet and said that 96.77% of the taxes had been collected for fiscal year; Grafton is not one of the towns having difficulty collecting taxes. John Gregory questioned the Grafton Fire & Rescue and Humanitarian article lines. Record said that when the Fire Department uses fuel, the town invoices them and then they reimburse it. She planned to address the agencies included in the annual Humanitarian article the next day; she usually has to remind some of them to invoice the town before the end of the fiscal year on June 30. She reminded Gregory and Cathy Siano-Goodwin to invoice the town for their selectmen stipends before June 30. She told the board that Josh Hearne had collected half his stipend before his resignation so Chris Wallace (who was appointed to replace Hearne) would have been eligible to receive the other half; however, Wallace asked Record to donate his share to the Town Hall Handicap Reserve account.

Record attended a webinar on the topic of preparing for the education tax rate. It’s been highly suggested that the town delay collecting first quarter taxes until September, and then retain the remaining deadlines. She will update the board at its next meeting because she will have information. She said it was important to be mindful to inform the school that once the town collects the taxes, the town has 20 days to give them funds for the school, now bringing that delay to one month, 20 days. She said they’re aware and had to borrow money last year for the same reason. She also suggested the town should not spend large amounts of money on paving, equipment, etc. in the first four-to-six months of the fiscal year.

Gregory said that in the Capital Budget line for repairs and maintenance, that it would be good to change the life of the trucks from seven years to five years, considering how much is spent on repairs. Joe Pollio agreed and said the request could be sent to the committee when the time comes. Gregory also asked about the contracted services line for paving and asked what would happen with the surplus; Record said it would move to the reserve fund and that the professional auditor (Sullivan & Powers) preferred to make those transfers, probably later in the summer.

• Elections: School. Record told the board that the school budget vote would be held on June 25 at the fire station, with the polls open from 9 AM to 7 PM. She thinks the process will be smooth, absentee and shut-in votes will be honored and the necessary warnings have bee posted. The school board incur the expenses for this collection; it’s their responsibility and they’re aware of that.

• Delinquent Tax Collector Policy. It was noted that Bill Kearns had circulated the policy before he left and Kim Record shared her computer screen for the board to review the document further. Delinquent Tax Collector Michelle Dolloph asked if it was the Current Collector of Taxes’ responsibility to post the 8% before it’s handed over to Dolloph. She asked because Record had done so this year. She was referring to page 2 of the policy, under Delinquent Tax Penalty. Record said it was the Delinquent Collector’s responsibility, according to the draft policy. After discussion it was determined this should be changed to Current Collector of Taxes and Record will inform Kearns to make that change.

Record noted that the policy had been drafted by Kearns, Record, Dolloph and Town Attorney Larry Slason. Record said that Slason said the town was in good shape as far as delinquent taxes are concerned.

Joe Pollio asked about the term of the office, which is defined as three years in the policy draft. Record said that that was the current term and a vote by the town would be required for a change.

Stan Mack said he had not had the chance to go through it completely but that if Record, Kearns and Slason were happy with it, he was good with it, too.

Motion by John Gregory, seconded by Al Sands, to accept the Delinquent Tax Collector Policy. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Coronavirus. Joe Pollio asked if anyone knew when the board would be able to meet face-to-face and a discussion ensued about the logistics: the meeting could be held in the Town Hall upstairs because of distancing requirements; however, the space is not yet accessible. The Town Garage meeting space is too small and the school building can’t yet be used. Pollio said he planned to attend a webinar about this topic on Wednesday, and Cathy Siano-Goodwin will attend too. Pollio said the board could deal with this at the next meeting and Al Sands said if there’s no other facility, then the board could continue to meet virtually.

8. Cemetery Policy. Stan Mack and Joe Pollio had worked on this draft and Kim Record shared her screen so the board could review it further. All had received a copy. Mack questioned plaques being erected at each cemetery with its origin and historical facts and asked if this were indeed a policy issue. Pollio said it would be going forward, if a new cemetery is built. Mack suggested removing the first mention of deeds, which occurs twice in the document; the second time it is stated better. Pollio will ask Bill Kearns to make that change. Mack said that under cemetery rates, it should be $150 and $150 to total $300. Pollio asked about a charge of $50 to anyone leaving plant containers after November 1. Record said that had been discussed but there could be no enforcement. She will give purchasers a copy of the policy/rules when plots are purchased. Pollio questioned the town bearing the expense of plant container disposal and Danny Taylor said the previous agent had brought such debris to the Town Garage for dumpster disposal in the past so it’s already included in town garbage.

Cathy Siano-Goodwin questioned the prohibition of perennial or bulb (tulips, etc.) planting. Mack said these plantings were a problem because they have deep root systems and tend to disrupt the grave markers and stones and these plantings are tough for the crew to work around. Pollio said that most cemeteries (in other towns) limit what can grow forever.

Mack asked if the board should accept the policy provisionally to allow the cemetery crew to offer input. Record said that Walter Critchfield had reviewed it and was fine with everything.

Motion by Al Sands, seconded by Stan Mack, to approve the Cemetery Policy as written with minor changes. Motion passed unanimously.

9. Tree Policy. Joe Pollio said this was a complicated issue and perhaps the matter should be postponed. Al Sands and John Gregory said the policy was OK with them. Danny Taylor said he had reviewed it with Bill Kearns and he thought it would be fine. Motion was made by John Gregory to adopt the Tree Policy, seconded by Al Sands. Motion passed unanimously.

• Tree Warden Job Description. A draft has not yet been written and Joe Pollio asked if this matter should be postponed. Al Sands said he would like to see the town advertise the position to see if anyone else in town has the necessary talent and is interested. Stan Mack said a job description would be needed for that. Pollio suggested asking Bill Kearns to draft a job description for the next meeting, which would allow enough time for newspaper deadlines.

10. Village Park. Al Sands reported that the trails are cleared, he had cut hazardous trees as he saw fit along the area where the group was working. A potential site for the lean-to was cleared. The issues he sees concern the parking lot work: it’s going to cost more than he’d anticipated and the ash timber will generate less money than he’d anticipated. On top of that, he sees a problem with the invasive Japanese barberry. If a treatment were used on it, it would require a licensed applicator. There are some decisions to be made. Stan Mack asked if the board could meet there to see what’s being discussed. Kim Record asked Sands to clarify the additional expense he anticipated. Sands said he thought the timber value would pay for the parking/landing. Sands said there’s approximately $9,000 available and the cost would be closer to $20-25,000 for clearing and adding gravel for a dry parking lot. Timber volume won’t make up that difference. After discussion, it was determined the board would reconvene at the Village Park at the end of the next board meeting on June 15.

Mack said there’s a newly-planted tree in the middle of Wilson Park—where the Village Pump house was located—that’s struggling to survive. He said he’d spoken to Ivor Stevens about it and Stevens suggested raising the spot and replanting the tree because it’s in line with run-off from Pleasant Street. The cost would be approximately $500. Kim Record said there were funds from the Trustee of Public Funds available for town parks and she would apprise the board at the next meeting.

11. Village Water-Wastewater Committee Appointment. Committee Chair Suzanne Welch reported that there was a vacancy on the committee due to the resignation of Kim Record. Welch recommended that the selectboard appoint Meg Gonzalez, who had been instrumental during the water testing phase last year and had attended all committee meetings. Welch said there was a question as to her availability in several months. After discussion, a motion was made by Al Sands, seconded by Stan Mack, to appoint Meg Gonzalez to the Water-Wastewater Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

12. Town Pool. Joe Pollio said that the pool is usually open on Memorial Day and that Health Officer Rich Thompson was ready to test the water. Pollio said opening it was a question of liability. There was a lengthy discussion about signage, using the pool as a fire pond only, and the port-a-potty usually installed by the Grafton Improvement Association. Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked if there were a question of town parks and liability, and Kim Record said Bill Kearns was checking that out with VLCT, as well as on the matter of the cemetery crew using their own vehicles for cemetery maintenance. After this discussion, it was determined that Town Attorney Larry Slason and VLCT would be consulted on the matter of liability, even if the pool were closed for swimming. The matter will be revisited when Bill Kearns returns.

13. Other Business. There was no other business.

14. Public Comment. There was no public comment.

15. Executive Session. At 4:35 PM, a motion was made by Stan Mack, seconded by Al Sands, to enter executive session to discuss personnel and contracts and to invite Town Clerk/Treasurer Kim Record to participate. Motion passed unanimously.

16. Exit Executive Session. Motion to exit Executive Session at 5:15 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Attending: Joe Polio, Al Sands, Stan Mack, John Gregory, and Cathy Siano-Goodwin

The following decisions from executive session were made:

1. The personnel committee will review with the cemetery crew and discuss work hours.
2. Al Sands will contact Bill Kearns on when he’s allow to come back to work as it relates to the Governor’s rules of Covid-19. He is to comply with the 14-day quarantine or the 7 days quarantine and get tested. Bill has been out traveling out of state due to a death in his family.

Motion made by Al Sands to adjourn and second by John Gregory. Meeting concluded at 5:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Siano-Goodwin

17. Date of Next Selectboard Meeting: June 15, 2020, to be followed by board visit to Village Park

18. Adjourn. Motion by Al Sands, seconded by John Gregory at 5:23 PM, to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Martin