**MINUTES SELECTBOARD MEETING**

**Monday 6 PM, October 19, 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 convened the meeting at 6 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), Kim Record (Clerk/Treasurer), Nancy Merrill, Hardy Merrill, and Wendy Martin (Assistant Town Clerk). FACT TV present on Microsoft Teams and live streaming the meeting.

2. Adopt Agenda. Joe Pollio said that he had consulted with Town Administrator Bill Kearns, and the Fisher Hill discussion on the agenda does not require an executive session. He suggested adding it to the Highway Report. Pollio said Kearns had sent a memo to the board concerning CIC and asked if the board would like to add it to the agenda. It was determined there was no urgency; therefore, the matter will be discussed at a future meeting. Motion by Al Sands, seconded by Stan Mack, to adopt the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approve minutes of October 5, 2020 meeting. Al Sands noted that on page 2, third line down, it should be “John Gregory stated the sale *is*,” instead of “…sale *if*.” He added that on that same line, the word “bids” should be replaced with “bidders.” Motion by Mack, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to approve the minutes as corrected. Motion passed by a vote of 4–1 (Sands abstained because he had not been present at the October 5th meeting.)

4. Warrants. Joe Pollio noted for the record that the Warrants had been signed by the entire board as of that afternoon.

5. Highway Report.
• Danny Taylor told the board that the crew was working on grading and culverts as needed and hauling sand in between. He also said the crew had been working at the Village Park in between rainstorms: every time it rains, the crew can’t move up there. He said they can do the entranceway but the rest will have to happen next summer. Taylor said he had smoothed it pretty far out and would try to do more and that the idea was to smooth it up, let it freeze, then do the logging. Taylor said the culvert would be finished with no problem. Al Sands said that one of the firewood bidders had asked about the November 1st deadline of removing the logs, and Sands told him it would be weather-dependent, that if it rains and the conditions are soft, there would be an extension.

Sands said he had been reviewing expenses and that there was $9,043.51 in reserve. There was a brief discussion about expenses already incurred and it was noted that the bill for gravel had not yet been received. Sands asked the board if it would be amenable to putting more gravel out or extending what had been done, if it worked with the road crew’s schedule. The cost would come out of the reserve. The alternative would be to have Taylor smooth the area and secure it until after the logging is completed. Stan Mack and Joe Pollio both said the crew should finish up what’s been started already, let everything freeze up and go back after the first round of logging. Taylor agreed, saying that time was an issue: the crew has three or four culverts to install, plus grading to be done before the roads freeze. Sands said he had made the proposal so that the board’s strategy would be clear later on.

• Signs on Fisher Hill. Joe Pollio asked if Taylor would be willing to supervise the individual who would be completing required community service. Taylor said the individual had contacted the road crew before, had come into the office and signed the paperwork, but then had never followed up. Taylor said he preferred not to waste the town’s time, but would supervise if directed to by the board. Pollio said he would apprise Bill Kearns of this. There was a discussion about the community service being completed in Grafton because the damage had been done in Grafton. Cathy Siano-Goodwin noted that the Diversion Board needed to be notified. The majority of the board agreed that the service should be done in Grafton, and any number of tasks could be accomplished. Pollio will ask Kearns to update the Diversion Board.

• Sand. John Gregory asked Taylor how many yards of sand are usually put out to bid; Taylor said the town hadn’t put it out to bid for the last couple of years. Taylor said the town used approximately 6,000 yards last year.

• Miscellaneous road matters. Taylor said that because there is no longer sight obstruction on the turn on Route 121 by the Gravelle property, he will remove the “blind driveway” sign that’s already falling over. He said brush and trees that had obscured the area had been removed since the sign was installed. Stan Mack said he noticed some plastic lining remaining by the new paving on Route 35 at the Chester line. Taylor said the crew would pick it up. Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked if lines would be painted on the stretch of new paving in Houghtonville and Taylor said it wouldn’t be done this year because the crew that paints does it only once a year and the paving had happened too late for this year.

• Village Park Sign. Al Sands said he would like to see a sign installed at the intersection of the new road that said something such as “Village Park Access.” If more people were using the area, he thought it would be good to have signage, and with a 911 designation. Cathy Siano-Goodwin agreed. Stan Mack asked if he meant something like a road sign. Taylor said he would rather see a “nice wooden sign” for the park in keeping with its appearance and thought that would look better than the aluminum state signs. Joe Pollio said he would asked Bill Kearns to look into the matter and place it on the next meeting agenda.

6. Town Clerk/Treasurer Report. Kim Record said that the second quarter tax deadline was already approaching. Election ballots are rolling in, with approximately 200 processed to date and more coming in each day. Election will be held at the Brick Meeting House. As of October 13, the town is online at Record Hub for Land Records Books 56–60 and that means the requirements of the grant have been satisfied. She added that Books 38–60 should be completed by the end of December and more will be added as time goes on. Record has applied for another grant of $5,000 to support future elections. She said there’d been some discussion about the possibility of the annual Town Meeting being conducted entirely by Australian Ballot and Bill Kearns will research the matter in the coming weeks. Joe Pollio asked about budget meetings to be held at the Brick Meeting House in early November and whether or not the board would like to schedule those meetings or wait until the next meeting; the consensus was to wait until the next meeting.

7. Village Park: Open bids for firewood log sale. Town Clerk Kim Record was in possession of the sealed bid, showed the envelope to the board and proceeded to open the bids. It was noted that two parties had been at the site visit.

• Mark Rushton bid $601.

John Gregory asked how many cords of wood there were; Al Sands said he thought it was about two log truck loads. It was moved by Al Sands, seconded by Cathy Siano-Goodwin, to accept the lone bid. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Constable and Planning Commission, Tree Warden appointments. Joe Pollio said the Constable position was not an issue presently, the Planning Commission had no recommendations for its vacancy, and no one had volunteered to be Tree Warden but eventually all three positions would need to be filled. A discussion ensued about the Tree Warden appointment. Al Sands said some of the Emerald Ash Bore Committee volunteers had asked whether or not the planned survey was proceeding and he hated to see volunteers investing their time and the Selectboard not following up. It was suggested that the wait had been because it had been thought the new Tree Warden would chair the committee and take the lead on the survey. In addition, COVID restrictions made committee meetings and site visits difficult. Cathy Siano-Goodwin asked if anyone on the committee would be interested in serving as Tree Warden; Sands said he would email the group to ask. Stan Mack said two people might be interested, with one acting as deputy.

9. Cemeteries. Joe Pollio said that landowner Mueller (land near Burgess Cemetery) had given the town permission to dig for gravel and Pollio asked if the board would like to discuss the other possible sites as well. Stan Mack said the Houghtonville site was the one he thought should be concentrated on and John Gregory agreed. Mack said a draft plan could be put together to show prospective landowners how little impact it would be. There was discussion about Cobb Cemetery and the adjoining landowner not wanting to divide their property. Al Sands said there was a triangle of land at the turn from Stagecoach Road onto Hall Ranch Road that would lend itself well to the project. Cathy Siano-Goodwin said there were three potential sites and all three should be pursued, and the rest of the board agreed; Bill Kearns will be asked to pursue.

10. Other Business.

• Village Water-Wastewater Committee Chair Suzanne Welch told the board that the wastewater survey would be mailed on October 26 (return deadline: December 1), with 70 high-priority village properties having been identified. Twenty of those properties belong to the Windham Foundation and Stan Mack and Commission Vice Chair Chris Wallace had met with Bob Donald to apprise him.

• John Gregory asked for an update on the excess funds in the cemetery account and whether or not they could be used. Kim Record said the matter hadn’t gone further with the Trustees of Public Funds because the office had been so busy but she will follow up.

• John Gregory said there’d been communication about a sheriff living in town, but that the subject had been dropped. Joe Pollio said there were no houses available to rent from the Windham Foundation; he said he thought it was a great idea, but didn’t know how to make it happen. He also said that Bill Kearns had been in touch with a prospective sheriff resident, but that it was a matter of finding a house for the person to live in. According to Kearns, a village location would be ideal. Al Sands apprised Suzanne Welch (Windham Foundation board member) that at one time in the past, the Foundation had a village property it had rented out as a residence for law enforcement and there were some people in town who had hoped this would be possible again. Welch reiterated that no houses were available right now.

11. Public Comment. Al Sands said he had not attended the October 5th meeting but had the impression that the Selectboard was preparing to hold its regular meetings at the Brick Meeting House, even though that was not reflected in the minutes that this had been decided; Joe Pollio said it had not been decided. A discussion ensued about an official COVID plan for the building, who would be responsible for drafting a plan—the Town or the owner of the building (Grafton Historical Society), appointing a safety officer, etc. Joe Pollio said the town had to follow recommendations from the state. Kim Record said it would involve sign-in sheets for contact tracing, wiping down surfaces, etc. She said the safety officer had to be on site during the meetings, but she thought a different person could be designated, depending on the meeting or committee holding the meeting. Joe Pollio said the Brick Meeting House now has Internet and therefore Zoom capabilities for board members or members of the public who didn’t want to attend meetings in person. Suzanne Welch asked about the donation the Windham Foundation had made toward Town Hall second-floor accessibility; Kim Record said the funds were held in a reserve but that the project had been backburnered because it was difficult to get contractors to come into the building at this time.

12. Date of Next Selectboard Meeting: Monday, November 2, 2020 at 6 PM via Microsoft Teams.

13. Adjourn. It was moved by Al Sands, seconded by John Gregory, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Martin