**MINUTES SELECTBOARD MEETING**

**Regular – In Person/live**

**(Computer malfunctioned so no MicroSoft Teams hookup)**

**Monday, July 19, 2021 @ 5:00 PM**

Present at the meeting in Town Hall, upstairs, were Joe Pollio Chair, Cathy Siano-Goodwin, John Gregory, Sue Allen, and Suzanne Welch.

Persons present in the Hall: Dottie Cannon, Joan Lake, Don Dougall, Mike Field, Al Sands, Hardy Merrill, Craig Ruggless, David Rogers, and Town Administrator Bill Kearns.

1. Call to order. The Chair called a meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
2. Adopt Agenda. Suzann Welch moved, second John Gregory to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Minutes of Selectboard meeting June 28 and July 6, 2021. Motion made by Cathy Siano-Goodwin to approve the June 28, 2021, minutes as presented, second John Gregory. Motion passed unanimously. Motion made by Cathy Siano-Goodwin to approve the July 6, 2021, minutes as presented, second John Gregory. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Highway Report Danny Taylor was not present.
   * Tractor Show September 4, 2021 – Request closing Kidder hill Rd (between Main St. and Pleasant St.) from 7 AM to 4 PM - Craig Ruggless stated that the show would need more room this year therefore he had spoken to Fire and Rescue to clear with them the use of Kidder Hill Rd between Main St. and Pleasant St. and thus blocking that section of road off from 7 Am to 4 PM on Saturday September 4, 2021, and in addition asked for the use of a portion of the Park abutting that section of the Road. After a short discussion it was moved by Suzanne Welch, second John Gregory to approve the request of Craig Ruggless for blocking off Kidder Hill Rd from 7 AM to 4 PM on Saturday September 4, 2021, and the use of the abutting Park for the Tractor Show and activities pertaining to it. Motion passed unanimously. Craig then asked anyone with antique tractors to get involved and invited everyone to come and enjoy the show and gathering.
   * Bill Kearns stated Danny wished to let the Selectboard know the crew would begin this week on the ditching and culvert work on Rte. 121 E in anticipation of the rebuilding and paving of that section of Rte. 121 E. The ditch being worked on is in front of Douglas’ residence, is 300 ft long and includes 15 culverts and one crossing Rte. 121 to the river side of the road.
   * The crew had surveyed the roads this morning after last nights storms and found no damage.
   * A tree that fell this afternoon was removed from Middletown Rd
5. Clerk/Treasurer – There was no report.
6. Water Wastewater Commission. The Chair thanked the member of the Commission for all their fine work and service on the Village Water Wastewater Commission, stated their work was done as the tasks to be competed now, negotiating with the Tighe and Bond, contracting with them, Accepting the grant proposal when that was awarded, and going forward would be the work of the Selectboard. He suggested a Selectboard committee, the Water Wastewater Committee be formed and that he and Sue Allen be the member of that committee. He had been dealing with this issue since the early 2000 and Sue was interested in working on it with him. Cathy Siano-Goodwin stated that Matt Siano, who was the current Chair of the Commission, told her it was time for the Selectboard to take over. Also stated that Matt wants to be of service in any way he can to assist the Board in work with the engineering firm. Suzanne Welch expressed agreement with the Chair and others with the termination of the Commission and the forming of a s Selectboard Committee to handle it from here on out. She expressed concern over the process in the future, who would make decision and the public involvement in the process since the committee meetings would not be noticed of their meetings. Joe Pollio assured her on all counts that the committee through reports during the Selectboard meetings, through public information meetings with the Engineers, and the Grafton news the public would be kept informed. Suzanne Welch then questioned the decision-making process, and the Cahir again assured her, as with all the Selectboard committees, the actual decision making rested with the Selectboard not the committees. Finally In response to a concern expressed by Suzanne Welch, it was agreed by Joe Pollio and Sue Allen to attend, at least remotely, the last Water Wastewater Commission meeting on Wednesday of this week. Finally, Suzanne reminded the Selectboard that the application for the grant listed person and entities that should be asked to be involved in decision making as the process moved forward, and the balance of the Selectboard acknowledged that. It was then moved by Suzanne welch, second Cathy Siano-Goodwin to sunset the Water Wastewater Commission, create in its stead the Water Wastewater Committee of the Selectboard. Motion passed unanimously. Following that approval, it was moved by Suzanne Welch, second Cathy Siano-Goodwin to appoint Joe Pollio and Sue Allen members of that Selectboard Water Wastewater Committee. Motion passed unanimously.
7. Handling Communications to the Selectboard. The Selectboard raised these issues during the discussion:
   * Joe Pollio thanked John Gregory for raising the issue
   * Joe Pollio stated that there was some information that is now sent out by email, which is just business of the Selectboard and could be limited to them and in lieu of sending email, left in the amil boxes of the Selectboard for them to pick up.
   * John Gregory state that with emails he had to print off all the pertinent pages, when that information could be printed at the office and distributed to the boxes. The member of the Selectboard would then come into the office and pick up the information.
   * Defining what would be sent by email and what printed and put in the boxes was not that simple or clear cut.
   * The DRAFT agendas would be sent out on Wednesday so that comments could be made for the final edition of the agenda on Thursday.
   * The Town Administrator would print out the agenda and all the materials for the meeting and put them in the box by late Thursday. Bill Kearns stated he would also send by email that same information to the residents as they requested, though not to the Selectboard.
   * Bill Kearns stated he sends a lot of public information out to the residents and would continue to do so, though limit what he sent to the Selectboard, but would print that info out and put in the boxes.
   * Bill Kearns stated, though the concept was not crystal clear, he would start immediately to limit what was sent to the Selectboard by email and put more items in the mailboxes. As time passed the Selectboard could then have the experience to hone what it is they want sent out by email versus in the mailbox. It was so informally agreed.

There should be a Selectboard procedure on this, perhaps, and that reminded the Chair that Selectboard Procedures should be on the next agenda. Suzanne Welch then referred back to her handling of the Application for Grant for Water wastewater engineering Study (See Item 3 of June 28, 2021, minutes) and the completed version she presented at that meeting without prior notice of its being prepared by Tighe and Bond engineer and added that she had talked with VLCT who told her “Documents can be distributed at a meeting even if not part of the packet.” Thus, she stated, per VLCT she had not violated the Open Meeting law. Bill Kearns responded that, if the Selectboard was going to go deeply into this, he would like an executive session. He then added, in his opinion, Suzanne Welch had violated the spirit of the open meeting law which were expressed by VLCT in its treatise on the law in the old Selectboard Handbook where it is written “…The Vermont Supreme Court has routinely interpreted the open meeting law with an eye toward making information available to the public.” Suzanne Welch had the information in plenty of time before the meeting to get it out by email and not hold it until after the meeting began. Joe Pollio stated that it has always been the policy of the Selectboard that if information is received before a meeting which is relevant to an issue to be discussed in a meeting, that information was divulged to the public as early as possible. Suzanne then stated she was new to the Selectboard and had learned a lesson by what had occurred. She asked that an executive session be had at the next Selectboard meeting.

1. Committee Reports:
   * Cemetery committee – John Gregory reported that Joe Pollio and he with help of David Rogers would be looking at land on the Hill easterly of Fisher Hill for a cemetery, which land had been offered to the town at no cost.
   * Highway committee – John Gregory stated that during the first week of August VTrans would be sending letter to all the owners of land abutting the Walker Bridge site. Furthermore, in regard to farm equipment being able to use the temporary bypass during bridge construction, the width of the temporary bridge was widened to meet the width requirements of the farm equipment. Also, the guardrails had been adjusted and would now be 43” in height.
   * Parks committee – Park Trails - Joe Pollio stated that we would need a real survey of the Village Park boundaries and that the Town would not develop and improve trails not on Town property. Mike Field, of the park trail volunteers along with al Sands were at the meeting and joined in the discussion. It was clear that the location of the lower trails was problematic, in that it was difficult to know when the volunteers were working in the park or on others land. There is interest now to try to get a Department of Forest parks and Recreation ERSA Grant for improving the trails. There are two grants, one with a minimum of $25,000 and one with a minimum of $50,000. These, Al Sands stated were one-time grants, and could be used to develop the trails in the park and trails leading to the park and connecting elsewhere. Al sands and Mike had been on a virtual class for 1.5 hours that day, and there was a lot of information to be digested. After it was suggested that other parties, including the Nature Museum, the Windham Foundation, in addition to the town may be interested in a network of trails, and because the info from the class needed to be digested, Mike Field suggested, and all agreed, to take some time, the Park committee could meet with others and perhaps a plan could be worked out. The timeline for the Grant is: letter of intent submitted by August 27th, from those submitted a first cut would be announced September 27th and if we made the cut, a detailed proposal would be put in, the awards would be made, perhaps 20 or so of the best projects, later in the year for work to be done in 2022. The Park Committee will work with Mike Field and Al Sands on getting the meeting together.
   * Personnel committee – there was nothing
   * Buildings committees – Heat pumps, upstairs and Post Office proposal. The estimates should all be in this week, all three of them. Sue Allen said she was still pursuing information on the Ames Holt grant possibilities, including applying for funds outside the normal deadlines.
2. Public Comment none
3. Next Regular Meeting – August 2, 2021 @ 6:00 PM.
4. Adjourn: Motion by Suzanne Welch, second Cathy Siano-Goodwin to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 PM. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

William G. Kearns