**Selectboard Meeting**

**Richford, Vermont**

**Approved Meeting Minutes**

**February 20, 2023**

Chair Pond called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with members Wally Steinhour, Alan Fletcher, Sherry Paquette, and Kristen Sheperd present. Guests at the meeting included Carl Wetherby, Joey Randall, Rowena Brown, Zoning Administrator John Libbey, Town Administrator Michael Olio, and Cameraman Gerry Vaisey.

The board said the pledge of allegiance.

Chair Pond recognized guests. Carl Wetherby had a couple items he wanted to discuss with the selectboard. He brought up the board discussing the installation of a streetlight for a resident in front of their house. It was discussed on December 19th, and the next time it was brought up was at the February 6th meeting, but there was no motion made to say the board agreed to installing the streetlight. The selectboard said a motion will be made during this meeting. Second, the discussion around the winter parking ordinance continued, and Carl thought the V.S.A statute cited at the last meeting does not cover the selectboard to have cars towed. Selectman Steinhour said they would have to review it, but as it stands the attorney said the town is within their rights to tow. Selectman Steinhour continued saying a meeting was organized with Greta Brunswick from Northwest Regional Planning to assist with modernizing the ordinance. They continued debating the issue, until Chair Pond said it was time to move on.

Rowena Brown asked if there was an update on fixing the library stair railing? Selectwoman Paquette said it still has not been fixed, and she will coordinate with Bobby Peters to have it fixed along with a roof leak that she will address in her buildings report.

Zoning Administrator John Libbey said last year a resident on the Corliss Road wanted to subdivide their property. He explained the land is a part of a forest conservation district which requires a minimum of 10 acres per lot. This owner has 10.2 acres total. Selectman Fletcher thought the state governs subdivisions on the Corliss Road, not the town. He said it could be the Department of Environmental Conservation. John said the owners attended a Development Review Board meeting for the subdivision and the board denied it. The residents have appealed the decision in environmental court. John said the municipality may need the attorney going forward. Selectman Steinhour said figuring out if the state oversees this district would have to be resolved before hiring our attorney. Carl thought in the past, zoning bylaws required lots to be 10 acres in that district. Rowena affirmed it is 10. She added there are two lots combined that make up the 10 acres to satisfy the bylaw. John said the owners are claiming the road is a natural divider between the two lots, which is why they want to subdivide. Selectman Fletcher reiterated contacting the state would be wise to determine who has jurisdiction over the subdivision before proceeding.

John asked what is the town’s right-of-way policy? He said the town has a right-of-way from the road which can extend a few feet onto private property. Zoning does not have jurisdiction over this right-of-way, but the selectboard does. He asked if trash is piled within the right-of-way, and someone complained, how does the selectboard handle it? Chair Pond and Selectman Steinhour said the town would have research and establish what the right-of-way is. Selectman Fletcher said a right-of-way gives access to do work, it is not for them to maintain the property. The selectboard tasked the Town Administrator to contact VLCT about right-of-way use.

Next, Selectwoman Paquette discussed a vote that was deadlocked in a prior meeting, about the town paying for a sewer line camera test. The camera test found a planted tree on town property damaged a resident’s sewer line. Selectwoman Paquette felt the selectboard should pay since it was an issue caused by the town. Selectman Fletcher disagreed saying in past cases, the owners have paid for repairs or tests to their lines, no matter the cause. If the town pays, it would set a precedence for future issues. Selectman Steinhour asked would the town go after a resident if a tree on their property damaged a town sewer line? He thought that is extremely unlikely, and paying for this could create a slippery slope. Selectman Fletcher said these situations will be addressed when they update the water and sewer rules and regulations. Selectwoman Paquette disagreed saying since the town was responsible for the cause, they should pay.

Selectman Steinhour made a motion to not pay for the camera line test. Selectman Fletcher seconded. Selectwoman Paquette, and Selectwoman Sheperd opposed. Chair Pond abstained. Motion did not pass with a 2-2 vote.

The selectboard moved to approve the 2/6/23 meeting minutes. Selectman Steinhour made a motion to approve the minutes. Selectwoman Paquette seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Next the selectboard moved to approve the installation of a streetlight in front of a resident’s house. Selectman Steinhour made a motion, and Selectwoman Paquette seconded. Motion passed 5-0

While on the streetlight subject, John asked why wasn’t the streetlight by the sewer plant changed? Does it belong to someone else? Chair Pond said he was not sure, but it could be a part of the sewer plant building.

Town Administrator Update – Continuing to work on assigned tasks from previous selectboard meeting.

The Assistance to Firefighters grant was submitted, and the hardship waiver was not acquired, so there will be a $ 9,000-match if the grant is awarded. Chair Pond said he will withhold from using the equipment budget until the grant outcome is determined.

Last week the TA had a meeting with Bethany Remmers from Northwest Regional Planning to discuss the rail trail extension project, and the Municipal Roads General Permit work.

Highway Report – Selectman Steinhour said the crew and the Town Administrator are working on items from the VLCT safety inspection, which include organizing MSDS sheets, ordering required safety equipment, and fixing the eye wash station.

Chair Pond said the Highway Foreman contacted him to see if there were extra lockers not being used by the Fire Department. He said there could be, but would have to check.

Buildings Report – Selectwoman Paquette said Northcountry’s renovations are going well. A cracked window was found in the front office, so Selectwoman Paquette contacted Bobby Peters to replace it. Last year he replaced a window in that section of the building.

A section of the library roof is leaking again, so Selectwoman Paquette asked Bobby Peters to try to patch it for a third time. The leak is located on the backside of the building on the shingled roof. Rowena asked if insurance could cover the cost the roof repair? Selectwoman Paquette said it won’t, but it could cover the inside damage. She stated that section of roof should be replaced soon.

Lastly Selectwoman Paquette said she made a list of building maintenance tasks for the highway crew if they have downtime. She also asked Selectman Steinhour if the highway crew could acquire a large rock to place by the condensers recently installed outside the Post-Office, so they do not get plowed into. He said he would follow-up on it.

Water & Sewer Report – Chair Pond said there was a break in the sprinkler system at Blue Seal. He added the reservoir lost 2 ½ feet of water. Chief Operator Jeremy Weigand increased water production to stabilize the supply. He then sent materials to fix their leak, which will be billed to Blue Seal. Chair Pond said the mill is appreciative of everyone who helped because this was a serious issue that caused the mill to shut down. Selectman Fletcher wondered if the reservoir dropped a certain footage, do the users have to be notified? Chair Pond was not sure, but said Jeremy was in very close contact with Blue Seal.

Selectman Fletcher said they will hopefully have the first meeting about revising the water and sewer rules and regulations this week. He would like to have the revisions completed before summer.

Parks, Playgrounds, Cemeteries Report – Selectwoman Sheperd said the 4th of July parade will be held on the 1st of July. She said she has been meeting with the previous parade coordinator and welcomes anyone who wants to join the committee.

Chair Pond added the fire department extinguished a plastic trash can that was set on fire in Davis Park. Now the park will need a new one.

Other Business – Selectwoman Paquette asked about adding a camera in the parks so they can monitor vandalism. The selectboard tasked the Town Administrator for gathering information on camera setup in the parks.

Chair Pond asked if anyone has seen any Franklin County Sheriff deputies in town? He does not want to see the town spending its money if they are not getting what they pay for. The Town Administrator will reach out to the new Sheriff for a schedule. Selectwoman Paquette will call to setup a meeting. Selectman Steinhour added maybe it is time to explore alternatives.

Meeting adjourned 6:52 PM

Submitted by

Michael Olio – Town Administrator

Attest: