**Selectboard Meeting**

**Richford, Vermont**

**Approved Meeting Minutes**

**April 1, 2024**

Chair Steinhour called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm with members Andy Pond, Alan Fletcher, Sherry Paquette, and Kristin Sheperd present. Guests at the meeting were Town Administrator Marissa Tessier, Carolyn Gendron, Penny Santy, Tracy Combs, Tina Combs, Kelly Johnson, Animal Control Officer Tracy Ovitt, John Libbey, Rowena Brown, Joey Randall, Robert Wetherby (zoom), and cameraman Gerry Vaisey.

The board said the pledge of allegiance.

Chair Steinhour recognized guests. He started with Joey Randall who was asked by Selectman Fletcher to briefly go over the weekend/eclipse prep for the ambulance. He stated that there will be 2 ambulance crews on duty from Friday through Monday. They have stocked up on extra supplies. Selectman Pond reported that he has asked fire personnel to be at the station, they will be available to give directions and information to people coming in from out of town. The fire department has also ordered extra supplies and will be ready to help.

Carolyn Gendron was there to thank Wally for the apology letter, and she also wanted to request that at future meetings held upstairs that there should be a microphone used so people could hear what was being said.

John Libbey wanted to remind the board that there is a Planning Commission hearing being held on Monday April 8th regarding the change of zoning. He will be there to answer any questions regarding zoning, but he asked members of the board to be there as well. Chair Steinhour and Marissa will both be going. John asked if the board could have the town crew pick up a crate and table, Joey made a comment that he had seen someone pick them up.

Animal Control Officer Tracy Ovitt was attending regarding a resident’s dogs. There was a court order issued in 2016, and the resident was required to keep a double fence to keep the dogs in, and to keep the dogs on a leash. The dogs are also required to be registered with the town and vaccinated. She has been receiving many phone calls about the dogs being loose and running in packs of 2 or 3. Tracy had a picture of some of the damage the dogs have done in the past. The fence was kept up for a while but got damaged and has not been fixed. Tracy asked if the board could see if the court order still stands and if it does, the resident needs to be served these papers in person. Some neighbors of said resident were also attending and they have had many bad encounters with these dogs. They voiced their concerns for the safety of each other and their kids. The State Police and the Sheriff department have both been made aware of the situation, but both departments say it falls under Animal Control, and they cannot do anything until someone gets hurt. Chair Steinhour suggested the residents contact the State Representatives regarding the State Police and Sheriff departments. Marissa will contact Town attorney regarding the court order and see what can be done.

Rowen Brown wanted to know if there was any progress on finding more policing. Chair Steinhour stated there isn’t anything positive to report but they are still working on resolving the issue. Some members attended a meeting in Enosburg regarding the issue. Rowena mentioned the ATV ordinance and if the board would entertain the possibility of banning the ATVs and not the side by side. Unfortunately, the police departments are understaffed and Chair Steinhour stated he wished they had a better solution. Rowena also asked for an update on the Willow Street agreement. Chair Steinhour said the agreement has been signed by both the property owner and the board. They will be able to address the stuff on the town property but when he went down it seemed as though the stuff was on the landowner’s property. That can be addressed through the zoning administrator. John Libbey said he would check again with the listers to see where the property lines are.

Robert Wetherby asked if both parties were given drafts of the Memorandum of Understanding. Selectman Pond stated he was not representing the Fire Association. Chair Steinhour stated that the Memorandum was brought before the Fire Associations executive board and whether they shared it with all the members or not was on them. Robert also asked for clarification on the fire wardens and fire chiefs in the memorandum. The board was unsure of exactly what he was asking for.

The board moved to approve the 3/18/24 meeting minutes.

Marissa stated that she misspoke regarding the moderator. Darlene Gregoire received 22 write-in votes therefore she was voted in. Selectwoman Paquette made a motion to accept the 3/18/24 meeting minutes once amended. Selectman Pond seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Highway Report – Mud season is winding down. Grader has been out; spring clean-up will start soon. Chair Steinhour has had discussions with Jason about using APRA money to purchase excess stone so the highway crew can work on the bad spots on certain roads and be able to work on these problem areas in the fall. Chair Steinhour was looking to see what the board thought. Rowena asked if there will be public meetings regarding ARPA. Chair Steinhour and Selectman Fletcher stated that the board needs to set up meetings with the Town Clerk to prioritize, but public meetings are a great idea.

Buildings Report – Door for the Post Office have been ordered, they are still 12 weeks out. The railings have been replaced at the library, and they will be painted. The glass for the door at the bank will be replaced. There is a locksmith coming to fix the lock on the bathroom at the library.

Water & Sewer Report – There was a follow up meeting regarding the inventory of lead and galvanized pipes going into residents’ homes. MKS Engineering gave a quote of $101,000 to do the inventory. The is a loan forgiveness up to 101,000, any expenses after that there are options for 0% interest rates up to 5 years. Selectman Fletcher stated the hope is for the cost to be forgiven so there is no cost to the user. This is a state requirement leaving the town no option than to do this inventory.

Selectman Fletcher made a motion to allow Town Clerk Kiley Deuso to submit the Service Line Loan Application. Selectwoman Paquette seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Parks, Playground, and Cemeteries – Selectwoman Sheperd contact Green Mountain Flagging regarding the 4th of July parade, and they have her a quote of $450 for a 4-hour minimum for one flagger. She also contacted a company previously used to fix headstones in the Troy Street cemetery. He gave a quote of $3500 to fix these. Selectwoman Sheperd did investigate some grant options and unfortunately the Vermont Cemetery Association is not offering any grants at this time. She contacted Brandon Wilson about craving something out of the trunk that is in the Troy Street cemetery. There was a conversation about fixing up the gazebo before prom.

Town Administrator Update – Reviewing policies and ordinances to see what can be updated, as many of them are outdated. Working with Kiley and Jason to get the highway paving grant submitted. Deer Run submitted an increase of $300 to the mowing contract to include the War Monument area.

Selectwomen Paquette made a motion to approve the increase. Selectman Pond seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Other Business – Selectman Pond met with our camera company, and they suggested upgrading the system. There had been mention of adding cameras to the parks around town and possibly the Park and Ride that is going in on Eastern Ave. Selectman Pond said there isn’t an official quote yet, but it will potentially cost $40,000. Chair Steinhour commented and said that sounds like a lot but having camera footage could help with proof. Carolyn Gendron asked who will enforce anything. Selectman Pond stated Andre is very good at following up.

Selectwoman Paquette made a motion to go into executive session. Selectman Fletcher seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

At 6:35 pm Selectwoman Paquette made a motion to come out of executive session. Selectwoman Sheperd seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

As a result of the executive session Selectwoman Paquette made a motion to increase Animal Control Officers monthly pay from $500 to $650. Selectman Fletcher seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:37 pm.

Submitted by

Marissa Tessier – Town Administrator

Attest: