**Selectboard Meeting**

**Richford, Vermont**

**Approved Meeting Minutes**

**October 2, 2023**

Chair Pond called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with members Sherry Paquette, Wally Steinhour, Kristen Sheperd and Alan Fletcher present. Guests at the meeting were Robert Wetherby (Zoom), Carl Wetherby, Joey Randall, Town Clerk Kiley Deuso, and Town Administrator Michael Olio, and cameraman Gerry Vaisey.

The board said the pledge of allegiance.

Chair Pond recognized guests. He started with Robert Wetherby who attended the meeting through Zoom. Robert asked about posting the “illegal” meeting minutes. Selectman Steinhour said there is nothing to post. According to VLCT, there is no requirement to post meeting minutes after an open meeting law violation. Robert believes minutes have to be posted because the email exchange constitutes a meeting. Selectman Steinhour said that is not what they were told, and a copy of the email exchange was given to Robert. Mr. Wetherby said he will continue researching the issue.

Carl Wetherby had a couple questions for the board. He asked when will the shrubs around the high school backup generator be trimmed? Selectman Steinhour said he will inform the highway crew. Second, he asked if there was a petition going around town to put a fire truck on the ballot in March? The board said they are not aware of one.

Selectman Steinhour wanted to discuss the Farrar Street property. Since the town did not bid on any tax sale properties, there is money in the budget if they decided to tear down the building. Selectman Fletcher thought it should be sold as is, and then they can recover the costs invested in the property. Selectwoman Sheperd said she has concerns of it continuing to be an eye sore if they decided to sell the property. Chair Pond said if the building was torn down, there would be another eye sore exposed from the building behind it. He thought that property was in worse condition.

Selectman Fletcher motioned to sell the Farrar Street property. Selectwoman Paquette seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Selectman Steinhour asked if they should sell the Jay Road property as well? It is not a functional piece of land for the town. The board agreed.

The board moved to approve the 9/18/23 meeting minutes and the 9/25/23 special meeting minutes.

Selectman Steinhour motioned to approve the 9/18/23 meeting minutes. Selectwoman Paquette seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Selectwoman Paquette motioned to approve the 9/25/23 special meeting minutes. Selectwoman Sheperd seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Update from Town Administrator – There will not be an application for the housing grant Tammy Ryea was interested in applying for. After consulting with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the project did not meet their criteria.

The community trash day was moved from October 14th to October 21st.

Last week two assessments were done at the Fire Station and the Historical Society building for the Municipal Energy Resilience Program. The other assessments will be done in December.

The TAP scoping study grant will move forward with Maddie Yandow from Northwest Regional Planning as the municipal project manager. The next step is to obtain a design consultant.

Selectman Steinhour mentioned there were two trailers and a vehicle at the village parking lot. He wondered if anything could be done to move them. Kiley said Andre can identify who owns them. The selectboard asked the Town Administrator to contact Officer Labier about the vehicle and trailers. Carl told Selectman Steinhour who owned the trailers and the car.

Highway Report – Selectman Steinhour said the Highway Crew is finished piling sand and are grading where it is needed. They are continuing to prepare for winter.

Buildings Report – Selectwoman Paquette said the new boiler is running in the Post-Office. Now it will need to be inspected.

Water & Sewer Report – Chair Pond would like to have a water and sewer meeting on Thursday at 3.

Carl asked if the water billing will be changed to quarterly? He feels this change would be better for everyone in Richford. Selectman Fletcher said the rules have to be changed first. Kiley said she agrees with changing the billing to quarterly, but worries about the current capacity to handle it.

Parks, Playgrounds & Cemeteries Report – Selectwoman Sheperd said the water in the playground building is going to be drained.

Other Business – Chair Pond said asked the board if they were okay if the fire department has a coin drop on Saturday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. The board said it would be fine to do.

Selectwoman Sheperd asked about the house that burnt on South Union Street. She said people have been piling junk there, and wondered whose obligation it was to clean up the property. The board said it is still the owner’s responsibility. Kiley said the owners are trying to figure out how to clean it up.

Carl asked what is the procedure to get a petition to put something on the ballot? He would like to see a petition to get water billing to quarterly. Selectman Fletcher reiterated the water rules have to be changed since it specifically says it has to be billed twice a year. Carl asked about the forgiveness given to people for their water bills. He wondered how can a procedure that’s not been enacted be used to forgive bills, but the selectboard won’t change billing to quarterly? Selectman Steinhour said his understanding was the selectboard could consider the circumstance and work with people on their bills. Selectman Fletcher said right now there is no set rule on bill forgiveness, it is at the selectboard’s discretion.

Selectman Steinhour motioned to go into executive session at 6:30 pm. Selectwoman Paquette seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Selectman Steinhour motioned to come out of executive session at 6:47 pm. Selectwoman Paquette seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

No decisions were made as a result of the executive session.

Meeting Adjourned 6:48 pm.

Submitted by

Michael Olio – Town Administrator

Attest: