**Selectboard Meeting**

**Richford, Vermont**

**Approved Meeting Minutes**

**December 18, 2023**

Chair Pond called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm with members Sherry Paquette, Wally Steinhour, Alan Fletcher, and Kristin Sheperd present. Guests at the meeting were Town Clerk Kiley Deuso, Assistant Town Clerk Marissa Tessier, Dan, Seely, Annette Goyne, Debbie Atherton, Joey Randall, Shelby Paquette, Jamie Latimer, Justin Randall, Randy Thompson, Rowena Brown, Robert Wetherby (Zoom), and Christy Liddy (Zoom).

The board said the pledge of allegiance.

Chair Pond recognized guests. He started with Kiley Deuso, who had a memo she handed out to the board from Greta Brunswick from NRPC. The memo was for the Richford Sidewalk Scoping Study Consultant Procurement. Kiley was looking for the board’s approval to request a proposal from the highest-ranking firm Fuss and O’ Neill.

Selectwoman Paquette made a motion to approve requesting a proposal from the at the ready consultant Fuss and O' Neill. Selectman Steinhour seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Rowena Brown wanted to thank the highway crew for taking care of the branches right away and for cleaning up the debris in the main street park. Selectman Steinhour stated that Jason encourages using an arborist for the tree at the library. Rowena said Richford Beautification is going to have an arborist look at the tree and all the other trees from Intervale Ave to the fire department and do the appropriate trimming at the appropriate time of the year.

Christy Liddy, the director of the library, explained they have continued to support our community through regular programing. She also stated the library is a valuable resource to young families in our community. The elementary school has field trips regularly, where she reads stories and helps with crafts. Community members make use of the libraries computers when they are open. The library is asking for 70,000 this year because of the cost of living and continuing to support the recent, well-deserved raises of two of their staff members. The funds will help the library continue to have access to high quality programming, help build literacy for all ages and to stay on parity with other libraries in Franklin County.

Annette Goyne from the Richford Conservation Commission gave an update on the things that they have done throughout the year. They have put up some historical markers around town, a nature trail at the high school with steps. They received grants from Upper Missisquoi and Trout River Wild & Scenic Committee for threatened species. They placed a total of 10 bat houses around Richford. Also, they put in a pollinator garden at the elementary school. Richford Conservation was 1 of 12 recipients of the AVCC grant for $550 to put in shrubs for pollinators and wildlife. There was the annual Green-Up Day, bioblitz at RES. Richford Conservation Commission is asking to be put in the town budget for $500 and stay on the ballot for a $500 appropriation. The grants they receive are half to start the project and then the other half when the project is done. Also, with the appropriation they never know if it will be approved by the voters. The $500 they receive usually goes towards paying back members who have contributed their own money. As the treasurer Dan Seely stated that he would like to build a buffer in their bank account and the $500 in the budget would help with this.

Robert Wetherby was just visiting.

The board moved to approve the 12/4/23 meeting minutes.

Selectwomen Paquette motioned to approve the 12/4/23 meeting minutes. Selectman Steinhour seconded. Motion passed 5-0

Chair Pond recognized guests Jamie, Justin, Randy, and Shelby, who came in after the meeting had started that were just visiting.

Highway Report – Selectman Steinhour stated there was no flooding as of 3:00 pm and the highway department was working on clearing brush. The purchase of the sidewalk tractor has been finalized, they had to downsize, all the parts are on order and the tractor should be here shortly. Selectman Steinhour spoke with Rick Mason about the concerns from the last meeting about the property. He stated that there will be some new conditions added to the lease agreement. The new lease agreement states that the property will be subject to zoning administrator review every year before the town renews. Selectman Steinhour’s recommendation is that the board continue leasing but coming going forward there will be clear guidelines or stipulations that it will have to be maintained within the Zoning by laws of Richford. The board agreed and the agreement will be sent.

Buildings Report – Selectwoman Paquette is waiting for quotes on the EMS building roof, siding on the library, and overhead doors.

Water & Sewer Report – Nothing to report.

Necessity Resolution – Kiley updated the resolution with the numbers from Wayne Elliot. The board will need to sign. This will authorize the selectboard to host a special election for voters residing in the special services district for the $1.1 million bond vote for the water system improvement financing project. After the special election with the voters of the special service district, it will then go to the voters at the annual town meeting.

Selectman Steinhour made a motion to approve the Necessity Resolution. Selectwoman Paquette seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Parks, Playgrounds & Cemeteries – Selectwoman Sheperd had nothing to report. Kiley stated that she would like to research it a little more, but she had someone reach out about using the ball field next summer and fall. They are willing to help maintain and maybe put a little money into the fields.

Other business – Chair Pond has contacted the Fire Marshall about the Pink Lady on Main Street. He has not heard back and was wondering what can be done as far as zoning. Rowena stated zoning cannot do anything about the inside of a building, they can only send letters for outside of a property. Chair Pond also stated that over the weekend he was made aware of a slanderous post on social media, he wanted to make the board aware that he was consulting with the town attorney to see if there is anything that can be legally done about the statement.

Chair Pond made a motion to go into executive session for personnel at 5:35 pm. Selectwoman Sheperd seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

At 5:43 pm Selectman Steinhour motioned to come out of executive session. Selectwoman Paquette seconded. Motion passes 5-0.

As a result of the executive session Selectman Steinhour made a motion to hire Marissa Tessier as Town Administrator. Selectwoman Paquette seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned 5:45 pm.

Submitted by

Marissa Tessier – Assistant Town Clerk

Attest: