

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE STRAFFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
August 27, 2014

Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 312 (b) (1) Selectboard meeting minutes include

- (A) All members of the public body present;
- (B) All other active participants in the meeting;
- (C) All motions, proposals and resolutions made, offered and considered, and what disposition is made of same; and
- (D) The results of any votes, with a record of the individual vote of each member if a roll call is taken.

Although meeting minutes have complied with 1 V.S.A. § 312 (b) (1), any additional information is included as a courtesy.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members of the public body present:

Rod Maclay, Chair, Brian Johnson, Steve Marx, Brent Cadwell, and John Freitag, Members

Other active participants:

Jane Prescott, Recording Secretary

Citizens present: Janet Hardy, Roz Finn, Randy Coffin, Paul Perkins, Calvin Benjamin, Jessica Tidman, Paul Scull (arrived at 7:03 p.m.). All but Janet Hardy departed at 7:28.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

CITIZENS CONCERNS

Roz Finn requested more time. Calvin Benjamin arrived and stated he was concerned with some excavating on Route 132 and that it didn't go out to bid and local contractors were not offered a chance to bid on the job. Calvin feels that contracts are given to whoever wants it. Calvin was told he isn't getting work because he has a sick wife at home who is dying of cancer. Calvin was very upset about this. Calvin expressed that work in town should be given to people who live in town. Calvin stated that when hiring Pike or other outside contractors, the town ends up in the hole. Calvin expressed concerns about what contracts are being put out to bid and not put out to bid. Randy Coffin asked if it is usual for contracts to be bided on.

Rod provided background information on the work being done on Route 132. The town was given 8000 yards of material from the Mine. Ed Hathaway told the select board that they needed to move the material out of the mines immediately. Northwood's was working at the Copper Mine and the Road Foreman knew that they have the equipment to load trucks and move the materials down to Route 132. The cost quoted from Northwood's to repair the washouts on Route 132 was \$2500 and the Road Foreman felt like it would be a cost saving to go with Northwood's for this job. Northwood agreed to load their trucks to move the materials. Calvin stated he was concerned how

the decision was made. Brent stated that policy states that if the cost of a job is \$3000 or less, Jon MacKinnon can move forward and hire a job to be done without getting permission from the Select Board. The decision to hire Northwood's to repair the washouts on Route 132 was made by Jon MacKinnon. If the cost of a job is more than \$3000, Jon MacKinnon must go to the select board. It is Jon MacKinnon's usual process to ask more than 1 contractor for a quote on any job. Also, there were stipulations that the material from the mine had to be used on Route 132. There were 3 washouts that needed to be fixed. The Board told the citizens present that if the cost of any job to fix a road is greater than \$3000, it must go before the board for approval. Calvin expressed concerns that he is not asked to do excavating for the town. Calvin expressed concerns about the way the Justin Morrill Highway from town house to the Tunbridge town line was bided out for contract. Roz stated that there is a lot that goes on between select board members that the town is not involved in and that people feel they are excluded from the workings of the town. Roz is appalled by the cruelty of the 2 remarks made to Calvin. Rod stated he didn't make the last statement about Julie. Rod told Calvin that the Select Board made every effort for Calvin to be able to work at the Recycling Center last summer. Janet Hardy is confused about the job at the recycling center. Calvin doesn't understand why local contractors are not being asked first to do the jobs in town that can be done. Tom Scull stated he hopes that select board gives business to local contractors in town before others get the job and that personal issues do not belong in business.

Paul Perkins asked; since July 1, has the select board been posting agendas on the website 48 hours prior to their meetings. The Board responded that the agendas have been posted, except for this meeting. Brent stated that Lisa has been dealing with family issues, and, because of it, the agenda did not get posted. Janet asked if the Assistant Town Clerk is capable of posting the agenda. The Select Board didn't know the answer. Paul is concerned that since the law went into effect requiring posting of agendas, there could be a penalty for not following the law. He also stated that the school board has been advised that any decisions they make are invalid if an agenda isn't posted on the web site. Paul suggested reviewing any decisions made since July 1 in case they need to be ratified. He feels it fits within the theme of what's been mentioned at the meeting. If you willfully violate the statues you can be prosecuted for it. Rod stated that the select board will take care to ensure the posting of the agenda.

Minutes of August 13, 2014. John suggested that the recording secretary not comment about policies. John made a motion to approve as written. Steve seconded. All approved.

Personnel policy probationary period – Brent – spoke with a representative from the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) to confirm the decision the Board made on the probationary period was reasonable. The only advice from VLCT was that they advise towns to have a probationary period. The duration of the probationary period can be at each town's discretion. The policy adopted by the Board at a previous meeting states "A new employee probationary period is 6 months and after 2 full months of employment, the employee will be eligible for health insurance coverage on the first day of the next month"

Cell phone update – Steve – Talked with someone at State. There is going to be cell phone service on Route 132 in South Strafford. Mini towers are being mounted on telephone poles going up 132. The range goes about ½ miles on either side of the road. There are no plans for cell phone coverage in Strafford. The person from the State mentioned that if enough people from Strafford want cell phone service, and everyone calls a major carrier like AT& T or Verizon, they will look into making

cell phone service available to Strafford, because they will be making money. The State chose roads in towns with no cell phone service that had a lot of traffic on them. The cell phone project on Route 132 should be completed by January 1.

Dog offense – A dog offense happened yesterday on school grounds. Ed is issuing a ticket that the dog needs to be under control at all times. John will notify Greg Bagnato so the school is aware.

John will send thank you to Jon MacKinnon and Ed Eastman for getting safety issues done for first day of school.

Data Clarification – Road crew hire. Applicant update letter was sent on 6/26/2014. The candidate was interviewed on 7/11/2014. The regret letter was mailed to other applicants on 7/17/2014.

Highways: VTrans Transportation Alternatives Program Grant was presented to the Select Board. There are certain criteria for this grant. Rod asked if the Board wants to tackle applying for a grant now. Brent stated there were a number of things it can be used for and John suggested vegetation management is big with conservation commission and maybe pass it on to them. Brent will forward to Amy & Steve from Conservation Commission and if they want they can move forward with applying for a grant from the program.

Town Garage Heaters – Brian updated. Brian obtained an estimate from Ben Linehan at AHT technologies to replace the heating system. The quote from AHT is; \$31,106.00. The estimate from Roger Carpenter from April 2014 is \$17,704 to update current system. Brent wants to invite Roger Carpenter to the next meeting. John felt the cheapest was to go the quote from Roger Carpenter. Steve talked to Blake Spencer and Dave Taplin to discuss what Blake feels insulation should be. Need to find out what proper method of heat needs to be with the insulation in there. Rod would like to have a special meeting at the Town Garage with Roger Carpenter so everyone can understand. Brent will call Roger Carpenter to arrange a time.

Rte. 132 work – Rod stated that when we have something that comes up that is under budget, Jon MacKinnon should email the Select Board to let them know what is happening. John suggested weekly updates to the town on what the road crew does on a weekly basis. Brian suggested that if we start these updates, we can't stop. Then the Board suggested a periodic update. Currently the road crew is grading roads, doing roadside mowing and hauling sand for the winter stock pile.

Bridge Projects updates – On the White Bridge, the contractor may pour the footings tomorrow. On Thursday Lafayette will finish the guard rail at Todd Bean's and fix the guard rail on Van Dyke Road. Lafayette realized the short guard rail on Van Dyke Road was their fault and they are paying to install the proper size guard rail.

Brent is meeting with Ron Rhodes and designer Roy Schiff at Maple Hill Culvert to review site. He will return within 1-2 weeks to drill and survey and do design for it. This is being funded by a grant from the Conservation Committee.

Road Salt – We are going to have to pay a higher price for road salt this year. The State is getting their salt for \$75.00 per ton. Usually we get the same price as the State. The town's price for salt this year is \$83.61 a ton. Last year the cost of salt was \$56.00 per ton. Rod has called VLCT but he

hasn't connected with the person at VLCT yet to figure out if there is a way to get road salt at a lower price. All the salt that the town has purchased to date is at the old price. The new price goes into effect this fall. We still have \$21,178 in the budget for salt for this year.

Rod mentioned 5 maple trees dying in the lower village; 2 near the cemetery and 3 near Coburn's. Rod asked if people knew why. Ideas were passed around. The Board suggested asking Matt Perry about them. Rod will contact Matt Perry.

Steve updated the Board. He was told by someone in town this week that they came on Thursday to get an absentee ballot at 2:30 p.m. and the town clerk's office was closed. He understood that there was a family emergency, but, he feels the Town Clerk could have asked a select man or another elected official like a justice of the peace to staff office in her absence. Steve suggested to the person to send email or write a letter.

John asked if we want to think about local contractors and he is not sure about law and asked if the town could do preferential treatment with local contractors. Brent stated that usually Jon MacKinnon always calls local contractors who live in town first when he knows it's within their realm of work. Brent also stated that even if the price of a job is below the bid threshold, Jon MacKinnon usually get 3 bids.

Brent made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brian seconded. All agreed. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, September 10, 2014 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Prescott, Recording Secretary