

**Strafford Selectboard Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, September 23, 2020, at 6:00 pm  
Town Office and Zoom

Members present: Toni Pippy, Pat Kelly, Rett Emerson, Brent Cadwell, Mary Linehan

Others present and participation via Zoom: Lisa Bragg, Jon McKinnon, Jennifer Brown, Michael Sacca, Robert Linck (VLT), Ed Hathaway, John Schmeltzer, Jake Thompson, John Echeverria, David Paganelli, JT Horn

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm

Public Concerns - None

Emergency Management COVID 19 –Executive Order extended to October 15, 2020

Town Highways and Equipment Update

- **Tyson Bridge – Daniels Construction Budget Estimate**

Two estimates for repair were received, as well as a State inspection of the bridge. Ed Hathaway, EPA, explained the process for review to ensure we know the best way forward for finishing off the bridge. State inspection of 9/17/2020 indicates that the bridge is in pretty good shape, so EPA is willing to go ahead and replace the deck and bring it back to serviceable condition but won't cover the maintenance costs identified in the inspection. Jon plans to talk to District 4 to make sure we are making the best plan. Ed reiterated their commitment to working with us to spend money the best way and get the Strafford taxpayers the best solution. Optimally we will make a decision about how to go forward by end of the calendar year; likely any work will be conducted in the spring due to approaching winter weather. John Schmeltzer, Dept of Conservation, State counterpart to EPA, explained that the EPA will continue to be working for several months but is handing over the maintenance to the State in coming weeks.

- Road paving will begin soon and will be finished this year.
- Motion passed to approve Highway Access Application for Miller Pond Road.
- Approve Financing for Truck. Lisa working with Mascoma Bank on the details: \$174,631 at 3% interest; \$35,189.01 annual payment for 5 years. Jon was able to get an improved trade-in value, so loan amount is reduced.
- An old culvert at the intersection of Kibling Hill and Brook Road may be too short. Given Tyson Bridge issues, this will have to wait.

**Correspondence**

- Email updates from the State Emergency Operations Center Situation Reports, re: **COVID 19**, Vermont Department of Health. We also receive emails from The Office of the Governor, TRORC and VLTC

- Email, Byron Breese, RE: Noise. Highway liaisons clarified that truck braking in town near school, recreation areas, and concentrated residential areas is a safety issue that cannot be restricted despite the noise.
- Letter, Otterman and Allen, P.C., RE: Lease Land Release on Curtis Bush Property at 6 Havelock Rd. Discussed in Quit Claim Deed item below
- Email, John Freitag, RE: bridge plan. Jon is monitoring the status of bridges and prioritizing as needed.
- Email, Mark Castro, RE: Falling Trees. Jon took care of these trees
- TRORC, RE: Invitation to Participate in Municipal Roads Grants-In-Aid Program. Jon hopes to get TRORC to do some updated maps to get more specificity. Rita coming next week for next year's grant.
- The Richards Group, RE: 2021 Vermont Health Exchange Rates. Will review again during budgeting process.
- Emails, Michael Sacca, RE: Ashley Forest Project

Motion passed to accept minutes to the September 8, regular meeting

**Use of Murray Recreation Field** request 9/26/20 10-12 noon, Newton PTA to use the field for the clothing swap. Motion passed to approve.

**Vermont Quit Claim Deed**, Curtis, and Jean Bush. Motion passed to accept the Vermont Quit Claim Deed.

#### **Budget 2020 review.**

- Funds set aside as offset for the anticipated road grant are unspent due to the fact that grants were not processed this year. Could potentially be used toward the Tyson Bridge maintenance costs that EPA will not cover.
- VT Municipal Loan Fund; we can get a 2% loan for up to \$110,000 which could be used to pay down the current loan for the Fire Truck. Savings of \$1,800--may not be worth it if there is loan origination fee. Lisa will check if we can apply in April for a loan for the new truck at the same rate, reducing that cost.
- Town Office ongoing sewer gas problem. Seems to be fixed, many thanks to Ben Linehan, Brocklebank Craft Plumbing, for the very prompt response on such short notice.
- Town Office building has many deficiencies and addressing them is increasingly urgent. COVID has derailed many previous priorities, and the Selectboard needs to put the Town Office back on the agenda.

**Ashley Community Forest discussion, voter information and decisions.** Discussion re terms of the potential donation, details of a conservation easement and the expectations of AVC, VLT, and ACF committee if the donation is accepted. Michael Sacca clarified that AVC is willing to allow subdivision of the Ashley Forest parcel to allow each town to own its own acreage separately; Bob Linck, VLT, noted that the CE will not require town to do anything to improve the property, or incur any costs to manage the forest if the town does not want to. Noted that

an Orange County Forester is available to provide management support. Agreed that both Strafford and Sharon towns preferably would vote in roughly the same time and using the same language for the article. AVC wants to hold the vote before year end. AVC will organize meetings to be held with both Strafford and Sharon to iron out language of an article, and determine a voting date.

**Dog officer.** Motion to appoint Melissa MacDonald as Dog Officer.

**Liaison updates**

- Junk Yard Inventory will be finalized by all Selectboard members, dividing up the roads
- Red Barn rock wall repair work is nearly completed, and free of charge to town. Thanks to all the people who have helped with this renovation.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Linehan  
Recording Clerk