

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE STRAFFORD SELECTBOARD

April 22, 2015

Members of the public body present: John Freitag, Steve Marx, Toni Pippy

Members of the public body not present: Brent Cadwell, Brian Johnson

Other active participants: Lisa Kendall, Town Clerk, Jon MacKinnon, Road Foreman, Nellie Pennington, Auditor, Janet Hardy, Chris Gex, Steve Gex, Robert Bushway, Roz Finn, Carlton Phelps, Sue Coburn, Martha Walke

Meeting called to order in the Town Office at 6 p.m.

Adjustments were made to the agenda to include correspondence from Green Mountain Power and under General: Dog Pound update, Shared Town Services, Scheduling of the Solid Waste Hearing, EPA update on Superfund work in 2015 at the Elizabeth Mine Site and Rte. 132 Cell Phone repeater update

1.) Citizen Concerns: Roz Finn had concerns regarding the bridge replacement project scheduled to take place next year near her house. She had wanted to talk with Brent Cadwell, but since he was absent decided to wait until the next meeting.

2.) Correspondence: John shared a recent email from Green Mountain Power regarding relocating and rebuilding the current main line that feeds Strafford from Sharon along Rte. 132 which should be a much more reliable line. It is a big project and they are doing it in four phases. Work will start hopefully late this summer on the first phase coming from Sharon. The last phase is from the Town line to South Strafford village which they have just surveyed and will begin seeking easements soon. Their goal is to have the entire project ready for construction by the end of 2015 and completed by the end of 2016.

3.) Minutes: Steve moved and Toni seconded to adopt the minutes of April 8th. Minutes were adopted unanimously?

4.) General:

Dog Kennel: Janet Hardy came in to check on the status of the Dog Kennel project. She has offered to be Town Dog Office and Pound Keeper if a proper kennel for the dogs is provided. There are no funds in the budget for building a proper kennel. A fund for contributions has been established at the Town Office and Lisa reported that around \$350 has been raised. Janet reported that an individual has offered a kennel he is no longer using. Janet said that what is still needed is a cement floor and a building. Brent has priced out a unit from the Carriage Shed that would cost around \$3,500. Steven Gex, who has looked into the issue of kennels for his own use and has experience in the construction field, offered to help with a design. It was also suggested that we check with local builders to be involved with the project. Janet will touch base with Brent who is serving as the point person on this from the Selectboard when he returns from vacation.

Equipment Fund: Auditor Nellie Pennington came in to explain how the equipment fund works and answer questions. Nellie explained that the reason behind the equipment fund was to be able to track all expenses regarding town highway equipment. Revenue in the equipment fund comes from “paying” ourselves for the use of our equipment. These transactions are booked as an expense in the Highway Fund “Equipment Use” and as revenue for the Equipment Fund “Equipment Earnings”. Questions were raised regarding with over \$130,000 in loan or lease/purchase payments due this year if there was sufficient funds in the budget to cover the costs. Referring to the line items for summer and winter equipment use in the budget, Nellie said that she felt there

were. Lisa indicated that the monthly budget reports given to the Board should allow the Board to track equipment earnings. Nellie was thanked for presentation as well as her long service as an Auditor. Nellie said that she was planning to have a session in the late fall on how to read your Town Report. Toni suggested that maybe we could present some of the information differently and easier follow in the Town Report. John said that the Board will have budget hearings and more opportunity for the public to weigh in on next year's budget.

Solid Waste Fact Sheet and planning for the a public meeting on the issue of Solid Waste: John handed out copies of a draft fact sheet on how Solid Waste is currently handled in Strafford that he has been working on. He asked how soon the Board would like to have a public meeting on the issue and suggested the possibility of early May. Steve and Toni felt that as facts and options were still being put together a later date would be better. They also felt it would be good to have options developed for the public to comment on at the public meeting. It was agreed upon to spend significant time at the next Selectboard Meeting on May 13 going over options. Tom Kennedy, the consultant from the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District will be invited to share models from other towns, Dori Wolfe, Chair of the Recycling Committee and members of the Committee will also be invited to share their ideas as well.

Sub-committee on Pay and Classification and Compensation update: The Sub-committee has held their first meeting and elected officers. Their next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday April 29<sup>th</sup> at 6p.m. Agenda will be posted and the public is welcome. John offered to step down from the Sub-committee if another Board member was willing to take his place. Toni agreed to serve on this Sub-committee. John said Toni's many decades of work in the financial services at Dartmouth College should serve the Sub-committee well. John suggested and the Board agreed that he should continue being the contact person with the Rockefeller Policy Shop at Dartmouth College where students are doing a research project on comparisons in towns under a population of 2,000 with Strafford's pay and compensation. This project is due to be completed in early to the middle of May and will include a presentation to the Selectboard and Sub-committee and public. John reported that Professor Ron Shaiko who is supervising the research project said in an update on the project for the Board meeting, that in response to suggestions from the last Sub-committee meeting that they "are including the various types of road miles in each of the towns we are analyzing as well as various compensation packages. We are also looking at Grand Lists". The research project is being done at no cost to the Town.

Shared Town Services: Toni asked if anyone had attended or had information on a recent regional meeting on this topic. As no one had, Toni will follow-up and see what she can find came out of the meeting.

Scheduling an EPA update on 2015 work on the Superfund site at the Elizabeth Mine Site: John reported that he has been in contact with officials and they are willing to do a presentation to the Board. It was suggested that this be done as a public meeting that Board members could attend as well as the general public. John will follow-up.

Cell repeater update: Steve reported that he had talked to the CEO of Coverage Co., the company that was paid by the government to install cell phone repeaters along Rte. 132. There is a hold up as the company tries to find the best way put them into operation. The possibilities are using Fairpoint, ECFiber or installing their own lines. The issue seems to be about how to make the most money. Steve will follow-up with our Representatives to see what can be done. When operational they will provide a ½ mile cell phone corridor on either side of Rte. 132.

##### 5.) Town Highways:

Jon updated Board on road conditions. There are getting to be some bad spots as the roads continue to thaw. The upper part of Old City Falls Road is particularly bad. The crew is doing what they can as conditions allow. Carlton asked if trucks hauling in gravel could go right to the bad spots instead of dumping at the Town Garage and then having Town trucks haul the material. Jon explained that coordination of this sort while it can work on larger projects is difficult when working in different areas especially since there is no reliable radio contact with

the gravel trucks. People with specific road problems are urged to first call the Town Garage at 765-4550 or email [highwaydept@straffordvt.org](mailto:highwaydept@straffordvt.org). While not all problems can be taken care of immediately, Jon and the crew will try to respond where appropriate.

6.) Other: Lisa informed the Board that she and Regina, Assistant Town Clerk are required to take a three and a half day polling workshop in June. Courtney Hardy, the second assistant would not be able to cover all the office hours and the office would need to be closed for some of that time.

Steve made a motion to adjourn, Toni seconded and all approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Next Meetings: Regular Board Meeting May 13 at 6 p.m. @ the Town Office

Future Agenda items:

Solid Waste options and planning for public meeting

Respectfully Submitted,

Toni M. Pippy