

## Strafford Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at 6:00 pm

Strafford Town Office

Members present: Brian Johnson, Toni Pippy, Jeff Solsaa, David Paganelli, Mary Linehan (Zoom)

Others participating: Lisa Bragg, John Freitag, Stephen Dycus, Rocky Fuller, Blake Spencer

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm.

### 1. Highways:

a. Jeff met with Kyle from Blaktop, Inc., the company that recently repaved Route 132, to view issues we have with that work. Kyle acknowledged issues with cracking and aprons. Later, Jeff met with Herb, also from Blaktop, Inc., and he was less agreeable to acknowledge our issues. Herb contends that the cracking in the surface pavement is related to the road below, and is not due to anything Blaktop did or didn't do. Jeff will meet with Blaktop personnel again next week to negotiate remedial action.

b. Blower has increased in price since our initial discussions. Jeff will supply specifics and we will discuss in detail at the 5/25/22 regular meeting.

c. Jeff reported that road grading is taking longer than expected (approximately 1 mile/day), largely due to our inability to truck enough material to the work area, fast enough to keep the grader busy. Jeff made a motion to hire Sonny Moses as a temporary town employee to truck for us, until we are able to hire a permanent employee. The hiring to be contingent upon a valid UA and verification of CDL. Seconded by Toni. Motion passed 5-0.

d. Due to the slow pace of grading, and the amount of road that needs re-grading, Jeff suggested that we hire a contract grader to grade certain roads that need to be smoothed and re-shaped, but where no new material needs to be added at this time. Motion made by Toni to hire "Joe" with his grader, for 5 days work, 10 hours per day, at a rate of \$120/hour. The town agreeing to supply fuel for the contracted grader. Seconded by Brian. Motion passed 4-1 with Brian voting no.

e. Jeff informed the Selectboard that P.D. requests clarification of his ongoing duties. The Chair tabled discussion on this until the 5/25/22 regular meeting.

f. Jeff informed the Selectboard that P.D. has completed Ryan's performance evaluation and Jeff suggests that Ryan is rightfully due a raise. Chair tabled discussion on this until the 5/25/22 regular meeting.

### 2. Town Office discussion: Open discussion between the Selectboard and other meeting participants about what information is necessary to proceed with feasibility studies for the current town office and the Tilles parcel.

a. Current Town Office – It was agreed that we should talk with the Development Review Board to understand whether they might favorably consider a lot-line readjustment with an abutter if such adjustment created a non-conforming lot. If all parties were satisfied that such an arrangement would be acceptable, then it was agreed that the landowner should be approached to gauge interest in a specific proposal that would involve transfer of a small acreage (approximately 3/100 of an acre) to the town. If that transfer of acreage can be agreed upon in principle, then we could move forward with a feasibility study. The project reviewed in the feasibility study would then include expansion of the current town office. Brian has agreed to approach the Development Review Board for an informal opinion.

b. Tilles Parcel – Rocky Fuller and Curt Albee will be asked to do an initial site evaluation of the Tilles parcel, that will include review of the current septic system, site drainage, well, potential

moisture in the house basement, examination of all buildings and a review of compliance with all setbacks. The Tilles parcel may not be available for evaluation until early June, with a report made to the Selectboard soon after an inspection is completed. Toni will contact the landowner to make inspection arrangements. If the initial site inspection is positive, then the Selectboard would expect to contract a feasibility study for a project to include renovation of the existing house, minor expansion of the existing house to house a vault, and conversion of the barn into office and meeting space.

c. There has been recent discussion about digitizing town land records. David reported on an inquiry to VLCT and Vermont State Archives & Records Administration regarding the Town's responsibility to maintain paper records on site, if we digitize our records and make them available online. This discussion is important because we need to know if a vault is required in our new town office, and if so, how large a vault is required. Unfortunately, the response to the inquiry was that policies on maintenance of land records are under review at this time. It is likely that new policies will be adopted, but there is no clarity yet on what those new policies might be.

d. David reported on a conversation with Gil Robertson regarding potential town purchase of Stone Soup. There was at least one offer under consideration at that time, and now we are told that the building is under contract.

e. David contacted Steve Wilbanks to ask his opinion of the likelihood of a trade of the current town office plus cash for the former Masonic Hall. He expressed the opinion that such a trade was highly unlikely to come to fruition.

f. The listers prepared a site map of the Town Garage parcel. David visited the site and reported that the area between the Town Garage parking area and the road appears to be possible to develop as a town office site. It appears that the leachfield for the Town Garage may be in that same area. This site appears possible to develop, but does not meet the recommended conditions in the 2021 report that the town office be located in one of the villages. Further, the site would be noisy from truck and heavy equipment traffic and subject to dust from stone, sand and gravel piles.

3. The Chair tabled discussion of potential sale of the O'Neil Road parcel until our regular meeting 5/25/22. It was agreed that Brian would ask a realtor to attend that meeting to inform us about listing the parcel.

Toni made a motion to find that premature general public knowledge of attorney client communications between the Selectboard and Town Attorney as to matters for which legal advice is sought would clearly place the Town at a substantial disadvantage by disclosing privileged communications and attorney-client privilege. Second by David. Motion passed 5-0.

Toni made a motion to find that premature general public knowledge of the Selectboard's discussion of pending litigation would clearly place the Town at a substantial disadvantage because of the potential for disclosing the Selectboard's internal views about claims and defenses. Seconded by David. Motion passed 5-0.

Toni made a motion that the selectboard enter into executive session with the Town Attorney with the purposes of considering attorney-client advice and for discussion of pending litigation. Seconded by David. Motion passed 5-0.

The Selectboard entered executive session at 7:30 p.m..

The Selectboard left executive session at 8:00 p.m..

Toni made a motion to approve the May 2, 2022 settlement agreement with John Thorp, including payment by the Town of a \$2,500 deductible. Seconded by Mary. Motion approved 5-0.

At this time, Mary left the meeting.

Other Business:

- Brian presented two applications for highway access for Selectboard review. P.D. has done site visits at both locations and recommends board approval.
- Motion was made by Toni to approve highway access applications for Kate Garrison at 49 Mine Road, and for Jen Pratt at 45 Mine Road. Seconded by Jeff. Motion approved 4-0.

Toni made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by David. Motion approved 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Paganelli  
Acting Secretary