

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE STRAFFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
December 10, 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, Select Board Members

Other active participants:

Lisa Kendall, Town Clerk, Jon MacKinnon, Highway Department Foreman, Jane Prescott, Recording Secretary, Ed Eastman, Rocky Fuller

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

CITIZENS CONCERNS: None.

MINUTES: Rod presented the November 19, 2014 minutes to the Select Board for their approval. John F. made a motion to approve the November 19, 2014 minutes. Brian seconded. All approved.

GENERAL: Town House Advisory Group update – Rocky distributed minutes from the group's last meeting and reviewed them with the Select Board. He updated the composting toilet system grant proposal progress. He also gave a report on the backhouse construction progress, the fee schedule ideas for 2015, budgeting, and the chimney removal project. Rocky also distributed a list of priorities that the group is considering for future projects. Some of the items for new projects include; bell tower/spire repairs, window repairs, exterior painting, interior painting, attic lighting and pathway to observe the roof framing, remaining chimney removal, sound system upgrades, new lighting throughout the building, tree work around the grounds, entry door repairs, sanding and refinishing the main floor, and bench repairs. The rough estimated cost for these projects is around \$69,000. Rod asked if we are charging enough money to offset some of the costs of repair and maintenance. Rocky felt that the fees are too low but until the restroom is complete, they don't feel they can charge more.

TOWN HIGHWAYS:

Tyson Bridge guardrails are done. Watson Bridge guardrails are done.

Equipment Replacement Decision – Brent would like the Select Board to make a decision on the NorTRAX lease for John Deere equipment. The cost is \$40,000 per year for 5 year, with a total cost of \$178,000 over 5 years. Discussion ensued. John F. made a motion to follow the bid policy and get the specs and put the equipment out to bid with a due date of January 13 and include the equipment replacement as a separate article at Town Meeting for voter approval. Steve seconded. Steve and John in favor. Rod, Brent and Brian did not approve. Brent made a motion to accept the NorTRAX proposal on the loader and backhoe after comparing prices with NorTRAX (John Deere) and Caterpillar. Brian seconded. John F. wants to amend the motion to allow a legal review of the contract during the next week for due diligence. Brian, Brent and Rod approved. John and Steve did not approve. Motion passed.

Employee Compensation Decision – 3 different proposals were discussed. Rod would like the Select Board to make a decision tonight. Lisa and Brent have a proposal similar to Thetford's compensation plan. Steve has a proposal and John F. has a proposal. For now, Steve doesn't want to get into something like what Thetford uses, but it needs more research and may be something viable in the future. Steve suggested we come up with a percentage increase that fits with the town and divide it up into an hourly increase. Lisa stated what she proposed is a starting point to get employees closer to where they need to be for pay. Rod stated that the Select Board needs to decide if they want to give a percentage pay raise each year, or, should we implement a system where they are paid based on their years of service and expertise. John F. feels that the Board doesn't have all the data to make comparisons and we should move forward with VLCT proposal for the future and for this year, we should go with a 3% increase but modify for the Road Crew so it's an aggregate \$0.63 per person. Brent's proposal is a pay scale that he has worked on with Jon and Lisa, which is a half step to get the Road Crew employees where they should be based on their education and years of experience. Brent stated he appreciates the work the Town Crew does. Brent's proposal is a different percentage for everyone, which brings the employees closer to fairer pay across the board. John made a motion to give a 3% salary increase of total salaries for 2015 and the Select Board will decide how it should be distributed to each employee and to hire VLCT to do a complete compensation package analysis. Steve seconded. Brian, John and Steve approved. Rod and Brent did not approve. Motion passed. Brian would like to know more about other options before he makes a decision. Rod stated that the Town Clerk is her office and she gives the Select Board the budget and the Select Board can either approve or not approve her budget. Steve stated that if we present a 3% increase this year, we should let the voters know that we are adjusting salaries.

John F. made a motion to increase Ed Eastman's salary to \$10,000. No one seconded. It will be discussed on December 17 agenda.

Rod presented paying a holiday bonus of \$150 per year. Brent motioned to give a holiday bonus of \$150. Brian seconded. All approved.

GENERAL:

Lister Vacancy – Discussed people who applied for lister position. Rod suggested inviting Mark Castro to a Select Board meeting to discuss potential Listers.

Unbudgeted Select Board stipend – John F. stated that each Select Board was paid \$450.00 however; the line item in the 2014 budget is \$1350 for Select Board stipend. Lisa noted that the budget was prepared under the assumption that there would be 3 members of the Select Board (before it was voted at Town Meeting). But, since there are now 5 Select Board, John feels checks should be \$1350 divided by 5 instead of 3. There is currently \$450.00 voted by the town to pay Select Board members. John F. made a motion that the checks be redone to pay each Select Board \$270.00 each to reflect the line item in the budget passed at town meeting. Brian seconded. Brian, Steve and John approved. Rod and Brent voted against. Rod stated that he voted against because the voters in town had passed a law to pay each Select Board member \$450.00 per year for compensation for serving as Select Board member. Lisa made out the checks according to statute.

Unbudgeted Part time Health Benefits – John F. discussed that there are not any benefits for the part time position in the Town Clerk's office. Lisa stated in the Personal Policy, there is holiday pay for part time employees. Lisa said that because her hours change it's not clear each week how many hours the part time employee will work, she felt it was fair to pay her for 4 holiday hours.

Errors & Omissions – from the Listers. Some late current use changes were submitted. There are 3 landowners who have land in current use and they each had 2 parcels and, for current use, they need to be combined to one for this program.

Loan Payoff – FEMA line of credit and tax anticipation note. Lisa looked at the current funds and the payoffs for the loans. FEMA line of credit – took out 1.2 million. Only used (borrowed) \$377,449 and 75% of those funds were reimbursed by FEMA. The cost of our bridges was \$1.3 million. We still have \$80-\$90,000 in anticipated funds to receive. Lisa recommends paying off the TAN note of \$355,207.10. We still can't pay off the FEMA note, but, she suggests paying the interest of \$2174.69, and keeps the loan open until Oct. 1, 2015 when the additional funds from FEMA are received.

Steve made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brent seconded. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Next regular meeting; Wednesday, December 17, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane A. Prescott
Recording Secretary