

## Strafford Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 13, 2022, at 6:00 pm

Strafford Town Office

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

Others participating: Lisa Bragg, Sue Coburn, John Freitag, Rocky Fuller, Mary Thompson, Susan Tiholitz, Gill Robertson, Susan Cloke, Gretchen, Ann Kraybill, Greg Colling, Major Byron Breese, Daniel Gottlieb, John Echeverria

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm.

1. Public Concerns. John Freitag asked if the Town purchasing policy would be used for purchase of the grader. Jeff Solsaa confirmed that we are using the policy; using a sole source waiver. Chair confirmed that the extensive research was conducted and the proposed price for the lease of the grader for 7 years is advantageous. Given all factors considered, the sole source waiver is appropriate. Brian reported that two unidentified citizens have expressed concern about the appearance of the proposed railing for Bridge #30. Susan Cloke reported that her neighbors are also concerned and plan to write a letter about the issue. Board clarified that the Town is already in the process of obtaining a grant to bring the bridge up to Agency of Transportation safety standards, and the cost of the bridge repair will depend on the amount of the grant award.
2. Town Road Crew, Highways and Equipment Update
  - a. Mud season and budget, Letter from Kevin Geiger, TRORC, RE: extreme mud. Chair reported that the Road Crew has already used all allocated overtime for the year; State has confirmed that no funds will be available for road repair, however ARPA funds can be used. The current estimate of the necessary road repairs is approximately \$200,000 more than the approved 2022 budget line. Over the last 3 months it has become clear the full extent of the inadequacy of gravel road maintenance. 75% of non-seasonal residences in Strafford are on gravel roads and many people faced serious challenges to get to medical appointments, attend school and work. An enormous amount of work will be required to get the roads into shape over the next 5-10 years. Adjustments to the highway budget will be required for this year, and it will be necessary to use ARPA funds to address the repair and maintenance needs. Future highway budgets are likely to be significantly higher, based on the inventory of needed repairs. An additional 3,000 tons of hard pack is required immediately to cover the gravel recently dropped on the roads to mitigate the mud.
  - b. Staffing. Chair presented analysis of the hours billed by the Road Foreman over the last 2 years to help determine the staffing needs for the Road Crew. Discussion re: appropriate staffing and skill mix for anticipated needs and longer-term staffing structure for the highway department. Job descriptions and roles and responsibilities need to be reviewed. Crew needs some time off after the very arduous mud season.
  - c. Robinson Road. The Road Crew has reviewed the very badly damaged section of Robinson Road (3,200 feet of road). The current ditch at the site is annually filled in by erosion from the hillside. It will be necessary to raise the roadbed and replace the culverts to do the repair. The proposed repairs include: ditching, replacing culverts, adding gravel, grading, laying fabric, and covering with a foot of hard pack. Estimated cost for repair is \$80,000, including \$48,000 for stone. Crew plans to go up on Monday to make the road passable, but rebuilding is necessary. Motion passed to purchase 3,000 tons of hard pack.

- d. Grader Proposal. Proposal for a lease for 7 years with extended warranty for maintenance was shared with Board, and further negotiations increased the value of the trade-in to \$146,500 for a \$559,164 grader. Jeff signed the Town up for Sourcewell, a municipal purchasing mechanism that reduces the cost of equipment by 35%, further reducing the price. At end of the lease term we would have equity in the equipment to apply to a future grader. Motion passed to lease the grader for \$218,000 with annual payments of \$41,000.
  - e. Truck proposal. The currently owned Western Star 2014 truck has been out for repair in the past year more than it has been on the road. Extensive additional repairs are anticipated in coming year. A new truck will be required, and delivery of a new vehicle will take one year. Motion passed to seek bids for a purchase or lease of a replacement truck.
  - f. Bridge #30, FY23 Structures Grant and Paving Grants. Hook Construction provided estimates to take off the wing walls and run W-band around the sides of the bridge. Brook Road will be closed for app. 3 days, with one lane open after that. Estimated cost of \$62,000. To additionally hammer out the damage on the deck and replace it, the estimated cost is \$475,000. We have applied for an emergency grant to do the repairs. Lisa noted that this bridge could be propose for VT Project Selection and Prioritization—State and Town Highway Bridge projects for replacement in future.
  - g. Correspondence from Amy Donahue, RE: Turnpike; S. Flint, RE: Robinson Road; Susan Cloke, RE: Cellar; Cameron Speth, RE: Jordan Road; Kate Bass RE: Jordan Road; R. Byron Breese, RE: town right of way and stone wall; John Freitag, RE: Latham Road, the last road refurbishing for now; Cindy Binzen and Rocky Fuller, RE: Robinson Road;
  - h. Updates: Brook Road Bridge Railing Repair and BR#23 (Justin Morrill Highway) bids due April 13<sup>th</sup>. Bids opened. Northwoods-\$349,750; Daniels-\$494,375. Both bids are higher than the grant award amount (\$200,000). Board will need to request an extension from District 4 to solicit additional bids.
3. Motion passed to approve minutes of the March 21<sup>st</sup> special meeting. David Paganelli did not attend the meeting and abstained from the vote. Motion passed to approve minutes of the March 23<sup>rd</sup> regular meeting.
  4. Right of Way, Major Breese. Highway Liaison clarified that the pile of stones next to the road on Down Forest is impeding road maintenance, especially in the winter, and must be removed. The stones are in the Town's right-of-way and can cause damage to the snowplow; all residents are subject to the same requirement and other residents have been required to move obstacles in the right-of-way. Chair recalled the numerous communications regarding the issues, clarified that all town residents are treated the same on this issue, assured Mr. Breese that he is not being persecuted by the Selectboard, and reiterated that the stones must be removed from the right-of-way. Jeff volunteered to meet Major Breese on site to explain the Town's position and Major Breese accepted the offer.
  5. Town Office next steps and what must be fixed now. Discussion regarding feasibility study of town office renovation and Tilles property and other ideas. John Echeverria reported that landowners have suggested other properties for consideration, including his own. Town residents are requested to provide their ideas for alternative properties to the Selectboard. A special informational meeting to discuss Town Office options will be held on May 7<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm.
  6. Motion passed to take the ARPA revenue standard allowance. Report is due April 30<sup>th</sup>.

7. General Correspondence received.
  - a. Mike Hebb, RE: My driveway is encroached on even more starting today
  - b. Mike Hebb, RE: Dog Racket
  - c. Rocky Fuller, RE: THAG March Meeting Minutes
  - d. Jordana Levine, RE: Newly paved part of 132
  - e. Charles Denton, RE: Attention!!!
  - f. Geoff Martin, IREC report for March submitted
  - g. Rockwell Fuller, RE: Strafford Town House
  - h. Elise Schadler, Program Manager, Vermont Dept of Forests, Parks & Recreation, RE: Information on emerald ash borer and the new detection in Pomfret.
  - i. Carolina Massa, State Hazard Mitigation Planner, VEM, RE: BRIC 2020 Town of Strafford #02140-31236-002V Subgrant Agreement and ANP. We have been awarded the grant. Jason Schumacher will lead development of the hazard mitigation plan
  - j. Carol Langstaff, RE: Strafford Community Nurse
  
8. Liaison Updates
  - a. Vacancy on Conservation Commission. David Paganelli resigned. Need to advertise the vacancy.
  - b. Vacancies on Planning Commission. Vacancy notice has been posted.
  - c. Local Emergency Management Plan, request to review and update. Jason Schumacher, Director of Emergency Management will be taking the lead on this.
  - d. Rec Board submitted a job description for Pocket Park for review. Chair clarified that the \$4,800 will need to cover all costs incurred by the Town for the Pocket Park. Liaison will discuss changes to the job description with the Rec Board.
  - e. Keith Billian has requested agreement that he can build on an existing 1-acre lot.
  - f. Brian Johnson reported that Ed Eastman does not wish to report his activities monthly. Discussion re intent of the motion made at Jan 27, 2022 meeting to request documentation of the activities of the constable. Motion passed to modify the minutes of the Jan 27, 2022: "A monthly summary will be requested for 2022 expenditures" to be replaced with "A monthly summary of activities conducted each month will be required for 2022." David Paganelli and Brian Johnson abstained from the vote because they were not yet selectboard members.
  
9. Other
  - a. Diesel prices. Motion passed to accept \$2.165 for propane beginning May 1, 2022.
  - b. Innovative solutions signature. Chair signed the price quotation for March 28-Sept 30, 2022.
  - c. Town Clerk is preparing bridge inventory.
  - d. There will be a Special Selectboard Meeting for an executive session on April 20th.
  - e. Rolf Petchukas inquired about the ditching on Turnpike Road near Linda Maher's driveway. Jeff clarified that the ditching was done to AOT standards.
  - f. Storm water permit work initiated in 2021 was not completed but is being addressed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Linehan  
Recording Clerk