

Minutes of the Strafford Selectboard
October 11, 2017

Members present: John Freitag, Acting Chair, Toni Pippy, Brian Johnson, Stephen Marx, and Kate Siepmann.

Also in attendance, Jon McKinnon, Road Foreman and Jennifer Brown, reporter for *The Herald*

John called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Citizens' Concerns

There were no citizens' concerns voiced.

2. Correspondence

The Board received letters from Mary Thompson, Therese Linehan, and George Spaneas all concerning the serious road dust problems in their neighborhood on Justin Morrill Highway. Brian inspected the scene and confirmed that the dust was "horrible."

Jon related a number of factors that contributed to the problem:

- It has been an unusually dry and warm early Fall. When Jon is normally ordering Ice-Be-Gone, he needed to make a special new order for chloride to control dust. That delivery was unfortunately delayed, but was applied the day it arrived.

- A dramatic increase in heavy truck traffic was created primarily by VELCO, who have been building roads on and near the power lines without notifying the Board or the Highway Department. Many hundreds of trucks (as many as 30 per hour) over the past month have created the lion's share of the problem. John has now established contact with the company and it is hoped that communication about scheduling and safety concerns will be vastly improved.

- In addition, the contractors working on repairing the road damage from the July 1 flooding are hauling fill and gravel from the McCulloch Pit ("the best gravel and stone for the best price") in Chelsea. While Jon and the Road Crew will do their best to regain control over that section of road, there is, sadly, no realistic hope for repaving the road in the near future. The town is still making payments of over \$125,000 per annum on the \$900,000+ reconstruction bond that allowed for the pavement to be removed from several roads, including that section of JSM Highway to the Tunbridge line.

Kerry Claffey wrote to request that the Town replace a drainage pipe that traverses his property on a Town Right of Way that is not draining into the brook. Jon will investigate and will take appropriate action to correct the situation.

Randy Coffin wrote to urge the Board to take some action on cleaning up the premises around the Claffey residence. Health officer, Stephen Marx, is and has been working to develop an amicable resolution.

3. Oh, good, something easy: the minutes of the September 27 meeting were unanimously approved. Kate expressed her gratitude to John for covering for her.

4. Town Highways

- Jon reports that all trucks and equipment are operating in good order.
- Due to the fact that the Road Crew is down by one man, the Board offered Jon any assistance he may need to keep up with the work load.
- The work to repair the July 1 is continuing apace.
- The Board signed all the contracts awarded for FEMA work
- A motion was made, seconded, and approved to go into Executive Session at 7:15. The Board exited the Executive Session at 7:27, with no action taken.

- A motion was made, seconded, and approved to follow the procedure recommended by the lawyer for our insurance carrier regarding a personnel issue. Brian and John will follow up.
- Concern over the heavy traffic volume produced by VELCO's road building project was somewhat abated by the news that the trucking phase is nearly complete. John will post an item on the List Serve to bring the townspeople up to date on VELCO's activities. See also "Correspondence" bullet point #2.

General

- Rocky Fuller reviewed the minutes of the Town House Advisory Group (THAG) meeting of September 21, available for all to read on the Town website. The Board complemented Rocky and THAG for their conscientious care and upkeep of one of the Town's most important landmarks.

- Two Rivers Ottaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC)

A motion was made and seconded to ask TRORC to conduct a regional review and approve our adopted Town Plan in a regional context, with the understanding that there will be no charge for this service. All approved.

- Certified Local Government (CLG)/Historic District process

Discussion was tabled until the Selectboard meeting on October 25.

- Budget: Toni has been reviewing the budget and confirms that everything is on track. The accounting for the expenses associated with the July 1 storm will be broken out (an arcane accounting term for "separate from") the regular budget.

- Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLTC). The VLCT Loss Control Report was reviewed and corrections will be implemented.

- Annual Employee Review process. Jon and Brian, the Board highway department liaison, will conduct the review of road crew. The Selectboard will conduct the review of Jon, our Road Foreman/Public Works Supervisor and Lisa Bragg in her role as Selectboard Assistant. Reviews will be completed before December.

A motion was made, seconded, and approved to adjourn at 8:58 pm

Faithfully submitted,

Kate Siepmann, Recording Clerk