

Strafford Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 29, 2022, at 6:00 pm at Strafford Town Office

Members participating: Toni Pippy, Jeff Solsaa, David Paganelli, Mary Linehan

Other participating: Lisa Bragg, John Freitag, Greg Colling, Marty Mintz, Rocky Fuller, Eric Thorp, Lynn Thorp, John Echeverria, Susan Cloke, Dee Gish, Ann Kraybill

Meeting called to order to 6:00 pm

1. Public Concerns. Marty Mintz presented a container of road dust from Old City Falls Rd to the Board, sampled in June 2022, and a letter he has sent to Dartmouth Chemistry Department and Dartmouth Geology Earth Science Department regarding the potential harm to human health of the dust, to keep the Board apprised of his concerns. He will report back when he gets a response. John Freitag stated that zoom meetings are valuable to him as a reporter.
2. Highway
 - a. Staffing: open position, injury and Shop Foreman pay rate. Jeff Solsaa reported that the Road Crew is healthy and back to work. No applications for the open position have been received. Discussion re: how to fill the opening, and the high demand for workers in all sectors. Board decided to wait a few weeks and re-post the position. After confirming that analysis of impact on the budget, the Chair made a motion to offer PD Hardy the position of Road Foreman with an hourly rate of \$30/hour, to be paid retroactively from first pay period of May 2022. Jeff seconded. David Paganelli proposed a new kind of Road Foreman, potentially an engineer, who can take over the responsibility for the open position, road grants, road specifications, allowing PD to serve temporarily until a new Foreman is hired. Discussion regarding the Highway Department staffing and skill needs, other town management needs, the challenges of recruiting in the current environment, the cost implications of staff with higher qualifications, and the need to follow through on discussions with the Road Crew to date. Motion passed. Toni, Jeff, Mary voted aye. David voted nay. Brian Johnson was absent.
 - b. Grading of gravel roads progress. Jeff estimated that 92% of the roads have been graded, with a few small roads still to be addressed in the coming month. There is an outstanding issue with Robinson Road, which was the worst problem during mud season. Although some gravel has been added, there are not sufficient resources available for the full repair and ditching (app. 1 mile), to address the underlying issues on the stretch where the hillside erodes onto the road. Chair reported that the cost of road repair due to mud season is now estimated at \$230,000 based on the most recent budget review. Discussion re: the cost of excavation to address the Robinson Road problem. Jeff will investigate the cost of excavation. Jeff reported that Ada Manning would like to bury electrical cable under the road. Additional information will be required to determine whether this is possible, Jeff will report back to Asa.
 - c. Blaktop rte. 132 paving updates – Jeff's meeting with Seth Ames, owner. Jeff met with Blaktop representatives and reported that Seth Ames has agreed to fix the issue on 132/Sharon Hill, including grinding and repaving the center 5 feet section to correct the missing pavement, and address the aprons which were not completed in the first effort. The

- job will likely get done before October 1. Jeff also reported that he has requested that Rt 132 be placed on the skip list for line painting until some repaving is completed.
- d. Tyson Bridge bid due 7/27/2022 for 2023 Ten Wheeler and Justin Morrill Bridge #23 due July 13th. There are no 2023 trucks left for purchase, Lisa requested that we amend the RFP to request an extension deadline and purchase of a 2024 vehicle. Lisa reported that there have been many indications of interest to paint the Tyson Bridge.
 - e. Highway Access Application, Clifford Darron & Bess French. Motion passed to Approve Application to Proceed with Highway Access on Taylor Valley Road.
 - f. Town Garage Storm Water Permitting Services– Pathways Agreement. Motion passed to sign the annual agreement for Town Garage Storm Water Permitting Services for Permit #4292-9010.
 - g. Better Roads Grant Agreement, review and sign. Chair signed \$20,000 grant for Old City Falls Road. Also were awarded a grant for \$199,800 for Miller Pond Road paving for 2023.
 - h. Viking-Cives bill from 10/7/2020, \$3,223.18 - to be paid. Paying this outstanding bill which was not received until 2022.
 - i. Bridge 30 Grant Request was denied.
 - j. School to Gym crosswalk update. Chair will work with Town Clerk to come up with a better solution to the current jersey barrier.
 - k. 2022 Highway Budget review. Chair reported that the budget has been reviewed. ARPA funds are being used to cover the shortfall in the highway budget, as well as use of unspent staff funds.
3. Approve the minutes of the 6/8/22 Regular meeting. Motion passed to approve the 6/8/22 meeting minutes with modification to the heading to delete the word “Agenda”. Brian was not present.
 4. Mowing Bid, Eric Thorp. Discussion re Invitation to Bid for mowing of town properties, and clarification about why the Town House property was included in the Invitation to Bid but had subsequently been excluded. Rocky Fuller explained that the THAG decided to reduce the frequency of mowing and to let the grass grow higher. Selectboard requested clarification about the number of mowings in the estimate provided, and other details. Eric clarified that this spring the grass has grown very thick and fast, and clarified that he cannot always predict the number of mowings required for the season, including given his efforts to work around planned events on the property and intent to make it look its best. Discussion re: the details of work included in previous year’s contract, inclusion of spring and fall cleanup efforts, and how to manage posted bids. Eric agreed to meet with Rocky to jointly plan for how frequently to mow the Town House lawn to improve the quality of the grass. Eric also agreed to provide at the end of the contract period, as statement of how many times mowing was done so the Selectboard can plan better in the future. Chair moved to accept Eric Thorp’s bid of \$17,000 for an annual mowing contract. Motion passed. Toni, Jeff, Mary voted aye. David voted nay. Brian was absent.
 5. Review “Bridge 30 Neighbors” group’s plans. Greg Colling reported that the group is still gathering information. Chair clarified that the bridge grant application was denied, and that it is unlikely that we will be able to find a contractor to do the work this year. The current priority of the Selectboard is to work with AOT to ensure that the bridge is safe for the winter.
 6. Town Office updates, flood insurance coverage. Chair will speak with Fiona Tilles next week. David Paganelli spoke with Susan Cloke about the possibility of transferring land with Morgan

Smith to allow expansion of the current Town Office parcel. David made a motion to list the O'Neil Rd. parcel with a realtor for sale. Discussion re the process for how a sale would take place, and how to select a realtor. Motion passed to list the O'Neil Road parcel with a realtor to sell. Lisa will investigate the process for posting the Miller Pond parcel and notify abutters who may be interested in purchasing it. Discussion re flood insurance, and what the flood risk is for the current Town Office and need for a survey of current Town Office parcel as a first step to developing a plan and getting agreement from abutters. Motion passed to survey the Town Office parcel. Brian was absent.

7. 2022 Strafford Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Discussion re: membership on the committee to update the existing LHMP. Process will be led by Kyle Katz, TRORC, with the following members: Emergency Management Director (Jason Schumacher), Road Crew, EMS Chief, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, Fire Chief.
8. Acknowledgement of Correspondence.
 - a. Eric Thorp, RE: Mowing bid
 - b. Eric Forand, State Exercise Administrator, Vermont Emergency Management RE: Statewide Catastrophic Exercise, planned for October 2024.
 - c. Jennifer M.V. Fitch, P.E., Commissioner, VT Dept of Buildings and General Services, RE: 2022 FY2023 Building Communities Grants Funded.
 - d. Vermont Cannabis Control Board RE: VT CCB: License SCLT0009 Issued, Clover Hill Cannabis, LLC.
9. August 9th Primary voting day. Town Clerk requests the continuous presence of BCA members to oversee the primary vote while voting takes place from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm at the Town House. At least a quorum of the BCA --at least seven persons--needs to be present during the entire voting period. All members are needed to count the votes at 7:00 pm.
10. Liaison Updates.
 - Outstanding dog licenses are still not resolved.
 - Dog Officer noted that as many as 18 fox hunting dogs are being walked off-leash on Taylor Valley Road, causing concern among walkers, and there have been complaints of the dogs running on other residents' property. Lisa will contact the Game Warden for guidance.
11. To Zoom or not to Zoom our meetings going forward. Discussion re challenges of zoom management, poor quality of audio, the importance of returning to standard governance practices. Motion passed to stop using zoom until it is mandated again by the State. Toni, Jeff, Mary voted aye. David voted nay. Brian was absent.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Linehan
Reporting Clerk