

## **Strafford Selectboard Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, March 23, 2022, at 6:00 pm

Strafford Town Office and via zoom

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

Others participating: Greg Colling, John Freitag, Rocky Fuller, Steve Dycus, John Echeverria, Rebecca Seibel, Sandra

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

1. Public Concerns. Brian Johnson reported that Mike Hebb has raised concerns about zoning violations. Brian will follow up on this issue.
2. Town Road Crew, Highways and Equipment Update
  - a. Mud season and budget. Jeff Solsaa updated board on the status of the road. Road crew is currently running 2 separate crews each night, but are able to deposit only enough gravel for 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a mile per night. So far 780 tons of material have been deposited, filling in 2-foot-deep ruts. Jeff noted that we have 68 miles of road to attend to. Brent Cadwell and Maple Hill Works did a great job on their road sections, but the traffic today caused a decline of the roads, which is to be expected due to the continued high level of moisture. Chris Bump from VTrans toured the roads today and agrees this is a disaster and will seek funding from FEMA to help with the very high anticipated repair costs. Documentation is essential, specifically: number of loads, man hour and machine hour, photos of roads. Chris indicated that the state may release funds. Lisa Bragg has prepared a preliminary cost estimate.

Discussion re: how to reduce unnecessary road traffic, especially ATVs that are mudding. Possible closure of more roads over the weekend. We have already used virtually all materials purchased and will need to purchase more immediately to meet the need. Currently we need more stone than hard pack, so we are changing the work order with Pike from 1,000 tons of stone to 2,000 ton of stone and from 4,000 tons of hard pack to 3,000 tons of hard pack.

Tonight the road crew will work on Old City, Kibling Hill, Brook Roads and if possible Cross Road. Even repaired roads remain very fragile and can easily become impassible. Need to notify town residents via the listserv and Facebook to clarify expectations for the coming days, including a request for photos of road damage.

- b. Staffing. Road crew is coming in to work at 11:30 pm and working straight through till 8 am. They are working at night because they cannot get on the roads in the daytime, due to warm temperatures. Expected snow and rain in the coming days will almost certainly make the problem worse. Road crew will focus on clearing paved roads during the snow, so there will be additional delays in addressing the gravel road issues. Despite the huge challenges, morale among the road crew seems to be good; Shawn Ward is providing surge support; PD is looking into additional surge support. They are doing everything they can in a dire situation, and trying to get some sleep during the day. Road crew needs to be reassured that they can use the materials they need, even though it would exceed approved budget lines. Chair confirmed that road crew through Jeff Solsaa will keep the board abreast of the

- expenses. The roads need to be fixed and the board will figure out where to get the funds. Toni will call Mark Shaw to request drone photos of road damage.
- c. Grader. Jeff proposed new vehicle configuration to maximize productivity for consideration at a future meeting. Reported that the grader will require an expensive repair/maintenance bill soon and will require a 3-week absence of equipment during the summer. Discussions with John Deere indicate that costs may be lower if we chose to lease equipment. Additional information is required.
  - d. Bridge #30, FY23 Structures Grant and Paving Grants. Jeff met with Hook Construction re: Brook Road bridge and should be getting a quote to replace the bridge rails and repair the deck. Lisa is applying for structures and paving emergency grants and needs the estimates in order to complete the applications. Insurance claim has been closed because owner of the car that did the damage has not yet been identified but is being sought by the Vermont State Police. Coordination is required between VSP and Orange County. Brian Johnson will follow up on the issue. Discussion re effort to re-allocate paving funds to Class 3 roads. Motion passed to use paving grants on Miller Pond Road to put back the one-mile blacktop section between paved sections.
  - e. Email from Pamela DeAndrea (she/her); AOT GIS Professional III, Mapping Section, RE: Taylor Valley LLC, Andrus Road. Andrus Rd has not yet been recognized as a Class 4 road because we do not have the proper donation. We need to start the process again.
  - f. Updates: Brook Road Bridge Railing Repair and BR#23 bids due April 13<sup>th</sup>.
3. Approve minutes to the March 9th, regular meeting. David Paganelli noted that he abstained from the vote for Ashley Forest Committee membership. Motion passed to approve minutes of March 9 regular meeting with the correction.
  4. Meghan Asbury, 4-T Coalition Coordinator, Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation update. Meghan provided update on activities, including Food and Farmers program, newsletter, trails, housing, community development, partnership with Seven Stars to conduct community arts programming. Strafford meeting was held on Monday March 21. In discussion with Vital Communities to apply for grants for more paid staff in the future.
  5. Town Office next steps. Tabled for future meeting. Town Office staff are consulting a specialist regarding conducting an air quality assessment.
  6. General Correspondence:
    - a. John Echeverria, RE: Town Offices
    - b. Jacqueline Chase RE: Kibling Hill Road
    - c. Rodney Sloat, RE: Road Debris in Culvert
  7. Liaison Updates
    - a. Strafford Energy and Climate Committee, RE: Town Garage renovation for energy efficiency and savings letter. Acknowledging receipt but tabling any discussion for future meeting.
    - b. ECFiber 2<sup>nd</sup> alternate. Simon Wilbanks indicated his interest in serving in this position.
  8. Other.

- Training is available for selectboards through the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. Chair recommends that all board members participate in the VLCT training.
  - Discussion re how to communicate with town residents about what to expect in the coming days, who to call and how to deal with emergencies, cars stuck and the efforts that are being made to address the road situation, which roads are being worked on and planned for the next day. Lisa can post daily, however, the Jeff noted that all plans are subject to change.
9. Executive Session. Mary moved 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. Seconded. Motion passed.

Mary moved 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. Motion passed.

Mary moved that the Selectboard enter into executive session for the purposes of considering attorney-client advice that has been shared with the Chair and for discussion of pending litigation. Seconded. Motion passed.

Entered into Executive session at 8:00 pm. Executive session adjourned at 8:13 pm. No decisions were made.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectfully,

Mary Linehan  
Recording Secretary