

Strafford Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 6:00pm Town Office and Zoom

Selectboard members present: Toni Pippy, Pat Kelly, Rett Emerson, Mary Linehan, Brent Cadwell (on zoom)

Others participating: Lisa Bragg, Jon MacKinnon, John Freitag, Lynne Thorp, Eric Thorp, Katrina DeCoff-Webster, Megan Fuerst, Mark Black

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm

Public Concerns - none

Emergency Management COVID 19 – See the COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard for the latest data on vaccination in Vermont and visit healthvermont.gov/covid19-vaccines to learn about who can get vaccinated now, vaccine safety information, and more. Governor Phil Scott extended the State of Emergency to 3/15/21

Town Highways and Equipment Update

- Highway Correspondence
 - Scott Roystan, Modern Protective Coatings, Inc. RE: Bridge Painting estimate. Jon is staying in touch with Roystan to ensure that we get the best price and is also coordinating with Ed Hathaway. Jon clarified that the contractor must have special certification to do the work in accordance with State guidance, which limits the competition and increases the cost of the work.
 - Jessica Tidman, RE: Snow Plow. Road Foreman confirmed that damage was accidental, and Jon will check out the situation.
- Sidewalk snow removal. Plow has been used to remove snow on the sidewalk and there is some concern about damage to the sidewalks. Noted that homeowners have been complaining that snow is being pushed back onto lawns. Road Foreman noted that the frequent storms this season have kept the crew busy just trying to keep up. EJ Thorp has not yet been contacted directly about the concerns, Eric and Lynn attended to find out what the issues are. Selectboard requests that Road Crew conduct a site visit with EJ to discuss the issues and make a clearer plan about sidewalk snow removal. The issue will be included in the next selectboard meeting if necessary.
- Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory. Documents have been received and need to be signed by all selectboard members to ensure adherence to state codes and standards.
- Jon MacKinnon reported that our usual vendor has offered to make sand available at the same price as last year. Rate offered is \$1 lower per ton if we pre-pay for next years supply. We usually spend \$20,000 for the pre-paid sand order, and usually spend \$30,000 per year. Price remains the same for all sand purchased, including anything over the pre-order. Motion passed to accept the pre-buy contract of \$20,000 for sand for next year.
- Trina De-Coff Webster provided the following feedback to the Road Crew: “Just want to give a big shout out to the road crew. I have been very impressed with the great conditions of

the roads! KUDOS to you all!” Mark Black concurred: “I second the message from Trina, road crew makes my life much easier. I know they get up VERY early to keep our roads clear!”

General Correspondence

- Email updates from the State Emergency Operations Center Situation Reports, re: **COVID 19**, Vermont Department of Health, The Office of the Governor, TRORC and VLTC
- Alan Beebe, Executive Director, Upper Valley Ambulance, RE: Subscription Program. Clarification of the terms of a subscription was provided to the Town and was posted on the list serve.
- David McWilliams, RE: Wifi at Barrett Hall

Motion passed to approve minutes of the February 10 regular meeting.

4-Town Coalition, RE: full-time 3-year Americorps VISTA position. Megan Feurst presented update on the 4-Town Coalition and provided the following link to a recent report: <https://www.vtrural.org/sites/default/files/The4TownCVReport-online.pdf> Strafford is not very well-represented in the coalition, but it is hoped more people will get involved. A 3-year Americorps VISTA position to support the Coalition will be provided at a cost of \$6,000 per year for a full-time position, hosted by the Green Mountain Economic Commission. The Coalition is asking \$1,000 from each of the 4 towns annually for 3 years. Position would start in April or May; GMEC would front the funds if towns have budget approval considerations that would delay funding. The position would be managed by Sarah Danley from the 4-Town Coalition and is intended to help raise revenue streams that could potentially find funding for the position in years 2-3. Chair confirms that funding for this activity could be covered in the current budget; noted that the employment period (likely May-Dec) is less than 1 year for this year’s budget cycle. Selectboard confirms a commitment to find funding for the first year of the Americorps VISTA position to support the 4-Town Coalition and will vote during the next board meeting. Megan will send details of the proposed position and confirmation of the dates of employment.

Evergreen Cemetery, mowing contract. David Harris and Sherm Wilson informed the selectboard that Eli Childs from Tunbridge has made an offer to do the proposed work for \$6500. Lisa will coordinate with the Cemetery Commission for completing the paperwork.

Planning Commission. Two positions are still available.

Animal Control Officer/Dog Officer discussion. Discussion tabled to obtain better information about what other towns are doing, and to revisit the current Dog Ordinance, and clarify duties of any proposed position. Liaisons will gather information for discussion at next meeting.

Liaison updates

- IREC would like to arrange Town garage energy audit for March 11 or 12. The audit is free of charge. Liaison noted the urgency of fixing building’s problems due to potential deterioration of the building. Chair noted there is a reserve fund that is available for repair.

- Question raised whether one of the identified junkyards is actually in violation of the town ordinance. Clearer review will be undertaken by the board members, including possible consultation with our lawyer.

Other

- Request made to clarify and rationalize the work of the various commissions, including the rules that govern their work and the relationship to the Selectboard. Discussion took place regarding how to prioritize this over the coming year. Chair highlighted the 2017 Report from the Town Governance Committee as an important reference, as well as statutes from VLCT and Town records for Commissions established by the Town.
- This year we need to move forward on the Town Office plan.
- Reminder that Tuesday March 2 is the election day.
- A tax abatement request has been made; meeting will be organized after the new selectboard member is in place, on March 8. Stanley property has over 10 years outstanding taxes and needs to be resolved.
- Chair gave a final thanks to Brent Cadwell for joining the board this year—we will miss him.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Linehan
Reporting Clerk