

DRAFT
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2024
Town Office, 227 Justin Morrill Hwy, Stafford. 05072

Selectboard participants – Toni Pippy, Jeff Solsaa, Andrew Duncklee, Hannah Levinger
Other Participants in person – Lisa Bragg, Martha Walke, Genevive Gibson, John Freitag, Curt Albee, Keith Fifield, Holly Groschner, Rocky Fuller, Bryan Kovalick
Participants via Zoom – Kelly Harmon, Margaret Albee, Betty-jo Duncklee, Kerrie Bushway, Anni Praetorius.

Meeting called to order 6pm

Meeting Timeline

Public Concerns - Holly Groschner Chair of the Corinth Selectboard and an appointee of the Orange County Joint Selectboard Committee on Law Enforcement (OCJSCLE) spoke in favor of appointing John Freitag to the Selectboard, and to the OCJSCLE as John has been a driving force in garnering support of other Orange County towns for this initiative as well as being one of the founders of the committee.

Keith Fifield advocated strongly for the Selectboard to appoint John Freitag to fill the vacancy on the Selectboard as John has been a source of consistent and detailed reports to the community around this year's budget proposal and he would like to see that level of detailed reporting continue going forward to better help the Town of Stafford stay informed on the details of Selectboard meetings that minutes cannot provide.

Selectboard member appointment - The Selectboard had three candidates that had communicated interest in filling the vacant position on the Selectboard: Kelly Harmon, John Freitag and Rhett Emerson. Toni Pippy moves for the Selectboard to enter an Executive session under 1 V.S.A § 313 to discuss the appointment or evaluation of a public officer or employee. Andrew Duncklee seconds the motion. All approve and the Selectboard enters an Executive Session at 6:23pm. The Selectboard exits Executive Session at 6:25pm. Toni Pippy moves to have the Selectboard appoint a candidate to the vacant Selectboard position using a paper ballot. Jeff Solsaa seconds the motion. All approve, and the motion passed. The results of the paper ballot vote were John Freitag: 1 Kelly Harmon: 3 Rhett Emerson: 0. Kelly Harmon is appointed to the Selectboard. Keith Fifield stated that even though the vote was not what he wanted, he thanked the Selectboard for their service and attention to this matter. Keith also reiterated that he would like to see a separate report on the Selectboard activity in addition to the meeting minutes. John Freitag stated that since he is not on the Selectboard, he will continue reporting for the Rutland Herald on Selectboard activity and will try to make the links to his articles available to as many sources as he can.

Highway Department update – The Highway Department has been able to spread more gravel as the roads had firmed up, until the unexpected snowstorm that hit earlier that week had put the Department behind schedule as they had to switch to plowing and snow removal. A leak in the garage has been identified as not a leak, but condensation that collects and runs down the wall into an outlet. A workaround has been found where the outlet will be temporarily removed until a more permanent solution can be found. There was discussion around the possibility of adjusting the grant to place fog lines on the road between the villages to RT 132 on Sharon Hill. So far it looks to be possible to apply fog lines to another section of road, if it is the same distance that is getting the fog lines.

Freeman Bridge Request for Proposal update – The Selectboard received two Proposals for the Engineering of Freeman Bridge. One from Nick Fabrikant and one from New England Engineers. Only the proposal from New England Engineers met the criteria for the Selectboard’s request. Jeff Solsaa is reviewing the proposal and will update the Selectboard at the next regular meeting.
Other – The chassis of the truck purchased by the Town has arrived and is currently being built to the Town’s specifications. The Highway Department is also investigating a more price effective way to purchase DEF fluid by buying in bulk to realize savings over time for the Town.

Approval of minutes – Jeff Solsaa moves to approve the minutes for the March 13 2024 meeting. Toni Pippy seconds the motion. All approve and the minutes were approved. Jeff Solsaa moves to approve the March 20 2024 meeting minutes with minor adjustments made to correct mis-spellings and typos. Toni Pippy seconds the motion. All approve, and the minutes are approved with minor adjustments made to correct errors.

Review and approve budget for the Ashley Forest Plan FY25 – Toni Pippy moves to approve the Budget for the Ashley Forest Plan FY25. Hannah Levinger seconds the motion. All approve and the Budget is approved.

Orange County Joint Selectboard Committee on Law Enforcement – John Freitag remains as an appointee of the OCJSCLC with Andrew Duncklee volunteering to be a Selectboard representative in support of John Freitag.

Acknowledged Correspondence –

- a. Steve Willbanks, Pakvan removal update
- b. Ross Gortner, RE: road crew/maintenance question
- c. David Paganelli, RE: Stewardship Plan for the Ashley Community Forest
- d. Mary Linehan, RE: Meeting Minutes
- e. Sydney Steinle, Planner, TRORC :Local Emergency Management Plan Update
- f. John Freitag, RE: Vacancy on the board

Capital Budget and Program Services Grant Kick off- Bryan Kovalick from the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Planning Commission reviewed the agreement between the Town of Strafford and Two Rivers, including general terms, responsibilities of both parties and scope of services being provided by Two Rivers. The Selectboard then reviewed PowerPoint slides around the subject of what constitutes a Capital Project and some examples of common Capital Projects at the Town level.

Recommendation re Architects for Town Office Renovation project- Curt Albee gave an overview of the multi-year process. The Town Office committee received five proposals in which they evaluated each proposal carefully and narrowed the field down to two proposals. One from Greg Colling and one from a company GVV. After more consideration the Town Office committee recommended the proposal submitted by GVV. The Selectboard and the members of the Town Office committee discussed dates for an informational meeting and possible timelines for a ballot to be presented to the Town. Toni Pippy moves to accept the recommendation of the Town Office Committee and approve the proposal from GVV. Jeff Solsaa seconds the motion. All approve and the recommendation of the Town Office Committee is approved.

Appoint Liaisons to committees and boards – The following people have been appointed to liaise with the following boards and committees.

Toni Pippy – Energy & Climate Committee, Auditors, Town Office

Jeff Solsaa – Highway Department, Police and Fire Department/FAST Squad

Hannah Levinger – Design Review Board, Planning Commission

Andrew Duncklee – School Board, OCJSCLE, Selectboard Scribe

Kelly Harmon – Conservation Commission, Recreation Board

Lisa Bragg – Recycling Coordinator, Townhouse Advisory Group, Listers

The Selectboard discussed opening positions to high school students to take meeting minutes and run the Selectboard end of the Zoom meeting. This way, the students can fulfill requirements for community service, students get an in-depth look at local government and the Selectboard members can actively participate in meetings. The Selectboard will continue to investigate the possibility of creating positions for high school students.

Jeff Solsaa moves to adjourn the meeting. Hannah Levinger seconds the motion. All approve and the meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.

Andrew Duncklee, Recording Clerk