

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STRAFFORD SELECTBOARD

October 28, 2015

Members of the public body present: John Freitag, Stephen Marx, Toni Pippy, Brent Cadwell, Brian Johnson

Other active participants: Jon MacKinnon, Road Foreman, Jennifer Brown, Herald of Randolph Reporter, Lisa Kendall, Town Clerk, Martha Pullen, and L. Tomisha

Meeting called to order in the Town Office at 6:00 p.m.

1.) Citizen Concerns:

Martha Pullen said she wanted to speak on behalf of changing the name of Sawyer Mountain Road to Hemenway Road. John said that we would address this under correspondence as we have a letter in regards to that as well.

2.) Correspondence

There was a letter from the Regional Planning Commission in regards to the next step to be taken by the Town's Hazard Mitigation Committee. John and Lisa will make sure it is passed on to the appropriate parties.

The Board approved and signed a letter to Robert Murray thanking him for his nearly 40 years of exceptional care of the Towns athletic fields. Mr. Murray has decided not to continue the mowing of the South Strafford Recreation Area and Varney Ballfield after this year.

The Board reviewed paperwork for a bridge grant to replace the bridge on the Brook Road by Marlene Ward's. John signed on behalf of the Board.

The Board reviewed a request by residents of Sawyer Mountain Road to honor John Hemenway, who has done much to conserve and preserve this area of town, by changing the road name to Hemenway Road. The request was well researched and documented and had the support of all the residents and nonresidents on the road. Lisa noted that there is a lot that goes into changing a road name and following through to update 9-1-1, the Listers, the Post Office, the Fire Department, etc. and all comes from her office. While she said she had no problem moving forward with the changes, her main concern was to make sure it's clear that this is granted under special circumstances. Brent asked if John Hemenway was aware of the request and perhaps it would be good before making a decision to check with him to make sure this is something he would feel comfortable with. The Board agreed that this would be a good first step, and Mickey said she would check with Mr. Hemenway before these minutes went out.

Minutes: Brent moved and Steve seconded a motion to approve the minutes of October 14th and October 21st as written. Toni requested that the minutes of October 14th be amended to include under OTHER, "Brent has received complaints about dogs barking that live at 85 Alger Brook Road from the neighbors. A call was made to Ed Eastman the dog officer by one of the neighbors, but he was not there." Brent moved and Steve seconded a motion to approve the October 14th minutes as amended and to approve the October 21st minutes as written. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3.) Town Highways

Highway and Equipment update – Jon reported that equipment was in good shape and work continues with final grading, mowing, and stock piling of material before winter. The change back to winter hours takes place next week and vacations for hunting season for various crew members has been arranged and approved.

Mine/Tyson Road Intersection Yield Sign, Old City Falls bridge guard rail, Maple Hill Road guard rail update -- A yield sign has been installed at the intersection of Tyson and Mine Road, the guard rails have been installed at the Old City Falls Bridge and there is a new culvert on Maple Hill Road. The road crew will pick up the old hydrant and screen no longer being used at this location and store at the town garage property for possible

future use. Jon said the rails at Old City Falls Bridge were put in too low and will be fixed by the contractor.

2016 Highway Budget – Jon and Lisa presented a first draft of the highway portion of the budget for 2016. Jon noted that the bridge grant was for a maximum \$175,000 and the Town was responsible for 10% of the cost. He estimated that the bridge might cost as much as \$200,000 and recommended putting \$25,000 in the budget to cover the Town portion. Jon expressed regret that the old days were passed when contractor Alex Boles could put in bridges at a fraction of the cost we now pay. The Board asked Jon and Lisa to proceed with putting the project out to bid with a due date for bids being received on January 6. In this way we will have figures that to use in the 2016 budget we present at Town Meeting.

Ton Truck— Jon said that he had been successful researching how to put out requests for bids for a new ton truck. Replacement of this truck next year is part of our equipment replacement schedule. Jon said he was able to tap into the process used by the Hartford Road Commissioner. This purchase comes under the Towns Purchasing Policy adopted last year. The Board discussed whether to put the purchase of a new Ton Truck as a separate article or to incorporate it into the budget process. In either case voters have the ability to approve or disapprove the expenditure. There was no decision reached at this time either on how to present it to the voters or when to proceed putting it out to bid.

Road crew annual personnel review – The road crew annual review was moved to the end of the meeting for executive session.

4.) General

Dog Kennel update – The dog house Brent offered to the Town was not in as good shape as he thought and broke apart upon trying to move it. Cost of building a new insulated one will be explored. In the meantime the hoop structure will be put over the new kennel by Brent and the road crew and the igloo dog house on hand put inside. Janet Hardy has indicated her willingness to take on being Dog Officer once this is completed. Toni moved and Brian seconded appointing Janet Dog Officer effective November 1. All approved.

Cell phone and VTel update – There is no action at this time by either company to activate the equipment that has been paid for and installed by State and Federal grant money. Stephen who has taken this on for the Board is both frustrated and outraged at this snafu. He will continue to work to bring this to the attention of the press since State officials have been unable to get these telecommunication facilities operational.

Insurance update -- Lisa provided figures on insurance increases. A decision on what type of health insurance coverage will be offered will need to be made by the end of November. The Pay, Classification, and Compensation Committee's report is due on November 11 and their recommendations will be incorporated into the discussion. The Board while looking at schedule for upcoming meetings realized that our November 25 meeting was the day before Thanksgiving and rescheduled that meeting to November 18.

Selectboard Assistant annual performance review – The Assistant to the Selectboard, Lisa, is currently budgeted for within the Selectboard expenses to provide 6 hours of time a week outside her Town Clerk and Town Treasurer positions assisting the Selectboard. Lisa brought up that Shelby Coburn was the last one officially appointed to this position and it has been an informal arrangement since then without a job description which makes it hard to do a review. She provided the Board with job descriptions of Selectboard Assistant from other Towns. She offered to highlight what she thinks currently applies to her work for the Board in this capacity. John will review and write up a job description for consideration at the next meeting.

2015 Budget Update -- The Board reviewed budget figures provided by Lisa. Things continue to look on track. Lisa brought news of more FEMA reimbursements that included covering extra expenses incurred by the Town. This will be a great help towards filling the gap from the shortfalls discovered in the outside audit. Lisa brought up that one of her assistants, Courtney Hardy, has found a new job and has given notice. Lisa does not intend to hire a replacement for the remaining time this year.

2016 Budget Discussion -- The Board continued its discussion of the budget and budget process. Toni brought up that possible changes as to how we might better present the budget so it is more understandable. She felt that the equipment fund, something the outside auditors found unique to Strafford in the way we handled this, could be done better. Part of the auditors recommendations were to get outside advice. Toni suggested that we consider seeing if Roberta Robinson, a former Strafford Town Clerk and Treasurer and current finance manager for the Town of Norwich, might be willing to help. The Board approved Toni meeting with Roberta on this. Lisa brought up another change. She suggested that the Town Garage and related expenses might better be put in the Highway section of the budget rather than in the General budget. Budget discussion will continue. The need to have Town Auditor Nellie Pennington, who has long played a key role in preparing the Town Reports and keeping track of town finances, involved was noted. Budgets requests for town organizations, boards and commissions are due before the November 11 meeting. A time for public comment on the budget will be scheduled once more information is gathered.

Stephen brought up the idea of moving the Annual School Meeting in the morning instead of the afternoon on Town Meeting Day. John said he knows of some towns that alternate between who goes first. With all the changes with the new school governance law passed last year and the fact that the school accounts for 2/3rds of the property taxes it was felt that this might be worth a try. Stephen is the Board liaison with the school and he will contact School Board Chair Eric Goodling to see what he thinks about a possible change in order of presentation on Town Meeting Day.

Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District (GUVSWD) solar project update/options -- Director Tom Kennedy has shared via email problems with the solar project proposed for the North Hartland property owned by the District. In light of this, John proposed the following letter to be sent out to other District Towns, see attached. John moved and Toni seconded that we send this letter. Brent spoke strongly that he felt this should not be investigated as it might lead to the sale of the site. Toni was uncomfortable with sending the letter to other Towns. The motion was brought to a vote. John in favor; Brent, Toni, and Brian opposed; Stephen abstained and the motion did not pass.

Body Camera Policy – John passed on an email he had received from Town Agent Alan Donohue regarding his thoughts on this issue, see attached. The Board agreed with his assessment and will follow his recommendations on this issue. John will notify Constable Ed Eastman who has indicated he is comfortable in proceeding in this manner as well.

5.) Other –

Recycle Committee use of the garage -- Jon expressed his concern over lack of communication regarding the recent paint pick-up. He also noted some damage to the gate and a garage door that may or may not have been caused during this time. He asked that other sites, like the recycling center or park and ride sheds be used for special events in the future. The Board agreed and will work with the Recycling Committee to find more suitable locations in the future.

Road crew annual personnel review -- Brent moved and Stephen seconded to go over town highway crew personnel reviews in executive session. The Board went into executive session at 8:30 p.m. and came out of executive session at 8:45 p.m. No decisions were made.

John will set up a time in the morning next week for the Board to meet with each road crew member to go over their performance reviews and hear any concerns they may have.

Toni made a motion to adjourn and Brent seconded. All approved and the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. Next Meetings: Regular Board Meetings – Town Office on **November 11th at 6 p.m.** and **November 18th at 6 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted, Toni M. Pippy

ATTACHMENT -- “DRAFT Letter presented at 10/28/15 Selectboard Meeting”

Dear Fellow Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District Towns

Over the last few years since it was determined not to open a landfill at our North Hartland property a number of alternatives to the landfill have been explored in order to according to District Director Tom Kennedy “provide income to the District and lessen the financial burden on our member towns and keep the landfill site in tact so that in years to come we would be able to have an operational landfill.”

Unfortunately, according again to Tom, “The District has looked at a sustainability park, composting facility, biofuel depot and each project had problems associated with it”. Recently the proposed solar project also ran into problems when GMP said there would be needed about 5 miles of reconditioning and associated upgrades to the tune of about 2 million dollars. This is more than a project would be able to absorb at the initial rates provided by GMP.

Member Towns are currently paying a per capita fee assessment of \$12.65 to cover the costs of bonds for the North Hartland site. For a very small town like Strafford this comes to \$13,889. We are currently facing a great deal of concern over property taxes and at the same time are looking at a great deal of increase in recycling costs as well as other financial needs.

We would like to propose, and ask you to consider having your Representative to the GUVSWD Board to explore what we could expect if we put the property on the market. This is a rare property in that it has already in recent years been certified as being able to be used as a landfill. We are not asking at this time to put in on the market but simply to find out what we could expect if it was put up for sale. Given the financial impact continued bond payments have on our budgets. We believe that this is at a minimum worth investigation.

ATTACHMENT – Body Camera Draft Policy – Letter from Town Agent--Selectboard in agreement with this advice

On Wed, Oct 28, 2015 at 2:11 PM, Alan Donohue <alandonohue4@yahoo.com> wrote:

John,

I reviewed the draft policy and it is very light relative to terms. If Strafford were to adopt a policy, it would need to be more detailed and specific. Instead of going into a complete rewrite, I would suggest not moving forward with a town sponsored body cam for Ed.

In my capacity as Town Agent and NOT as an attorney (I am not giving the town legal advice, simply my opinion), I would suggest that Ed purchase one of these cameras on his own and use it as a private citizen (as he sees fit). Since he does not have arrest powers I do not think it would be an issue if he decided to wear it or not. He would have no duty to maintain the recordings and the clerk's office would not be responsible for maintenance of records. This would reduce potential liability for the town (i.e.: violation of our policy, failing to respond to an open records request, loss of recording, etc...) and still allow Ed, if he wished, to have the protection of a record of the incident.

If he does to decide to buy one, I would still advise him to announce in situations where he chooses to record.

Apologies for the delay in responding. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Cheers,

Alan
