

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STRAFFORD SELECTBOARD

August 26, 2015

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

Other active participants: Lisa Kendall, Town Clerk, Jon Mackinnon, Road Foreman, Jennifer Brown, Herald of Randolph Reporter, James Garnett, Steven Gex, Chris Gex

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

1.) Citizen Concerns: There were no citizen concerns

2.) Correspondence: John noted that the correspondence that was received including right of way easements for new power poles on Town property would be better handled as an agenda item and suggested adding it at the end of the meeting under other if there was time.

3.) Minutes: Brent moved and Steve seconded to adopt the minutes of August 12. There were no corrections and all approved.

4. Town Highways

Brent moved that we adjust the agenda to first deal with Town Highways so that Road Foreman Jon Mackinnon would not have to stay for the whole meeting. Brian seconded and all approved.

Summer chloride and dust problems - John put this item on the agenda as he had been hearing that problems with dust were getting particularly bad on the Justin Morrill Highway. He noted that the Board had initially doubled the summer chloride line item, it was one of the items that were cut back to a 50% increase from 2014 due to the budget reduction made at Town Meeting. John was interested in how much has been spent on chloride this summer. Jon said that one tractor trailer load had been purchased so far and another was on order and should arrive any day. Chloride would be spread as soon as it arrived. Brian who lives on this section of the road took off his Selectboard hat to comment as a citizen that it was intolerable. It was noted that an over 1 million dollar road reconstruction project which rebuilt the section of the Justin Morrill Highway, a mile of Miller Pond Road, and a section of the Mine Road and turned these sections from pavement to gravel had not turned out as hoped for. The Town will be paying approximately \$100,000 per year on the bond for this project for eight more years and it has limited the funds available for other road improvements. Jon said the only real solution to the dust problem would be to repave the roads. He said we are on the top of the list for a paving grant next year although this does not guarantee getting one. Jon had originally recommended that the paving grant go to shimming and repaving the paved section of Miller Pond Road to help it last longer. This section was last repaved in 2012 with the last paving grant. The Board decided that should we get the paving grant, the priority, unless there was a natural disaster or other unexpected occurrence would be to pave the section of Justin Morrill Highway from the Firehouse to at least as far as past the Binzen residence.

Jon brought to the Board's attention a request regarding Town work on the Class 4 section of Furnace Flat Road. The Board reviewed the Policy on Class 4 Roads. Jon will contact the owner of the camp. The Town is responsible for culverts and bridges on Class 4 roads and keeping the road in a condition that a

high clearance 4WD vehicle can travel over it during the summer months. The Policy is posted on the Town website and will be applied in a fair and even handed manner.

Stop or Yield sign at the Tyson/ Mine Road intersection - John noted that this intersection had no sign designating who had the right of way. With potential traffic from the solar project and more work EPA work at the mine site this road would be receiving more traffic. Jon suggested that a yield sign would be better than a stop sign due to the steep grade. He said he would check with the Regional Planning Commission to make sure we took the proper steps in putting in this traffic sign.

Jon reported no problems with equipment and new guardrails had been ordered for the Old City Falls Bridge and would be put in before winter.

5.) General

Informational meeting on Renewable Energy Credits - John brought that at the first informational meeting on the solar project at the Elizabeth Mine Site no mention had been made that 80 to 90 % of the renewable energy credits from the project would not stay in Vermont but be sold to meet the needs of other states. The Board as part of their initial comments to the Public Service Board conditioned its continued support of the project on all the renewable energy credits staying being used to meet Vermont's requirements. John said that Professor Kevin B. Jones, head of the Energy Clinic at the Vermont Law School was willing to come and talk on this issue. He also said that GMP and our legislators were possibly interested in participating in a forum on the issue. John moved that the Board hold an Informational Meeting on Renewable Energy Credits and the proposed project at the Elizabeth Mine. Toni seconded and all approved. John will follow-up on setting up a meeting.

Dead Trees in Town Right of Way in front of Evergreen Cemetery - The Board discussed the recommendations of Tree Warden Bob Wilson. Jon said that due to a power line nearby, dead limbs, and the fact that the Town no longer had a chipper it would be better to have it contracted out. John said that he had contacted Trustee of Public Funds Kevin Plunkett for use of the Newton Fund to help with the cost. Kevin said there was some money there that could be used, but could not make a commitment as the next Trustee meeting was not till the beginning of October. There are funds that could be used in the Municipal Property line item to help cover the cost. The Board agreed to proceed with the removal and stump grinding. Jon said that the Road Crew would clean-up the debris from the stump grinding and fill in the holes both at the Cemetery and at the Town Common where a not too large elm was removed earlier.

Dog Kennel update - It has been difficult coordinating schedules this summer to build the new dog kennel. Brent will take the lead on renewing efforts to make sure this gets done soon.

Park and Ride update - Lisa reported that she had not heard back from any other Town Clerks on policies for their Park and Rides. After some discussion it was decided that a policy was not needed at this time.

Body Camera Update - Alan Donahue provided the Board with model policies that might be used as guidance for a policy in Strafford for the Constable. The copies will be at the Town Office for review. Brent said he had checked with Norwich, Thetford, Bradford, Fairley, Hartford and Orange County Sheriff and at this time Hartford is the only police department that uses body cameras. John will put together a proposal for discussion at the next meeting.

Cell Phone and Vet updates - Steve is still working on finding when the cell phone units installed along Rte.132 last year will be operational. It is a real dropped stitch on the part of the State. John reported that the Vet wireless broadband antenna according to an email from their engineer should be operational by the end of the week.

Outside Audit and Recommendations - Toni reported that she had been working on this issue, meeting with Strafford auditor Nellie Pennington and in conversation with the Lela McCaffrey, CPA at Fothergill Segale & Valley, CPA's the firm that performed the audit. They also did the last full audit in which was for the year ending 12/31/11. Eleven adjustments were made to the years ending 2013 and 2014 which results in a deficit in the highway fund of \$62,875.47 and a \$15,000 increase in the general fund. The main reason for the deficit in the highway fund goes back to 2012 and the tracking of more than 4.5 million dollars in FEMA funds and the complexity of the dealing with the federal forms and grants. The Board is required to make recommendations on how to address concerns raised by the audit. In regards to the outside audit, the Board agreed "that we follow your recommendation and immediately start this year using the modified accrual basis. We will also seek outside professional help to review our practices and continue making recommended improvements". Lela told Toni that the equipment fund tracking and accounting is unique because of how we bill the highway fund for the use of equipment. The Board discussed this and Toni will continue to work with Lisa and the auditors. Lisa has recommended the Board consider yearly outside audits and the Board will also look at various options in this regard when putting the budget together for next year.

Budget Update - Lisa provided the Board with the most recent budget figures. She felt at this point things were in very good shape.

Town Property security - Lisa provided with recommendations for policy on who has access to different areas of town buildings. The Board made some modifications including all Selectboard members having keys to the main office area, and to having in addition to the Town House Advisory Group Chair having a key to the Town Office having another designated representative from that group having a key as well. Brent made the motion to approve each area as it came up and Steve seconded and all approved. Copies of Policies and who has keys attached to these minutes.

Auditor Appointment - Toni reported that Lynn Thorp, a former auditor, was willing to step in and fill a vacancy on that Board till Town Meeting. Toni made the motion to appoint Lynn Throp as an Auditor, Brent seconded and all approved.

Sub-Committee on Pay, Classification and Compensation Update - Toni who is the Board representative on the is sub-committee updated the Board on progress they are making in comparisons between Strafford and some nearby communities. Toni said the sub-committee would next like to do a town wide survey. The Selectboard, while appreciative of the work being done by the sub-committee, all agreed that the Board should review the wording before a town wide survey is sent out.

Filing date issue update - An issue has arisen regarding a filing date by a utility attorney and changes they requested. The problem was due to mistakes on their end of things. The attorney for the Town, Paul Gilles, has been brought in to provide advice and guidance and the best way to resolve the issue

Filing date issue update - A problem has arose regarding a filing date by a utility attorney and changes that they had asked to be made, and correct documentation. The attorney for the Town, Paul Gillies, has been brought in to provide advice and guidance and the best way to resolve the issue.

Brent made a motion to adjourn and Steve seconded. All approved and the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Freitag, filling in as Recording Clerk for Toni Pippy