

Strafford Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 28, 2021, at 6:00pm, Strafford Town Office

Members participating: Toni Pippy, Mary Linehan, Rett Emerson, Pat Kelly (via Zoom)

Others participating: Lisa Bragg, John Echeveria, Martha Walke, Stuart Crocker; via Zoom: John Freitag, Jennifer Brown, Geoff Martin, Greg Colling, Robert Cowden, Chrissy Coburn, Doc Bagley, Andy Rowles, Donald Graham, Steve Willbanks, Jeannie Oliver, Kevin Jones, Jason Schumacher, Susan Tiholiz, Michael Scanlon

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

1. Public Concerns – none
2. Town Highways and Equipment Update. Foreman not in attendance, no update on equipment.
 - a. Highway Correspondence:
 - b. Vacancy applications. One application for highway department vacancy has been received; deadline for applications is August 11.
3. General Correspondence –
 - a. An email from Jacqueline Chase, RE: road on Kibling Hill. Liaison has been in contact.
 - b. Ed Hathaway, EPA, RE: Elizabeth Mine Update, June 2021. Mine Road will hopefully be open after this week.
 - c. Jake Palant, Regional Planner, TRORC, RE: Royalton Hazard Mitigation Plan. Plan is being reviewed by Jason Schumacher, Emergency Management Director, who will report back to the Selectboard.
 - d. David McWilliams, Barrett Hall, Invoice from Rymes Propane for generator used in emergency situations. The bill from 2018 was paid by Barret Hall trustees, who are now requesting reimbursement. Lisa confirmed that the bill was paid and reimburse and has switched from Rymes to the Town provider, Irving, to avoid future billing errors. Motion passed to reimburse Barrett Hall for the propane bill.
4. Approve minutes to the July 14th regular and July 20th Special meetings. Motion passed to approve the July 14th meeting minutes. Approval of special meeting minutes tabled till next meeting.
5. Consideration of requests for preferred site status for Community Solar Projects at 328 Rte. 132 & 139 Alger Brook by Strafford Energy/Climate Committee, Planning Commission, Doc Bagley, VLS Energy Clinic.

At 7:00 pm the Planning Commission called to order a special meeting of the Planning Commission. Doc reported that two sites are being considered for solar arrays, providing energy to 20-30 homes, through a 25-year lease, with an option to renew. All abutters to the sites, must receive 45-day notice; all have been contacted, except one. Concerns by abutters will be addressed to ensure community acceptance of the project. “Preferred site status” designation allows a more favorable rate adjustment (additional 4 cents/kw hour over the non-preferred site rate). The additional revenue will go to Strafford residents who participate in the project. According to TRORC, all solar installations, regardless of where energy is going, will be credited to the State’s clean power targets. John Freitag, one of the site abutters, noted his support for the project. Discussion re: process for selection of Preferred Sites. Discussion re: plan for dismantling system after lease term, which is the responsibility of the Strafford Solar Power LLC.

- Motion passed by Planning Commission to approve the Alger Brook Road site as a preferred site.
- Motion passed by Planning Commission to approve the Rte 132 site as a preferred site.
- Motion passed to adjourn Planning Commission Special Meeting.

Motion made by Toni Pippy for Selectboard to approve preferred site status for Community Solar Project at 328 Rte. 132. Seconded. Discussion: Martha Walke expressed objections to the process and lack of clarity about who will be responsible for dismantling materials. Chrissy Coburn noted that the Rte 132 array will be highly visible and adequate community discussion has not taken place. Noted that the members of the current energy and planning commissions will not be in place when dismantling happens, and it is not clear who will be responsible at that time. Mary asked whether in the future there will be opportunities to require a plan for dismantling; Jeannie Oliver responded that there will be opportunities for the Selectboard to file comments and have input at future stages of the project. Motion passed.

Motion made by Toni to approve preferred site status for Community Solar Project at 139 Alger Brook. Seconded. Discussion: Doc clarified that both sites are being pursued to have an option as project requirement details are worked out; regulations for solar projects continue to change frequently. Neither site is on prime agriculture land. Motion passed.

6. Town Office Planning Committee Update. Mary provided an update on the committee's progress and reminded the board that a public meeting will be held on July 30th to gather input from the town committees and boards on use of Town Office space.
7. Ashley Forest updates. Pat reported that discussions are continuing regarding specific language for the conservation easement. JT Horn has been particularly effective in representing the Town's interests. VLTC is not very flexible about the terms of the agreement.
8. Junk Yard Update. Follow up on junk yards is continuing.
9. Request to use Murray Field on August 21st 5:30-8 pm for a dance. Motion passed to approve the request to use Murray Field on August 21st 5:30-8 pm for a dance.
10. Town Clerk requested signature for highway grant to be used to update our road erosion inventory to be conducted by TRORC. Motion passed to sign the grant agreement State of Vermont Standard Grant Agreement for the Better Roads Program for \$5,000.
11. Liaison updates
 - Rett reported he has not been successful in reaching the power line contact. It may be necessary to go to the public service board for assistance in resolving the issue.
12. Other
 - Lisa will be out of the office next week.
 - Tax bills have gone out.

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 Executive session at 8:05 pm. Executive session adjourned at 8:54.

Motion passed to sign the agreement that the defense of PACIF is under a reservation of rights.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Linehan
Recording Clerk