

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STRAFFORD SELECTBOARD

June 10, 2015

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

Other active participants: Lisa Kendall, Town Clerk, Jennifer Brown, Herald of Randolph Reporter, Andy Behrens and Irv Thomae, E C Fiber, Gus Speth, Lee Vormelker and Janet Cavanagh, Strafford Energy Committee, Carol Wilson, Suzanna Lipmann, Cameron Speth, Tom Essex, Kevin Plunkett, Kelly Hull

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

## 1.) Citizen Concerns:

Carol Wilson spoke of her concerns and need for more information regarding the Wolfe Energy Solar project at the Elizabeth Mine Site.

## 2.) Correspondence:

Mike Hebb suggesting that there be forums for the public to ask questions regarding Wolfe Energy Solar Project

Carol and Bob Wilson with concerns and questions regarding the Wolfe Energy Solar project at the Elizabeth Mine Site.

## 3.) Minutes:

Brent moved and Brian seconded a motion to adopt the minutes of May 27<sup>th</sup>. Toni suggested that the draft minutes be amended to delete “over four million dollar” from the fourth sentence of update on Wolfe Energy Solar Project. Minutes with change were adopted unanimously.

Steve moved and Brent seconded a motion to adopt the minutes of June 1<sup>st</sup>. Minutes were adopted unanimously.

## 4.) General

**ECFiber** – Irv Thomae presented “A Resolution Approving the Formation of the East Central Vermont Telecommunications District and Appointing a Representative to the Governing Board” for the Selectboard to sign which is in regards to the new structure of ECFiber which will allow them better access to the financial market. The new structure is now allowed due to action in the legislature this past session and has the same taxpayer protections as the resolution passed by the voters at our Town Meeting. The resolution also included the appointment of our current representatives to the ECFiber board, Steve Willbanks and alternates David Webb and Andy Behrens to the new board. Brent moved and Steve seconded a motion to approve the new structure and appointments. All Approved.

**Wolfe Energy Solar Project at Elizabeth Mine Site – request for letter of support** – John suggested and the Board agreed that the agenda be changed to consider this item next as most of the public present for the meeting was here for that topic. John noted the Strafford Energy Committees letter of support and correspondence (see above) expressing concerns and asking for more information. There was discussion of the matter among Board members and the public on the project which in earlier years was found to be unfeasible. Now that Green Mountain Power (GMP) is upgrading the lines from Sharon to South Strafford the project appears doable. The project must be completed by the end of 2016 to receive certain tax incentives. Board member Stephen Marx who lives off the grid and has used solar power for years expressed his support of the project.

Dori Wolfe has offered to present more details on the project at an informational meeting on June 17. Those

present at the meeting were asked if they were in favor of having an informational meeting for the public to be able to learn more, ask questions and raise concerns was a good idea. All agreed this would be a good idea. Steve moved and Brian seconded to hold a Special Meeting on June 17 at 7p.m. @ Barrett Hall on the Wolfe Energy Solar Project at the Elizabeth Mine Site. All Approved. A final decision on the request for a letter of support will be made at the next regular Selectboard meeting on June 24.

**Dogs and dog kennel update** – Brent reported that kennel parts have been offered to the Town and they will be picked up and brought to the Town Garage site. The kennel will be temporarily assembled and measured for the cement pad size and to determine what kind of a shelter will be needed. Steve and Brian offered to help.

Lisa provided the Board with a list of people who have not yet licensed their dogs for 2015 and the Board divided the list and will be contacting the dog owners reminding them of this requirement. A \$20 per dog late fee will be assessed along with the licensing fee.

**Solid Waste options – trash/recycling/ GUVSD/ town generated trash** - Over the last six months the Board has been discussing how to deal with the provisions of a new law governing solid waste that goes in the effect on July 1, 2015 and at the same time a collapsing market for recyclables and increased trucking costs . There are four interconnected areas that have been investigated and considered. The Board took the following action on each.

**Trash** - Brent moved and Steve seconded to eliminate paying the Greater Upper Valley waste management fee for Durkee Rubbish Removal effective July 1, 2015. An approximate savings of \$2,000 for the rest of this year will offset some of the costs of running the recycling center. All approved.

**Recycling** - The Selectboard recognizes the valuable service to the Town of the Recycling Committee and the sponsorship of the center by the Strafford Lions Club and will continue to follow their lead on how best to provide recycling services. Steve moved and Brian seconded that Strafford trash haulers will be allowed to use the Recycling Center for their Strafford recyclables. Steve, Toni, Brian and John voted yea, Brent voted nay and the motion passed. The Board agreed to review with the Recycling Committee how this arrangement is working out at the end of the year.

**Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District** costs for bonds. John reported that he had not yet heard back from the GUVSD on the value of the landfill site. The town is currently paying over \$12,675 per year for the cost of bonds to acquire the site and build a bridge over the Interstate to access it. Due to changing economic conditions there are no plans to put the site in operation and the Board is seeking information on the value of the site and whether it would make sense to sell it. John will continue to follow-up on getting this information.

**Town generated trash.** John reported that the Recreation Board will be purchasing new containers for recyclables to go aside trash containers in town recreation areas in order to comply with the new law. Lisa reported that the Town Office already sorts and handles their recyclables. The dumpster at the Town Garage was discussed. While it is more convenient, the cost of the dumpster is twice as much in 2104 as it was for Durkee Rubbish Removal to handle Town trash in 2012. Casella who provides the dumpster has not yet said how they will comply with the new law or whether their prices will be going up on July 1 to cover their additional mandated recycling services. The Board agreed to offer the collection of Town trash to Durkee Rubbish Removal effective July 1, 2015. John, who takes the school recyclables to the Center on Saturday volunteered to take the recyclables from the Town Garage as well. John will contact the Debbie Clark to see if she wants to renew the service to the Town.

**Wolfe Energy Solar Project at Maclay Property. Request for signing tax letter in agreement with Listers position on taxes** - John reported that the Listers have looked at the figures provided by Dori and have a differing opinion on how to calculate the value. Solar projects and their tax value are a work in progress. The Board decided to table the matter until Dori could meet with the Listers and resolve the difference.

**Dental Insurance Renewal update** – There was nothing to report

**Report on election workshop** – Lisa reported that she and Regina attended a three day workshop on the new system the State will be using for elections. She felt it was cleaner and simpler and should work well.

5.) Town Highways

Brent reported that things were going well, grading and mowing and other summer related work is being done. The bridge on the Dodge Road has been completed. There is a hold up on the Maple Hill Road project due to easement issues. The Farley bridge by-pass is in and work should proceed soon.

6.) Other

John reported on getting more details about the Vtel pole on the Turnpike Road. According to Sam Coleman, a network engineer with the company, “The site once operational will provide customers 4G LTE wireless broadband. The second phase of the project is to provide a more traditional voice service over our network” John said he is still trying to get more details regarding time lines for completion of this project. He noted that due to actions of the legislature, telecommunication like broadband and renewable energy projects no longer go through the local review process.

John moved and Steve seconded to go into executive session to discuss a personnel issue. The Board voted to do so. The Board came out of executive session at 8:45p.m. No action was taken.

Brent made a motion to adjourn and Brian seconded. All approved and the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

**Next Meetings:**

Special Selectboard Meeting on solar project at the Elizabeth Mine Site at Barrett Hall on June 17, 2015 at 7 p.m.

Regular Board Meeting at Town Office on June 24, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Toni M. Pippy