

**Strafford Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, March 22, 2023, 6:00pm  
Town Office, 227 Justin Morrill Hwy, Strafford Vermont 05072

Members participating: John Freitag, Brian Johnson, Jeff Solsaa, and David Paganelli by zoom

Other participating in person: Roz Finn, John Echeverria, Curt Albee, Rocky Fuller, Rodney Sloat, Ed Eastman

Via zoom: Lisa Bragg, Michael Scanlan, Patti Morgan, Charlotte Barrett, Rita Cohen, Steve Willbanks, John Dumville, Darren Marcy – the White River Valley Herald

Meeting called to order at 6:05 with Chair John Freitag reading the Guidelines for Selectboard Conduct

- 1.) Public Concerns – Roz Finn expressed her concerns over the fading of crosswalks in South Strafford and the safety implications. Selectboard liaison to the highway department Jeff Solsaa said that the quality of the paint used this past summer was not as good as before and a better quality paint will be used this year.
- 2.) A motion to approve the minutes of the 3-8-23 regular meeting as presented was made, seconded and approved by all Board members.
- 3.) Board members reviewed and signed the Policy Regarding Conflicts of Interest and Ethical Conduct for the Town of Strafford.
- 4.) Selectboard Jeff Solsaa provide an update on highways and rapidly approaching mud season. He said the crew was working at night when the temperature dropped below freezing and the gravel roads hardened up enough to allow trucking and grading. Jeff brought up that Road Foreman PD Hardy recommended to having a previous applicant, whose hiring was approved by the Board but was not hired due only having a CDL endorsement for automatic transmission vehicles, should be re-considered and hired. Jeff agreed and explained that we have one truck with automatic transmission he could drive and should he work out, arrangements could be made to get the other CDL endorsement, Jeff asked if he should come to a Board meeting. It was the feeling of all Board members that since this candidate had already been approved by the Board, his hiring process should proceed and no further interviews were needed. Jeff then presented the Certificate of Highway Mileage, the Roads and Bridge Standard form, and Municipal compliance form. All were approved and signed after individual motions were made and seconded. It was noted that there will be a review of the Town highways this summer and changes will likely be proposed. Jeff also updated what needed to be done to switch the paving grant from Miller Pond Road to the section of Rte. 132 between Tyson Road and the Thetford Town line. This requires declining the grant for Miller Pond and reapplying for Rte. 132. As the switch in roads had been approved in an earlier Board meeting there was no further approval needed. Jeff and Lisa Bragg will make sure the needed paperwork gets done. The Board approved a request from the Road Foreman to double the 5,000 gallon pre-buy of chloride. It was noted that we use at least that much each year and this could save money. Motion made and seconded to approve. All in favor.

- 5.) Rocky Fuller, the head of the Town House Advisory Group presented their group's painting maintenance plan and other repairs to the Board. The group has done extensive research. Their care of the Town House is deeply appreciated by the Board as our their periodic updates.
- 6.) A proposal by Charlotte Barrett of the Preservation Trust of Vermont to have a day-long meet-up in Strafford, centered at the Town House on June 6. The purpose of the event is to share with interested people and state officials the importance of our local rural villages and village revitalization; celebrating success, identifying, challenges, and exploring solutions. A motion was made and seconded to approve the town hosting this event, at which Strafford will be used as a model. All in favor
- 7.) Rachel Cohen requested to have parts of Strafford roads be used for the Ranger bike riding event on Sunday June 11. This event has happened a number of times in the past few years and they will be using the same route as last year. Motion made and seconded to approve the Ranger request. All in favor
- 8.) Town Office update – Curt updated the Board on Town Office Committee discussions with the Development Review Board regarding the lot line adjustments offered by Morgan Smith and Susan Cloke to provide room for the addition to the existing Town Office. Curt felt that it was important to get a lawyer for the town involved at this point..  
The Town Office Committee's next meeting is on Thursday in the Town Office at 1:30pm. John Freitag offered to contact attorney Brooke Trottier to see if she would have time to work on this. The next step is the DRB meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup> to get their formal approval. It should again be noted that Susan Cloke and Morgan Smith have offered the land needed at no cost to the Town with the understanding that the Town would pay for the lawyers and any other related costs needed to make the land transfers happen. John then updated the Board on a grant that the Town applied for on March 13 and since received from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board that would provide grant writing and management help for the Town Office project.  
Also, Town Clerk Lisa Bragg submitted a Congressionally Directed Funding request for the Town Office project to Senator Peter Welch's office before a deadline on March 16. State Historic Preservation Officer Laura Trieshmann, Rolf Diamant, the first Superintendent at the Marsh, Billings, Rockefeller National Park, and Representative Rebecca Holcombe were among those writing letters of support.
- 9.) Selectboard member Brian Johnson reported he has set up a meeting with the Fire Marshal regarding code violations at the Town Office Building at 1pm on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Selectboard Chair John Freitag and Contractor Jeremy Kendall will attend as well as Brian.
- 10.) A Bridge 30 (the one next to the Town House) update was provided by John Echeverria. He is hoping to hear by April 1 on a \$300,000 grant for a project that would use a truss bridge frame to replace the deteriorated concrete sides of the bridge. If the grant is awarded then he will come to the April 12 meeting of the Selectboard where decisions will have to be made on whether to accept a truss bridge from the town of Ludow , which have been offered to Strafford be transferred (at no cost) and stored in Strafford till the rest of the funds needed to be raised by grants can be obtained. Selectboard member Jeff Solsaa felt that this bridge might be the top priority for our next structures grant which would help as well in covering the costs. Freitag expressed a concern to have a written plan in case we get the structure and the project for some reason does not go through. Echeverria said he had verbal contact with a scrap firm that, if needed, would pick up and remove the iron structure and there would likely be no cost involved for the town.

11.) Grant position – John reported that the Regional Planning Commission has funded staff that can work on a grant to insulate the Town Garage. This along with a grant for help writing and managing grants for the Town Office project allows some time to work on the grant position that was included in the budget passed at Town Meeting. John has been talking with Town Clerk Lisa Bragg about what exactly she feels is needed in this position and this will be a topic at future meetings.

12.) Correspondence was noted from Bruce Andrus regarding the status of Andrus Road and Tom Cecere regarding posted roads and a logging operation on Miller Pond road. John will reply.

13.) Filling vacancies

a.) The Board re-appointed Robert Wilson as Tree Warden

b.) The Board interviewed the two candidates, Patti Morgan and Rodney Sloat for the one-year Selectboard vacancy and entertained questions from them to the Board. Both care about our community and bring qualities that would make the Board better. A motion was made and seconded and approved by all members to go into Executive Session to discuss the candidates. The Board came out of Executive Session. A motion was made and seconded to appoint Rodney Sloat to the one year position. Johnson, Paganelli and Freitag voted yea, Solsaa no. Freitag will notify and thank both applicants.

14.) A motion was made and seconded and approved by all members to go into Executive Session to discuss Selectboard conduct . The Board came out of Executive Session. A motion was made, seconded and approved by all members to re-affirm keeping to the Guidelines for Selectboard Conduct.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourned the meeting at 9:37pm All approved

Respectfully Submitted,

John Freitag, Temp Recording Clerk