

Strafford Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday May 24, 2023, 6 pm
Town Office 227 Justin Morrill Hwy, Strafford Vermont 05072

Members participants in person: Rod Sloat, Jeff Solsaa, David Paganelli, John Freitag, Brian Johnson
Other participants in person: John Echeverria, Curt Albee, Rocky Fuller, Anni Praetorius
Other participants by zoom: Lisa Bragg, Shelby Coburn

Meeting called to order at 6pm. Reading of Guidelines for Selectboard Conduct

Public Concerns – no public concerns

Reviewed and all approved minutes of May 10th meeting.

Highways

Selectboard Highway liaison Solsaa updated the Board on current work of the highway department. He also updated the Board on the current bridge project on the Justin Morrill Highway to Tunbridge. The contractor will be relocating the Spaneas driveway during construction as part of the project. Solsaa will be meeting with State Highway personnel to inspect bridges in town and work out a long term bridge replacement plan. He suggested that depending on the timing of the Bridge 30 project we might want to modify our current structures grant to be used on another bridge that could be done sooner than that project, which is not anticipated to start until 2026.

Bridge #30

A motion was made, seconded and all agreed to approve signing a number of documents for the application for the \$300,000 Northern Borders Grant for this project. The Board also all agreed to approve signing a Grant document for the already approved \$300,000 Transportation Alternative Program. The legislature included in the budget raising the amount of the TAP grants from \$300,000 to \$600,000. The Bridge 30 project has a good chance of getting the amount already approved to this higher amount

Town Office Committee Update

Curt Albee gave a history of the Committee's work on trying to find a way to be able to accept the gift of land neighboring property owner Morgan Smith has offered so as to allow an addition to be built onto the current Town Office. Committee member Anni Praetorius talked about her meeting with Susan Cloke and whether some of her land could be obtained to offset the land given by Morgan Smith in order to meet the zoning requirements. It turned out that given Susan's plans for her land this would not work out. Albee said that at this point the Committee has gone as far as it feels it can go on the project. The Committee was thanked for their work on developing a conceptual plan and costs. The Selectboard will take over, trying to find a way to be able to obtain the sliver of land needed for the addition. David Paganelli will be examining the recently completed survey of the current Town Office project with Lister Tim Denny to see if there would be enough room to build the addition. If this looks like it might work the Board all agreed if it was alright with Morgan Smith to go ahead with a survey of his property to find out definitively if this was the case. Given the time, energy and funds expended by the Committee over the last 10 months it was felt worthwhile to pursue whatever reasonable possibilities were still available before moving on to other options.

Grant Update

Grant Manager Stefanie Slayton started work this week. She spent time with Town Clerk Lisa Bragg going over town policies and procedures and getting up to speed on current grants. The Board decided to ask Stefanie at this point to concentrate her efforts around finding grants for our highways and bridges.

The Town next step in a Municipal Energy Resilience Grant for the Town Garage will be an energy audit. Jeff Grout, an energy and climate consultant, who works for Strafford and other towns in our area will be working with the Strafford Energy and Climate Committee on this grant. Selectboard members Freitag and Solsaa will assist as well.

The Town received an additional gift from David Taplin which covers the entire cost of tree removal and planting new trees on the common.

The Town has received a grant for grant help on the Town Office project. Freitag reported that the two person team assigned to the project will be attending the June 6 Preservation Trust of Vermont Meet-Up Day event in Strafford and will have time afterwards to visit the Town Office and get further updates on the project.

Preservation Trust of Vermont – Meet-Up Day

There was an update on this June 6th event that will take place in the Town House. Rocky Fuller will be welcoming attendees to the Town House and will, during the lunch break, talk and show the work that has been done to preserve this remarkable building. An afternoon session in the program will highlight three current projects in Strafford: The Strafford Historical Society building project, Bridge 30 and the use of historic trusses, and the Town Office project.

1st Quarter Budget review – Town Clerk/ Town Treasurer Lisa Bragg led the Board through a review of budget expenditures to date and answered questions. Overall expenditures matched expectations.

Misc. Financial

A motion was made, seconded and all approved a new computer for the Town Office to be purchased and maintained by the Town IT person Mike Tisdale

The Board all reviewed and all approved the Orange County Sheriff's bill for April

A motion was made, seconded and all approved, a contract from Yankee Generator to replace the generator at Barrett Hall. Barrett Hall is a town designated emergency shelter and the older donated generator was installed by the Town and the new one will be owned by the Town as well.

Correspondence

The Board all approved of correspondence to Byron Breese regarding his wall.

Solsaa reported that he had replied to an email from Rett Emerson regarding a bridge questions

The Board all approved Freitag responding to an email from Carol Bushway regarding speeding on Turnpike Road.

Liaison updates

David Paganelli reported on good turnout for helping to get rid of invasives at the Ashley Forest.

A motion was made, seconded and all approved of Constable Ed Eastman getting the \$237.30 given by the State for law enforcement on Miller Pond and Swanee Bean Road due to expected increased traffic from a highway project work being done on Rte. 113 this summer.

The Board all approved of asking Ed Eastman to do speed checks on Turnpike Road.

The Board all voted to go into Executive Session at 8:40 to discuss a personnel issue.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:52 pm

A motion was made second and approved by all to send a letter to Dan Prescott thanking him for his years of service and stating the Board's intention to offer him part-time employment should he wish to work for the Town after retirement.

Motion made, seconded and all approved to adjourn at 8:57 pm

Respectfully submitted,

John Freitag