

Minutes of the Strafford Selectboard
June 14, 21017

Members of the Selectboard present: Toni Pippy (Chair), Stephen Marx, Brian Johnson, John Freitag, Kate Siepmann (arr. 6:30)
Other active participants: Lisa Bragg (Town Clerk), Jon MacKinnon (Road Foreman)

Toni called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Citizens' Concerns —no concerns were raised

2. Town Highways

Timesheet program review. Jon and Lisa brought to the Board's attention a method to simplify the record keeping to be more efficient. Toni will meet and discuss possibilities with them.

There will be a Bridge #29 pre-closure meeting on July 10 at 10:00 a.m. Jon will attend, possibly with Brent Cadwell, who is serving as volunteer liaison for the Board on this project.

The Board reviewed information on a truck bringing ballast blocks for the solar project that went off the Mine Road and got stuck in the soft shoulder of the road. Fortunately, there were no injuries or damage.

Toni will send a thank you card to the Newton School students for their Town Road Crew appreciation dinner that raised \$360.

The Board reviewed with Jon upcoming summer jobs including Old City Falls Bridge repair rip rap, Carpenter Hill Road upgrade, Fayen Road culvert, crack sealing and crosswalk lines. Jon is waiting to hear if a grant will come through Bridge #19 on Old City Falls Road.

Jon reported that arrangements have been made to fix the railing at the Town House handicapped access.

The Board discussed the approximately 2-foot road widening in front of the Hugs to allow for safe parking. Brian will try to arrange a site visit with Dr. Hug.

Brian moved and Stephen seconded signing a letter of intent to participate in the RPC/DEC Municipal Roads Grant-In-Aid Pilot Project. Toni, Brian, Kate, and John in favor. Stephen opposed.

The Board discussed either moving the Yield sign near the Town Office to Brook Road or adding another Yield sign, so both junctions would be more properly signed.

3. Approve minutes

John moved, Brian seconded to approve the minutes with only minor spelling corrections. All approved.

4. Correspondence

Rocky Fuller called to request the release of THAG funds to cover listening devices for the hearing impaired in the Townhouse required by a pending grant from the Vermont Arts Council. The cost to the Town would be \$821, as our part of a matching grant. The Board had no objection.

A request was made to keep the flashing speed indicator in operation 24 hours a day. As it turns out, the sign is removed daily by our Constable for recharging, rendering 24-hour operation unfeasible.

Rebecca Bailey and Jim Schley were unable to attend the dinner in honor of the Road Crew and wrote to express their appreciation for the good work they do.

Permission was requested to use a metal detector on the Common. The standing policy has been that “It’s okay, as long as you leave it as you found it.”

5. Development Review Board Clerk vacancy

Lisa and Martha Walke have agreed to work together in that capacity until the vacancy is filled.

6. Unlicensed Dogs

The thorny issue of unlicensed dogs made it on to the agenda. There are still 11 unlicensed dogs owned by six people in town. State law requires the licensing of dogs, with proof of vaccinations. In one case, where license fees have been covered by the owner but where no proof of vaccinations has been provided, the Town cannot issue a license. In the remaining cases, owners who have made no claim of inability to pay, simply refuse. This puts the Board in an untenable and awkward position, and the dogs in danger of losing their homes. In order to avoid further legal and punitive action, Board members will make personal appeals to the individuals to comply with the licensing requirements.

7. Budget vs Actual Review

The Town’s auditor, Teresa Kajenski of Fothergill Segale & Valley, CPAs reported that the accounting for this year is in good shape. There was some discussion about how to retire a budget deficit from last year, which will be resolved. Toni and Lisa are paying close attention to budget details.

8. NEMRC, not Cott Systems

Lisa reported that the New England Municipal Resource Center will set up a computer system for displaying land records and Lister cards, on-line. There will be service and copying fees charged to those who want to complete the searches in the Town Office.

9. Town Plan—Received on May 17, to be adopted by September 14, 2017

Kate reported 100% favorable responses to the initial Digest that appeared on Monday’s ListServe. She will work on producing and publishing more, completing the project by the second hearing on the Plan in August.

The first public hearing on the Plan is scheduled for Wednesday, June 21 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., downstairs in Barrett Hall.

The Board discussed the format of the hearing and emphasized that the point of this hearing is to gather thoughts and opinions from the Townspeople. What do you like, not like, or not understand about the Town Plan? If you have criticism, please make it constructive. And, most of all please be part of the process by attending the hearing on Wednesday.

10. General

a) Liaison updates: As liaison to the Town Office, Kate reported that she had attended a day-long conference on Historic Preservation last week and had made valuable connections on the way to pursuing the renovation of the Municipal Building. She will attend a 2-day forum on the subject in June, sponsored by The Preservation Trust of Vermont.

b) Town Letterhead: Kate submitted a design for new official letterhead featuring a wood block print of the Townhouse by wonderful artist, Patsy Root, a descendent of an early Strafford family. Brian moved, Stephen seconded that the Town adopt the new letterhead. All approved.

c) Stanley and Lord—Delinquent taxes update: After contact with Paul Gillies, the Board agreed that both properties should be put up for Tax Sale. Details about titles, EPA and State land use restrictions remain to be worked out.

d) Town Office Repairs: Top priority repairs to the Town Office include removing the carpet and sanding and finishing the floors, patching the roof where it leaks at the top of the stairs, replacing the screen door at the entrance, and fixing the vent in the bathroom. Kate offered a motion and Brian?John? seconded to contact the contractor/s and use the maintenance budget to get these jobs done. To this end, the Town Office will be CLOSED JULY 10–JULY 13.

e) John will follow through on the requirements for the 251 Vermont Advertising Campaign.

11. Other

John reported that the Lions Club is interested in making improvements to the pocket park as part of their Centennial project. These could include stairs to the river, a grill or some other improvement that Barbara and Wally Smith, creators of the pocket park, would like. The Board all thought it was a good idea.

Kate offered, Brian seconded a motion to adjourn. All agreed at 8:57 p.m.

Faithfully submitted,

Kate Siepmann
Recording Clerk