

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE STRAFFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN
July 23, 2014

Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 312 (b) (1) Selectboard meeting minutes include

- (A) All members of the public body present;
- (B) All other active participants in the meeting;
- (C) All motions, proposals and resolutions made, offered and considered, and what disposition is made of same; and
- (D) The results of any votes, with a record of the individual vote of each member if a roll call is taken.

Although meeting minutes have complied with 1 V.S.A. § 312 (b) (1), any additional information is included as a courtesy.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members of the public body present:

Rod Maclay, Chair, Brian Johnson, Steve Marx, Brent Cadwell, and John Freitag, Members

Other active participants:

Jon MacKinnon, Road Foreman, Lisa Kendall, Town Clerk, Jane Prescott, Recording Secretary, Russ Farley, Jennifer Brown, Reporter Herald of Randolph

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

CITIZENS CONCERNS: None

CORRESPONDENCE: The Board received an email from Bob Frenier who is running for state senator of Vermont. Mr. Frenier would like to attend a Select Board meeting. The Board will send correspondence to Mr. Frenier and let him know that after he is elected, they would welcome him at a meeting.

MINUTES: Minutes of July 10, 2014 Select Board meeting. Brent made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Brian seconded the motion. All in favor. Minutes of July 10, 2014 Select Board meeting are approved.

General

Recreation Report – John Freitag received the recreation area report. Safety issues – cracks repaired in tennis courts and the brush was cut. Shannon Higgins will submit a bill for the brush removal. The broken equipment was removed. More mulch will need to be put down due to safety concerns. There is less money in the budget than what was anticipated. Frank Brown will paint

back of red barn next year. Tree closest to red barn is dead, which presents a health hazard. Eli will remove the tree before the start of soccer camp on August 11, 2014. Price for tree removal is unknown at this time. Rod reminded John that he represents the Select Board and he needs to represent the Select Board and let the Recreation Board do their job.

Cell Phone Towers update – Steve called every phone number State of Vermont gave him. Spent an hour trying every phone number and didn't make any progress. Called original person and he is on vacation.

Personnel Policy – Lisa gave an update. The personnel policy committee members (Brent, Jon & Lisa) met Tuesday morning and reviewed the proposed personnel policy from VLCT. Committee members made a few changes from the VLCT policy. The committee recommended the following;

1. Probationary period and time to wait for health insurance coverage – VLCT proposed 6 months for both. The committee suggested changing the probationary period and time to wait for health insurance coverage period to 3 months. Historically, employees have received health insurance immediately upon being hired. John F. stated that VLCT strongly recommended a 6 month probation period. Lisa stated to ease paperwork to make the time period 3 months. Steve suggested 6 months for both health insurance and probation.

2. Under hours of service, Lisa added a section for road crew indicating dates, days and times they will work summer hours and winter hours. Lisa also added dates the road crew is on call during winter months; Nov. 1 through April 30.

3. The committee struck the line under jury duty that was confusing.

4. Under volunteer emergency personnel – the committee struck the paragraph saying that if recuperation time is needed after an emergency, an employee can request paid time off for that. The committee felt that if personnel need another day to recuperate after a fire – they can use their personal leave.

5. Lisa filled in standard percentages (100%) for dental and eye.

6. The committee added one more personal day. Currently if an employee attends Town Meeting, they are paid for a day of work, regardless of number of hours they are at town meeting. If an employee wished to attend Town Meeting or take the day off, they will use a personal day.

Discussion continued about possible changes to personal and sick leave policy. John Freitag suggested 3 personal days and 7 sick days and sick days can accrue to 15. The current policy states that employees can accumulate sick/personal days up to 15. Rod stated the Board formed a committee to work on the personnel policy and suggested that the Board should follow the guidelines of the committee.

Votes on the personnel policy are as follows;

1. Probationary time period for new employees and time period a new employee must wait for health insurance. John Freitag made a motion for new employees to have a 6 month probationary period and a 3 month period until a new employee is eligible to be in the town health insurance plan. Brian seconded motion. John, Brian & Steve voted in favor of the motion. Brent & Rod voted against the motion. Motion passed.

2. Personal and sick days; committee recommends 5 sick and 5 personal days and can accumulate up to 15 days – as is, they are one in the same. John made a motion to read 3 personal days and 7 sick days and sick days can accumulate up to 15. Steve seconded. John & Steve in favor. Brian, Brent & Rod voted against. Stays as is; 10 paid personal/sick days per year.

Remainder is minor addition of wording, but nothing changing policy.

John suggests keeping current vacation policy until we review what other towns around us give for vacation. Personnel Committee suggested changing the current policy to give 4 weeks of vacation after 10 years of service.

Brent made a motion to adopt new personnel policy as written. John amended the motion to exclude the Town Clerk. Brian seconded. Lisa stated some items are the same, but, there will be a second agreement with Town Clerk stating she will follow the policy. This personnel policy only applies to Road Crew. All in favor.

Employee Handbook – Lisa said its housekeeping, orientation, and employment applications. 2 handbooks – 1 for supervisor and 1 for employees. When employee starts they will receive the employee handbook. John moved and Brian seconded to approve Employee Handbook. All in favor.

Employee Pay Scale – Brent reported. Brent presented a pay scale matrix that Thetford follows for its municipal employees. Brent talked with Thetford town clerk and she explained that the matrix has a point system based on prior service, education and other factors. After adding the points then you plug into chart and tells you what pay level an employee should be paid. Brent stated that if we created and used a matrix like this the town would be closer to being on par with Thetford's pay. The matrix accounts for a merit raise and a cost of living increase. In Thetford' matrix, every 3 years they give a merit raise. John asked how we would implement the matrix and he asked Lisa to resend it. The purpose of the matrix from Thetford is to start a discussion on how to implement something like this in Strafford, not to vote. Brent recommends everyone reviews the matrix and the Select Board works to implement a similar matrix for the next budget year so we can start on this. Select Board should review this matrix and we will discuss at a future meeting.

Purchasing Policy – Jon MacKinnon reported. VLCT sent a suggested purchasing policy to the town. This policy is separate from the personnel policy. The current purchasing policy has a \$2000.00 purchase limit and a \$15,000 bid limit. The new policy suggests a \$3000 purchase policy limit. This increase in purchasing is due to standard items that Jon needs to buy regularly. Anything

Jon wants to buy over \$3000 needs to be brought to the Select Board for approval. In the past, Jon contacted Chair of Board for approval (as long as items were in budget line items).

For work that needs to be done for the town and a bid needs to be made, they discussed increasing the bid amount to \$30,000. Jon stated that there are bridges out there that need to be done. Jon wants to get bids from 3 local contractors and go with best bid. Anything over \$30,000 would need to go out to bid. For reoccurring purchases like diesel fuel, gas, propane and oil and sand and salt, we have a limit of \$75,000 before it gets put out to bid. Brent moved to adopt policy. Brian seconded. All approved. Lisa will have all members of Select Board sign the purchasing policy.

Vacation – Lisa on vacation August 6 through August 18.

Propane Contract – every year Lisa talks with Irving. Current price is 1.758 if she submits tonight. This contract is based on using 3300 gallons. Paid \$1.57 last year. Been as high as \$2.17 in past. Steve motioned to accept contract. Rod seconded. All approved.

Meeting to set tax rate will be Monday July 28 at 7:30 a.m.

TOWN HIGHWAYS

Interview Results of Road Crew – John asked to postpone discussion to end of meeting

Town Garage Update – Insurance denied the heating claim and moisture issue. Board needs to make decision about how to proceed; John feels we should follow up on insulation. John asked Lisa to send the Board background information on this issue to get us up to date as a Board. The heating system was not designed to be installed in that building. The person who installed the system should be held liable. The plaque /paperwork states the heating system should not be in an acidic environment. 7 years ago heaters were installed. John wants more background information and is worried about statute of limitations.

Crack Sealing cost overruns – Jon MacKinnon reported. The company came to town and did the regular contract with crack film. Jon felt it was important to also crack seal Miller Pond Road again and they went above the contact and spent \$6700 more on crack sealing. Jon suggested that since this was over budget the money could be from the chloride budget. Jon felt it was important to crack seal Miller Pond Road again to maintain the integrity of the blacktop. If the pavement has too many cracks or the cracks are too wide they can't guarantee it. So Jon check with Rod and they went ahead and crack sealed the pavement Miller Pond Rd. John stated that if you are going to go over budget, a decision needs to be made by the entire select board to go over budget. Rod made the decision to go ahead and crack seal Miller Pond Rd. because he felt that it was in the best interest of the town and it would save money in the long run because it would prolong the life of the current pavement.

Bridge Updates – VanDyke Road should be open this weekend. For the **White Road** in Taylor Valley, Daniels started cutting trees and chipping. Two test holes were dug for the new bridge and they hit ledge on all 4 corners. State bridge inspectors were in town. The State said there is a bridge

in Old City that needs rip rap. The town hasn't yet received a report, however, if the State says it needs to be done, we will not have a choice to delay it. Rod feels that if we have the big equipment in town it would be better to get the rip rap done. It would be a cost savings to do it while the equipment is in town.

Watson Bridge – Lisa updated. They are still waiting for Joe Delfino to sign the deed. Part of the contract with Northwood's was to take the Watson Bridge to the town garage. Jon is looking into prices to bring the bridge to Lower Dodge Road to use that bridge for the Cook bridge. Lisa states possibilities of doing the Cook Bridge with the remaining Bond funds. Parameters of the bond state that as long as it's highway related select Board has a lot of latitude with using the bond; e.g. crack sealing, Cook bridge, surveying. Jon asked Northwood's to give him a price to put in the bridge. If we can get 3 bids to get the bridge installed in a cost effective way, we should move forward and install the bridge.

John made a motion for the Select Board voted to go into Executive Session at 8:19 p.m. to discuss personnel issues. Steve seconded. All approved.

The executive session ended at 8:43 p.m.

No decisions were made.

Brent made a motion to hire Jay Thorp to work on the highway crew. Rod seconded the motion. Brent and Rod voted in favor of the motion. Brian, John & Steve voted against the motion.

Some discussion occurred.

Steve made a motion to reconsider the vote. Brian seconded the motion. Brent, Rod, Steve & Brian voted in favor of the motion. John voted against the motion.

More discussion occurred.

Brent made a motion to hire Jay Thorp at a rate of \$17.50 per hour to work on the highway crew. Brian seconded the motion. Brent, Rod and Brian voted in favor of the motion. John & Steve voted against the motion.

Steve made a motion by to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Brian. Meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

The next Select Board meeting is Wednesday August 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Clerk's office.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Prescott