

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE STRAFFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
November 12, 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, Select Board Members

**Other active participants:**

Lisa Kendall, Town Clerk, Jon MacKinnon, Highway Department Foreman, Jane Prescott, Recording Secretary, Ken Alton, Energy Committee Member, Jennifer Brown, Reporter Herald of Randolph

Citizens present: Marie Ricketts, Lee Volkemer

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

CITIZENS CONCERNS: None

MINUTES: Rod presented the October 22, 2014 and October 30, 2014 minutes to the Select Board for their approval. Brent motioned to accept both as written. Brian seconded. The minutes of the October 22, 2014 and October 30, 2014 Select Board meeting are approved.

GENERAL: Energy Committee – Vault Project Update by Ken Alton – The Town Vault was an ice cube in winter and frost was getting into it. The Energy Committee winterized the Vault to help keep our vital records intact and keep the humidity away from them and to help improve energy efficiency in the Town Clerk’s office. Lisa stated the office is warmer. The committee is also writing another grant to submit to Efficiency Vermont to install plexi-glass in the Town Office windows on both levels. The committee will use magnetic tape adhered to plexi-glass to cut the air infiltration rate in half. Cost is approximately \$60.00 per window and the plan is to use lexan in the south facing windows due to the fact that plexi-glass will yellow in the sun. Ken showed an example of how the plexi-glass is used in a

window. John F. moved to approve the committee moving forward with applying for a grant for windows for the Town Office, Brian seconded. All approved the Energy Committee moving forward in getting a grant to put plexi-glass over the windows in the Town Clerk's office.

FEMA Meeting – On Nov. 12 at 9:00 a.m. Select Board, Rick, Jon MacKinnon and Lisa Kendall met with FEMA. Rod feels we are in pretty good shape to get all of the money FEMA has promised. Four bridges that were either destroyed or damaged during Hurricane Irene were covered under FEMA. Repair or replacement costs of the bridges; 3 were under budget and 1 was over. Each bridge repair or replacement has to go through 5 reviews so it will be another 2-3 months before we see the remaining 25% of money that it cost to replace/repair the bridges. One of the issues FEMA had was on the temporary bridge by Steve Willbanks' house and the footings – when they put in one of the bridges according to the original plan, when they dug down for the footings, they didn't hit bedrock so the bridge had to be widened. Rod felt positive the Town Clerk, Road Foreman and Select Board had done the work needed to cover all the bases to get reimbursed from FEMA. Rod also stated that Lisa has done an excellent job of bookkeeping and Jon taking photographs of all the damage that occurred during Hurricane Irene and Rod feels the town is in good shape to get reimbursed. Lisa stated we have been receiving 75% of the cost of repair/replacement, but, FEMA won't pay the final 25% until they have done 5 reviews.

Lister Vacancies/Meeting with State & Vermont Appraisal Co. – Currently there is only 1 Lister, the other 2 members Betty Jo Black, Anne Aversa resigned. A discussion about the Board of Listers ensued. Rod stated that the Select Board needs to decide if we're going to keep Listers or hire consultants to do the work. John F. feels we should follow the statute and advertise the openings. Steve Marx said Mark Castro feel that we need to have Listers. Lisa spoke with Ann Aversa and whether or not to dissolve the Board of Listers. A person from the State, and the Vermont Appraisal Company would be willing to sit with Select Board and explain what the State does for us. John F. feels Steve should meet with the Lister and see what their recommendations are for the future of the Listers. Steve or members of the Listers could report to Select Board at next meeting. Rod wants the Select Board to gather more information from the State and other sources to figure out how we should move forward. Lisa stated there are currently no Listers and nothing is happening. Lisa suggested that when Steve meets with Mark that if there are things the Town Clerk's office can do to help, to please ask. John moved to post the Listers position. Steve seconded. All approved.

Budget Process 2015 – The Board discussed the budget process and moving forward for 2015.

Employee Compensation 2015/ Pay Scale Review – Brent called all surrounding towns and got their salaries for different positions. Lisa obtained health care benefits and reported it is comparable to surrounding towns. Norwich is unionized. Thetford is discussing become unionized. Lisa talked with VLCT and discussed developing a pay scale for the town and sent them information on what we have. VLCT is willing to negotiate the price to work with Strafford to create a pay scale. Given the end of year, Lisa suggested that she contact VLCT at beginning of 2015 to work on a pay scale. Lisa also suggests to the Select Board that they start with the spreadsheet that Brent worked on as a starting point in developing

the pay scale with 2015. Steve Marx suggested that he is in favor of a dollar increase rather than a percentage increase. Lisa will bring cost to work with VLCT to develop pay scale to subsequent meeting.

Comp Time/Personnel Policy Update – Lisa distributed current Overtime and Compensatory Time Off policy with changes. John F. asked for clarification of comp time policy. Lisa stated that any work that is done by the Road Crew before and after normal work hours is paid at time and a half. Brent moved to accept new wording in Comp Time policy. John seconded. All approved.

October Budget – Lisa distributed paperwork and asked if anyone had questions. Discussion ensued.

TOWN HIGHWAYS: John Deere Equipment Replacement – Brent updated the Board. Brent approached John Deere about a lease program for the loader and back hoe. Brent stated that John Deere gave a better price and offered larger equipment than what Caterpillar proposed. Brent reviewed the numbers for the Select Board. Brent said the down side of owning the equipment is the longer we own the equipment, the greater chance of needing expensive repairs. Based on the amount the town uses the equipment and the fact that after 5 years the warranty is up on the equipment, we may be better off leasing. The current Backhoe and Loader are 10 years old and both pieces of equipment need work done on them. If we lease equipment, then all repairs are covered under the lease and the town does not incur the cost. Jon M. stated that we are selling ourselves short in the equipment fund to save money. The amount we charge ourselves for use of equipment is lower than the actual cost of using the equipment. Lisa stated that we do increase the equipment rates each year.

Guard rails at Tyson Bridge – Jon M. got a price quote of \$5700 From Lafayette to repair guard rails. Jon has guardrail posts that Lafayette will take back in trade and that will lower the cost more. The second bid was \$13,000 from Vermont recreational. The work will be done this year using money in the bridge budget. John F. moved to approve accept Lafayette repair. Brent seconded. All approved.

Town Garage Update – The new heating system was installed. Tom Root was going to come and check the electrical.

Bridge #26 Bid Opening 8 pm – The Select Board opened the bids for Town Bridge #26 at 8:00 p.m. Hook is the lowest bidder, Kingsbury is the second, and Daniels is third. Town has to match \$35,000 for the State. The Town secures easements and moves the pole; the company does the remainder of the work. We can't use FEMA money toward State match. The State will contribute 90% of cost, up to \$175,000 toward the bridge. Next step is to make sure the math is all good and review what each bidder is covering and make sure it's correct and then you award to the lowest bidder. John F. made a motion to approve Hook Construction, low bidder at \$249,000 contingent on successful review of the contract. Brian seconded. All approved.

Road Crew Procedures and Concerns – John F. reviewed his concerns after the Select Board met with the Road Crew; each employee taking care of his own area of town; felt that from the personnel meeting, they discussed coverage of areas of town and suggested assigning

someone to take care of their own section of town. Not only do they have a plow area, but also grade, roadside mowing, etc. Road crew members need to be able to use all of the equipment. Jon M. said that all town crew has been trained on the grader and everyone does operate the grader. Jay hasn't yet used the grader. Jon is not in favor of giving people specific routes, because he is in favor of everyone being able to cover for everyone else. Jon wants every employee to be able to plow every route in town. That has been the policy for the past 14 years and he wants it to continue that way for cross coverage. John F. feels the town needs training courses. Jon M. said that previous to last year, St. Michaels offered classes through Vermont Local roads and Road Crew members have attended the trainings. Also, last year, the continuing education budget was cut from the budget to accommodate the budget considerations. John F. wants something posted in Strafford news and on list serve to be aware of snow plows. Steve asked John to write up something for list serve and the Newsletter. John F. also felt there was no way to compensate employees for their loyalty of years of service to the town. John F. distributed a proposal for a sick day bank for long term employees so there is an incentive not to use it, but, when you leave, you can cash it out. For people who have put in a significant amount of time, they have the sick bank there in case they need it. Current incentive is to use every day you have, because it goes away at the end of the year. John would like to discuss at next meeting. Jon M. suggested improving the pay scale and that would increase morale more.

Employee/Select Board Protocol – Brent began discussion about a chain of command with the Road Crew. If there is an issue with the Road Crew, they should bring to Jon for him to deal with. If the issue continues, Jon should bring to Select Board. It is not the job of the Select Board to deal with the issues. Steve gave a concrete example that if a Road Crew member approaches a Select Board member with an issue, they need to be referred back to Jon.

Employee Handbook/Personnel Policy; employee signature – One member of Road Crew hasn't returned signed documents acknowledging he received the Town's new policies. John F. said that the member has until the next Select Board meeting to sign, and, if he doesn't he needs to attend the next Select Board meeting and explain to them why he doesn't want to sign acknowledging receipt of the policies.

Letter from Lisa Kendall to Rod, Brent, Stephen and Brian, cc: John. Re: Behavior of John Freitag toward Lisa as Town Clerk. Lisa wrote a letter to the Select Board regarding the behavior towards her regarding a bill that John presented to her that was sent to school and Eleni asked John to bring it to Lisa to pay. Lisa brought a concern to the Board that John mishandled how he behaved in presenting a bill to the town. John apologized and admits he could have done it better.

Current schedule of meetings for the next month are as follows; Wednesday November 19, 2014, December 10, 2014, and December 17, 2014.

John moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Brent. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Next regular meeting; Wednesday, November 19, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane A. Prescott  
Recording Secretary