

Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2020 Meeting

Present:

Maureen Bell, Selectwoman
Kord Scott, Selectman
Bob Bingham
Joyce Cumming, Selectboard Clerk
Sally Hoover, Auditor
Tom Johnson, Energy Commission
Kathy Jungermann, Auditor
Gail Wyman, Asst. Treasurer
Rachel Spengler

Peter Chamberlain, Selectman
Vance Bell, Energy Commission
Dawn Bower, Various Commissions
Bill Dunkel, Town Planning Commission
John Hoover, Library Trustee, Justice of Peace
Louise Johnson, Meetinghouse Committee
Kathy Scott, Treasurer (arrived late)
Rory Rosselot

Call to Order

Maureen called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Additions to Agenda/Announcements/Reminders

Maureen noted that the next meeting re: the Windham Regional Commission Broadband Project is scheduled for Thursday night, February 6, 2020.

Act on minutes: January 20, 2020 Regular Selectboard Meeting, and January 24, 2020 Emergency Selectboard Meeting

Motion: To accept the minutes of the January 20, 2020 Regular Selectboard Meeting and the January 24, 2020 Emergency Selectboard Meeting as submitted—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Public Comment

Maureen noted that Windham Regional Commission held hearings on the Town Plan and Determination of Energy Compliance just prior to the start of the Selectboard meeting.

New Business:

Ambulance Service

This discussion was postponed briefly as Rachel Spengler had not yet arrived.

Windham Regional Commission Broadband Project –Next Stage Resolution/Point Person/Survey

Maureen reported on the Windham Regional Commission Broadband Project meeting held last week and the efforts to bring high-speed internet service to areas considered unserved. A feasibility study is in the planning stages and WRC has asked towns to support this effort by passing a resolution and appointing a contact person to work with the WRC. David Cherry has volunteered to serve as the contact person for Windham. A written survey will be distributed to residents at the Town Meeting in the hope of achieving a 25% or better response.

Following these steps, a business model will be developed for a group of towns to build a communication district; timeline was estimated at approximately 6 months after the feasibility study. Two towns in the region will include an article to form such a district at town meeting. Windham will have the option to join with these towns; there is no downside for Windham.

Motion: To support the Windham Regional Commission Broadband Project by passing a resolution—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Motion: To appoint David Cherry as the primary contact person to work with the Windham Regional Commission on the feasibility study—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Ambulance Service

Rachel Spengler and Rory Rosselot introduced themselves and briefly summarized their backgrounds. Rachel is a Physician Assistant specializing in Emergency Care and part-owner of Emergency Services of New England. Rory also has a background in healthcare and has worked as an EMT in the past. Rachel stated that she had reviewed the Rescue Committee Report prepared in November 2019 which analyzed cost, response times, qualifications and personnel, equipment, etc. available through Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad (LVRS) and Rescue Inc., and she hoped to convince the Selectboard to change to Rescue Inc. for the town's emergency service needs. Until recently, she was under the impression that emergency service providers were arbitrarily assigned to each town, but has learned that towns can choose the emergency service provider it wants. She believes the town's decision to use LVRS was based largely on financial factors and did not focus on outcomes. She shared an example of a chainsaw accident this fall and the waiting time for an ambulance after calling 9-1-1. Rachel responded to the scene to offer assistance when she learned of the incident. She believes that the waiting time and skill level of the first responders could have made a difference in the outcome. She characterized the report's recommendation to increase the number of first responders with AEDs as narrow-sighted based on the many emergencies such as flu, respiratory syncytial virus in infants and toddlers, seizures, diabetic complications, ATV/snowmobile rollovers, falls, etc. where AEDs wouldn't help. She feels that Rescue Inc., which is staffed 24/7, would provide a faster response and more highly trained staff which would optimize the potential for the best outcome. Rescue Inc. charges a fee of \$28 per household to the towns it serves and offers subscription plans to residents (\$60 or \$120 per year) to reduce out of pocket expenses. (Fee and subscription costs based on rates in effect July 1, 2017). Rachel suggested putting the issue to a vote at Town Meeting. She offered to brainstorm creative ways to cover the expenses associated with Rescue Inc. Brief discussion followed on mutual aid and back-up arrangements between towns. Rachel and Rory left the meeting after sharing their perspectives. Brief discussion followed on whether the issue should be taken up at Town Meeting or whether town government should make the decision. Peter offered to look into the costs based on the number of households in town and what qualifies as a household. Discussion of this topic will continue at upcoming Selectboard Meetings.

Delinquent Tax Collector

Maureen announced that Erin Kehoe has resigned from the position of Delinquent Tax Collector. The position cannot be left vacant and the Selectboard needs to appoint an Interim Delinquent Tax Collector to serve until election at the next Town Meeting. Tom Widger may be interested in serving as Delinquent Tax Collector as of March (Town Meeting) but wants to talk with Erin and Mike McLaine before making a decision. Mike McLaine has agreed to fill in as Interim Delinquent Tax Collector until Town Meeting but not beyond. He needs the check deposit register from Erin, and he will work with Kathy Scott to send out February delinquency notices.

Motion: To appoint Mike McLaine as Interim Delinquent Tax Collector effective immediately—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

The Meeting House:

Transition Update

Kord reported that the Church Council has developed and signed a resolution to relinquish its share of the Meeting House to the Town. Following up on recent discussion about whether the Church should be represented by separate legal counsel, Mike McLaine spoke with Atty. James A. “Lexi” Young who agreed to provide legal counsel for the Church. Atty. Bob Fisher will represent the Town. Details are still being worked out but should be finalized soon. Kord also noted that Jonathan and Elizabeth Stevens were not able to locate the deed to the building in the Town records as town government was a theocratic form of leadership at that time.

PACIF Insurance Update

Kord explained that the Church paid the first quarter insurance installment for the Meeting House in November, and Dave Crittenden suggested the Town take over as of February 15 when the next payment is due. Kord requested an insurance quote from PACIF which came in at \$3500 per year (see attached). This is substantially less than under the current policy. Kord reported that Dave Crittenden was not interested in trying to pursue a partial refund from the insurance carrier. Kord will complete the paperwork to get the building insured through PACIF effective February 15, 2020.

Roads:

General Update

No recent winter storms to discuss. The road crew has been placing signs around town to warn drivers of frost heaves and bumps. John Hoover noted the development of some fissures and rough road sections on White and Horsenail Hill Roads. Brief discussion followed on crack sealing and whether to address this now or wait until the weather warms. Kord will discuss this with the engineer and Richard.

F550 Replacement Pricing Plans

Kord has gotten prices from dealerships on vehicles in stock to replace the F550. He feels that purchasing a vehicle with a typical municipal truck configuration is the wrong approach. He would prefer to review available options and configurations before making a decision. He met with a Ford dealer today, and arranged meetings with two truck body companies for Wednesday of this week. Peter Chamberlain may be interested in participating at these meetings and Maureen will warn a meeting if Peter joins Kord.

House Bill 420 – Information from Carolyn Partridge

Carolyn Partridge shared information with Maureen re: House Bill 420. This bill (see attached) proposes allowing towns with no state highways within their borders to use grants received under the Class 2 Town Highway Roadway Program on their Class 3 roads. Windham has a small section (.35 miles) of Route 11 within its boundaries which may disqualify us. Maureen will follow up with Carolyn.

Roadside Mowing

Kord noted that in the past, it has been difficult to secure quotes from contractors to perform roadside mowing during specific time periods. Gail provided the name of the company that performs a good job in Andover, and Kord has requested a quote from them. We may need to be flexible regarding the timing. A suggestion was made to ask a member of the Conservation Commission about the effectiveness of spot mowing to control invasive species as was done this past year.

Correspondence/Payroll/Bills

Correspondence included a letter from the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation which was given to Peter for review. Putney Press will be closing and is offering copies of the Vermont Act 250 handbook and Vermont Government Directory at close-out prices (see attached). Information re: Restorative Community Justice of Southern Vermont was also received. It was suggested that RCJSV may be helpful in settling a dispute among tenants in town over a barking dog. Kord will post this information after reviewing it. Three heavyweight truck permits were received; Kord will handle these. Kord noted that requests for vehicles over 80,000 lbs. have been denied. Brief discussion followed regarding enlisting Jeffrey Trowt of DMV to assist if needed. The petition for a 5-member Selectboard was resubmitted on January 27, 2020 (see attached). Maureen will include this for discussion at the next meeting. She noted that while Bob Kehoe expressed a willingness to serve for one year, the petition specifies a term of two years for the additional members. Kathy Scott joined the meeting for review of payroll and bills. She noted the need to discuss Garage M&I and Town Office M&I, but this discussion can wait until after Town Meeting. A bill was received today for the new racks in the office which will be paid out of Town Office M&I.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the regular Selectboard meeting at 7:09 p.m.—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Cumming
Selectboard Clerk

Attachments:

- Insurance quote for the Meeting House from VLCT-PACIF
- House Bill 420
- Correspondence: letter from Putney Press and re-submitted petition