

Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2021 Regular Meeting

Present via Zoom:

Maureen Bell, Selectboard Chair
George Dutton, Selectman
Russ Cumming, Lister
Louise Johnson, Meeting House Committee
Kathy Jungermann, various positions
Pat McLaine
Kathy Scott, Treasurer
Tom Widger, Meeting House Committee

Kord Scott, Selectman
Dawn Bower, various positions
Bill Dunkel, various positions
Tom Johnson, various positions
Mike McLaine, Town Clerk
Barbara Jean Quinn
Eileen Widger, various positions
Gail Wyman, Assistant Treasurer

Call to Order:

Maureen announced the meeting and called it to order at 5:32 PM

Additions to Agenda/Announcements/Reminders

Maureen requested Kord update us on the repair status of the Town Office generator – add to Old Business. Kord asked to talk about the VTrans annual TA-60 form – add to Roads. Maureen and Kord welcomed George to the Selectboard.

Elect Selectboard Chair and Vice-Chair

Maureen nominated herself for Chair. All voted in favor.
Maureen nominated Kord for Vice-Chair. All voted in favor.

Appoint Selectboard Clerk

As there are currently no interested parties, Maureen agreed to take the minutes until someone could be found. We agreed to place a notice for the open position in the Windham New & Notes, which will be published soon. Barring success with that, we can place an ad in a regular newspaper.

Review and Adopt Selectboard Rules of Procedure and Conflict of Interest Policy

Maureen explained that nothing but the signature page changed on the COI Policy and the only change to the Rules, besides the signatures, was the addition of Zoom meetings information for the duration of the Covid pandemic. Maureen will leave the documents at the Office for signature. She also explained how George can get a key to the building. During the explanation of where the documents will be placed for signature, Kord mentioned that he has the Meeting House elevator certificate and will leave it in the same file. Maureen will bring this up at the next Meeting House Committee meeting.

Motion: To adopt Selectboard Rules of Procedure and Conflict of Interest Policy – moved by Maureen. All voted in favor.

Act on minutes from March 1 Regular Selectboard Meeting

Motion: To accept the minutes of the March 1, 2021 Regular Selectboard Meeting as submitted – moved by Maureen. Kord and Maureen voted in favor.

Make re-appointments for Town positions

Road Commissioner – 1 year (Kord Scott)
Planning Commissioner – 4 years (Tom Johnson)

Representatives to Windham Regional Commission – 1 year (Carolyn Partridge & William Dunkel)
Tree Warden – 1 year (Walter Woodruff)
Building Safety Officer – 1 year (Robert Kehoe)
Co-Emergency Management Coordinators – 1 year (Imme Maurath & Kathaleen Jungermann)
Energy Coordinator – 1 year (William Dunkel)
Citizens Advisory Committee Member – 3 years (Bonnie Chase & Michael Simonds), 1 year (Sally Hoover) Discussion regarding Sally accepting a 1 year term to even out the term expirations. Also, there was a question as to whether Kathy Scott is on the committee. She was appointed at least year's meeting.
Green-up Coordinator – 1 year (Ellen McDuffie)
Conservation Commissioners – 4 years (Dawn Bower & Ellen McDuffie)
Energy Committee Member – 3 year (Vance Bell)
Meeting House Committee Members – 3 years (Louise Johnson & Tom Widger), 2 years (filling out a vacant term, Imme Maurath)
Deerfield Valley Communications Union District Representatives – 1 year (Dave Cherry & Rory Rosselot)

Motion to accept the slate of nominees – moved by Maureen. All voted in favor.

Public Comment

Bill Dunkel provided a report from the Planning Commission. The PC received a letter from the VT Transportation Board regarding the increase in permit requests for helipads. They decided the best thing to do was to talk with other Towns. On the recommendation of John Bennett at the Windham Regional Commission, they will also touch base with organizations like the VT League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) and the VT Planners Association.

Another issue is whether our current Zoning Plan would protect us from a paramilitary organization from locating here (like what has happened in Pawlet). The PC thinks it does but before checking with our Town Attorney, they will do a little more investigation into the issue.

New Business:

Recap of Town Meeting Day

It appears that Town Meeting Day, with 192 ballots cast and some new registered voters, was highly successful. We want to thank Mike McLaine and his team for the work that they did. Welcome again to George – we are really looking forward to working with you. Kord brought up the fact that almost every town reported increased voting (because of the Australian ballot). People like that, but they also like the more participatory and traditional actual Town Meeting. It will be interesting to see what happens going forward. Maureen reminded us that we had the petition for Australian balloting a little more than a year ago and it was defeated.

Notice of VLCT's Selectboard Institute

Maureen explained a little bit about what the VLCT is – an organization in place to help Towns with guidance about running the Town. They have a staff of Attorneys who help with legislative issues. Annually, they present the Selectboard Institute – a meeting to help guide SB members. This year it will be presented as a webinar. They encourage new SB members, as well as seasoned veterans, to attend. Maureen indicated that she's learned a lot from them and highly recommends that George consider attending. It is online March 24 and since he hasn't received it yet, Maureen will forward registration info on to George. The cost is \$48 for PACIF (the insurance arm of the VLCT) members. Kord advised George that we are members and to note that when registering, as the price for non-members is higher. Maureen may also attend.

Hamilton Falls Access Sign Proposal

Maureen received an email from John Beagan who said that on West Windham Road they have already begun to see lots of traffic out to the Falls. George was able to confirm this. John and Alison Trowbridge have been working on a sign to direct people away from the West Windham Road entrance to the Falls and point them toward the entrance in Jamaica. The sign will read "Access to Hamilton Falls through Jamaica State Park in Jamaica Village" with an arrow pointing the way. They would like our help posting the sign. Kord has spoken with Richard Paré who will coordinate with Alison. He needs to know how big the sign is and if it will need 1 post or 2. He will also find out exactly where she would like it posted. George would like to see 2 signs.

Bill was concerned about the parking area and asked if it was to be blocked off. He also wants to know who owns the trail going to the Park and if it will be closed. Maureen is going to review her notes from last year (Forest, Parks & Rec) to remember exactly what they said. Kord and George remember that they were going to review the issues and come up with a formal policy. George said that the parking area cannot be closed, as handicap access must be provided. There will probably be limited parking again. Kord offered that we had spoken about the possibility of closing the road to all but local traffic, but said we cannot legally do that.

Renewable Heat Program from Brattleboro Energy Committee

Bill sent information about an online meeting next Wednesday, March 24 at 6 PM. It's about making the switch from fossil fuels to renewable heat. A detailed email is available – let Maureen or Bill know if you are interested.

Online Bill Pay

Kathy S. had wanted to address this issue, but we will get back to it at another time.

Office Key for George

George will stop in at the office tomorrow and liaise with Mike.

Old Business:

Update on Town Generator

Kord reported that the generator has been repaired as quoted. Radiator, muffler and pipes were all replaced.

Roads:

Rt 121 Culvert Engineering Award

Kord reminded us about the large culvert project at the beginning of the unpaved section of Rt 121. It's a Federally-funded project estimated to be \$495,000. There are lots of rules and procedures for us to follow and as such, we previously named the Windham Regional Commission/Margo Ghia as the Municipal Project Manager. Three firms responded to the Request for Proposal: Eckman Engineering, Engineering Ventures and Otter Creek Engineering. The Selection Committee, comprised of Margo, Kord, Richard and VTrans engineer Peter Pochop, scored the firms. Engineering Ventures is missing a few key components so it comes down to the other 2. Both of these firms were deemed technically competent and scored similarly, before looking at pricing. Eckman's bid is \$72,571.84. Otter Creek is \$52,266.00. Otter Creek has done similar projects, whereas Eckman has not. This gives Otter Creek the edge. The budget for this portion of the job is \$72,000 so Eckman was ~\$2500 over and Otter Creek is ~\$20,000 under budget. The Selection Committee's recommendation is to go with Otter Creek and the SB is asked to act on that tonight.

Motion: To hire Otter Creek to do the design portion of the Rt 121 culvert project – moved by Kord. All voted in favor.

Motion: If necessary, to allow Kord to sign any documents awarding the design phase of the project to Otter Creek Engineering - moved by Maureen. All voted in favor.

Town Highway Emergency Fund Grant Approval for 12.25.2020 Storm

The Town sustained a lot of damage to ditches and unpaved roads. VTrans was called out to look at the damage, which was estimated at \$50,000. Our threshold for State emergency financial assistance, which is calculated annually, was \$20,000 for 2020. Therefore, we were able to request this assistance. We learned this week that it was approved. The Road Crew can now go ahead and plan for this work.

Added item – VTrans TA60 Report

As mentioned above, VTrans calculates our threshold for State emergency financial assistance on an annual basis, based on our Roads budget. Under normal circumstances, VTrans sets a meeting with the SB, but they prefer not to do that this year. Our contact, Meghan Brunk, has already seen our Town's Annual Report and calculated the amount – about \$20,000, which is similar to last year.

Motion: To allow Kord to sign the TA-60 form that Meghan prepared – moved by Maureen. All voted in favor.

As an added note, a reminder that last year the State did not award paving and large structures grants because of the pandemic. Windham was high on the list to receive money. Mark Pickering of VTrans feels optimistic that because of all the stimulus money coming in to the State, they will resume awarding grants. We should continue to be near the top of the list, for both paving and structures grants, each being around \$175,000. It would be nice to get the paving grant – we need that.

Payroll and Bills:

Maureen explained the procedure of “signing off” on the Payroll and Bills to George.

Motion: To approve payroll and bills presented for this meeting and authorize Kord to sign off on same – moved by Maureen. All voted in favor.

Adjournment:

Motion: To adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 6:24 PM – moved by Maureen. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bell
Acting Selectboard Clerk

Attachments:

- Design Engineering Selection Justification from Margo Ghia