

Minutes of the March 12, 2012 Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Present: Neal Fox, Joe De Freitas, Bill Hall, Delbert Cloud, Geneva Gaiko, Laura Rubenis, Lisa Hill, Carl Russell, and Amy Danley-White for the "Herald of Randolph."

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM by Chairman Neal Fox, the Board first reviewing and approving the weekly payroll and payables. The minutes of the February 27, 2012 meeting of the Board of Selectmen were approved by motion of Joe De Freitas, seconded by Neal Fox and thus carried. The regional planning commission minutes of January 18 and January 26, 2012 were reviewed and placed on file. Discussion of the "Enhanced Consultation" process as described in the RPC's minutes resulted in agreement that the Selectboard and the Bethel Planning Commission would both plan to participate in that review of the Town's planning since it will likely occur in the near future, pre-empting the need for a similar discussion between only the Selectboard and the local Planning Commission as has been previously considered.

The Board then reviewed a submittal from the regional planning commission which categorized transportation projects being planned in the region by the type of project. Attached was a list of Town Highway Bridge Projects, and Delbert Cloud noted that a third bridge in the Town of Bethel has been added at his request, although it is anticipated that the subject bridges will be replaced with FEMA assistance rather than by inclusion in the State's bridge replacement program.

The Board then discussed a letter dated March 2, 2012 from Vicky Drew of the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program, this advising of the availability of additional funding as will allow more private property owners an opportunity to receive assistance with streambank stabilization work through the EWP Program. It was noted by the Board that some additional debris removal work should be done on the Town's behalf to protect bridges, particularly on Lilliesville Brook Road.

Delbert Cloud shared with the Board several points of information relative to procurements he is hoping to make for continuing public infrastructure repairs, much work being necessary in the forthcoming construction season.

Budget Status Reports as of March 1, 2012 for the Town General Fund, the Water Department, the Wastewater Department, and the Solid Waste Program were next reviewed, no action being required or taken. In association with the solid waste program, a March 8, 2012 memo from the Royalton Selectboard was received, this inviting the Bethel Selectboard to participate in discussion about the future ownership and administrative structure of that program in a meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The Board members concurred that the date is agreeable, provided that the meeting will not commence before 7:00 PM. Delbert Cloud will confirm with the Royalton Board.

The "Delinquent Tax Report" as of February 29, 2012 was examined, and Delbert Cloud voiced concern that the aggregate dollar amount is quite high, even though he expects the amount listed under the third installment date for the current year will likely decrease as reminder notices are sent out. It appears that a tax sale action may need to be scheduled this spring to reduce the level of delinquency.

The Board acknowledged receipt of a February 27, 2012 letter from Health Officer Erin Boettcher, advising that she would not seek reappointment when her term of office ends on March 31, 2012. Given the excellent service provided by Ms. Boettcher as Health Officer, the Board members expressed sincere regret, and agreed that a letter of appreciation for her service should be prepared for the Board members' signatures.

By motion of Joe De Freitas, seconded by Bill Hall and unanimously carried, David Aiken was re-appointed to the "Stagecoach" Board of Directors for an additional term of one year.

Delbert Cloud informed the Board that Abbie Sherman has successfully applied for a grant of One Thousand Dollars from the New England ADA Center, which will assist the Recreation Committee to evaluate accessibility needs at the Town's recreation facility. A "Field Based Training Day" will be conducted at the facility as part of the grant program award. The grant funds themselves will be deposited in the Bethel Recreation Facility Improvement Fund.

Several communications were then reviewed: (1) aggregate statistical information from FEMA re. individual and public assistance for the Irene recovery work, (2) clippings of press coverage for Town Meeting from the “Rutland Herald” and the “Valley News,” (3) a copy of the Agenda for the “FEMA Informational Meeting” held at the school cafeteria on September 27, 2011 which had been billed as a community meeting with an agenda open for discussion and a “Remainder of Time Questions/Answers/Comments” portion, and (4) notices of two training seminars for Town officers, sponsored by the VLCT.

Discussion turned to the need for additional designation of handicap parking spaces at the Town Hall, this having become apparent at Town Meeting. Delbert Cloud will follow up on this as soon as conditions allow for necessary posting and lining.

Chairman Fox then spoke of the need to set a time for a public meeting on the Irene recovery issue, as had been discussed at Town Meeting. Laura Rubenis requested that the minutes of this meeting show the September 27, 2011 meeting to have been designated as a “FEMA informational meeting;” Delbert Cloud replied that it was designated exactly as such but that it was introduced as being an “open agenda” and the questions/answers portion included various considerations. Bill Hall said he has spoken with a person he believes would be an excellent moderator for the public meeting and recommends holding the meeting on a Saturday evening which might be a favorable time for many people to attend. Neal Fox said he considers the meeting to be a public forum and not an official Town Meeting as would require 30 days warning. Two dates were suggested, these being March 31<sup>st</sup> and April 7<sup>th</sup>; Bill Hall said he would check on the schedule of the potential moderator.

Laura Rubenis inquired for additional details about the application procedure for the Town’s “Irene Relief Fund,” wondering if a review committee has been appointed, how applications would be reviewed, how soon decisions would be made, and if the committee would be in place by the end of March which is the application submittal deadline. The Board members agreed to assess the level of needs as demonstrated by applications which may be submitted by the next Board meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

Lisa Hill offered that, if the “Irene” meeting were to be held at the Town Hall, consideration should be given to making the floor area function agreeably for handicap use. She said anyone confined to a wheelchair could not have accessed the ballot box at Town Meeting.

Carl Russell suggested the Board should invite someone from the White River Partnership to a Board meeting to explain the importance of debris in and along stream channels and why restrictions were made by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources about removing too much of it. Joe De Freitas replied that he had encouraged the Director of the White River Partnership to schedule a visit with both the Selectboard, and the Rotary Club.

Laura Rubenis then asked for additional information about applicant qualifications for the job in the solid waste program now advertised, and if there is a job description available. Delbert Cloud replied that the job is advertised as requested by the Royalton and Bethel Selectboards, to hire a temporary employee to serve as an on-site supervisor and to help keep the facility more clean and organized. A versatile person will be needed, and the duties will depend on the skills of the selected applicant; job descriptions for this person and present employees may have to be adjusted to best utilize the abilities of all employees. Anyone interested in applying and having questions should call the Town Office. It was also clarified through question from Lisa Hill that the solid waste program operates primarily on “user fees” not tax dollars. Joe De Freitas added that the way the program is being operated now may be changed in the near future, which is why the job is temporary – new staffing and job descriptions may be necessary if the structure of the program is changed.

With no further business to attend, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM by motion of Joe De Freitas, seconded by Bill Hall and unanimously carried.

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Neal Fox

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Joe De Freitas

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Bill Hall