

Minutes of the September 24, 2012 Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Present: Neal Fox, Joe De Freitas, Bill Hall, Delbert Cloud, Abbie Sherman, Christie Nicholson, Mark Nicholson, Wanaka Garber, Thomas Moran, Sandra Ford, Fay Ford, John McHaffie, Geneva Gaiko, Mary Floyd, Leonard Meek, Thomas Laue, James Glass, Eleanor Griffin, Carl Russell, Dick McCormack, and Janice Punger.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Neal Fox, the Board first reviewing and approving the weekly payroll and payables. Chairman Fox then asked if the public had inquiry or comment regarding any matter of interest.

Mary Floyd reported on the community festival event held over the preceding weekend, it having been considered a very successful program. She advised that a need for better traffic control measures at future events had become evident. Chairman Fox referenced the fact that several people in Town might be trained in traffic control through the CERT program, and that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns also can provide training. Given the time-frame available, it was agreed that adequate measures could likely be found to provide for the matter. Chairman Fox then made the motion to write a letter commending Mary Floyd for her civic contributions for placement in the "Herald of Randolph," this motion being seconded by Bill Hall and unanimously carried.

Discussion then turned to the subject of Old Route 12 and the damaged bridge which is not expected at this time to be re-built. Several people were present to express concerns over the status of the road itself if the bridge is not to be replaced. Bill Hall explained the process under Vermont law as to how the matter has to be addressed by the Selectboard, noting that the Board must yet determine the details being asked about. Neal Fox concurred, and said the answers have not yet been developed for the questions being asked. Sandra Ford and James Glass expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the routine maintenance being performed on the road. Christie Nicholson spoke of problems that have not yet been fixed on the bridge further downstream, referencing erosion of the approaches and guardrails that have not been secured. The Board assured her that these matters would be looked into.

The Board then turned to the order of the agenda. The minutes of the Selectboard meeting of September 10, 2012 were approved by motion of Bill Hall, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried. A model of the proposed information sign to be placed in the vicinity of the Town Hall was examined, this having been made by George Burnham. Several suggestions were made about the possible location for the sign, and it was agreed that the Board should meet at the site to try to resolve where it should be put during the next Board meeting in October. At the request of Mascoma Savings Bank, the Board members endorsed a "corrected" Promissory Note for the "Streetscape" line of credit, the earlier version having contained an error in its text which the Bank wished to have changed.

The Planning Commission minutes of September 19, 2012 were next reviewed and placed on file, the Board noting that the Municipal Planning Grant application for financial assistance in developing a new Town Plan has been submitted to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. The agenda for the September 26, 2012 meeting of the regional planning commission was also reviewed and placed on file. Chairman Fox referenced the Town Plans that were scheduled for review by the RPC, and suggested that it might be beneficial for the reviews to be conducted within each Town to provide for a more pertinent consideration of factors discussed.

The Board next discussed a proposal for consultant services, to assist the Recreation Committee with development of a Master Plan for the facility on Pleasant Street. Bill Hall inquired about the phases of work envisioned. Abbie Sherman responded, noting that the Selectboard and Committee had agreed that the Master Plan should be developed as a first step, to guide decisions and subsequent grant applications. After due consideration, motion was made by Bill Hall, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried, to retain the firm recommended by the Committee, this being Vermont Integrated Architecture, with the consideration for the contract being drawn from the fund established for the facility improvements project. It was also agreed that

the Committee would discuss the matter of new members and report back to the Board with recommendations.

Delbert Cloud then explained various points of information about the FEMA Home Buy-out Program, referencing the fact that four properties in Bethel have been approved by the FEMA review office for participation. He noted that the time has come, knowing eligibility status of the four applicants, for the Board to confirm if the buy-out projects should proceed. The involved properties, once purged of all improvements, become the property of the Town. Referencing his support for the precepts of the program, Bill Hall made the motion to proceed with the acquisitions, this motion being seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried.

Delbert Cloud then offered explanation of the status for repair/replacement of three bridges damaged by tropical storm Irene. Bids are due October 1, 2012 for repair of Peavine Bridge. There is still uncertainty over the procedure for replacement of bridges #35 and #37 in Gilead, but every effort is being taken by Town staff to coordinate with the State of Vermont Recovery Office and FEMA officials to keep the projects moving forward. Mary Floyd and Carl Russell asked how the hydraulic requirements for replacement bridges are determined. Cloud replied that hydraulic evaluations are done by engineers from the Vermont Agency of Transportation, or in some cases (not these) engineers at the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources; replacement structures such as these have to meet the hydraulic standards of the Agency of Natural Resources.

Under other business, the Board reviewed a request from Sue Skaskiw, Executive Director of "Vermont Volunteer Services for Animals Humane Society" for permission to conduct a fund-raising coin drop on Main Street on Saturday, September 29, 2012. The Board discussed coin drops in general, and the question was raised by Bill Hall as to whether they should be authorized, or not. Ultimately, Joe De Freitas suggested that a precedent had already been set for this year, and made the motion to approve the current request; this motion was seconded by Neal Fox and thus carried.

The next two items on the agenda called for executive session and deliberative session. Senator Richard McCormack asked if he could sit in on the deliberative session, and referenced advice he had received from the Secretary of State about the "open meeting law." Delbert Cloud said that deliberations by judicial and quasi-judicial boards are purposely exempt from provisions of the "open meeting law," and that the Board will need to prepare a written report on its decision within 60 days from the August 13, 2012 public hearing, such report then becoming public.

With the understanding that a deliberative session would follow, the motion was made at 7:50 PM by Joe De Freitas to enter executive session to discuss litigation in which the Town is a party, this motion being seconded by Bill Hall and unanimously carried. Delbert Cloud was the only person remaining with the Board; no minutes were kept. The Board returned to open meeting at 8:45 PM. The only motion was to adjourn to Wednesday, September 26, 2012 at 7:00 PM at the Bethel Town Office to meet in joint session with the Royalton Selectboard re. business of the solid waste program, this motion being made by Bill Hall, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried.

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Neal Fox

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Joe De Freitas

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Bill Hall