

Minutes of September 26, 2016 Regular Selectboard Meeting.

Present: Board Members Carl Russell, Lisa Hill, Chris Jarvis, Vanessa Brown, and Moe Brigham. Others present: Town Manager Keith Arlund, Assistant Town Manager Abbie Sherman, Geneva Gaiko, Ele Griffin, Joseph Russo, Mary Floyd, Robert Gaiko, Kevin Geiger of Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, Leslie Silberberg, Barbara Hart, Janice Punger, Jose Lazo, Colin Floyd, Kim Aldrighetti, Tim Aldrighetti, Carla Hodgdon, Fred Dieffenbach, Bill Kevan, Andrew Delaney, Penny Griffin, Rosalie Benson, Sonya Stanley, David Stanley, Eric Benson, Greg Abbott, Lisa Abbott, Mel Washburn, Arlene Nelson, Al Nelson, Tim Brennan, Kristin LaFromboise, John Broker-Campbell of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and Lisa Campbell for the "Herald of Randolph."

Chairperson Russell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Public Comment or Inquiry:

1. Ele Griffin, on behalf of the Recreation Committee, requested permission from the Board to conduct a 50/50 raffle on September 30 and October 1 as part of the Better Block Initiative and Forward Festival to raise funds for future needs. Permission was granted by the Board.
2. Lisa Campbell shared with the Board that Bob Taylor had secured funding from Chippers to improve plantings at the Bethel Common. Nothing is expected from the Town for resources and Campbell would oversee the project. The Board agreed the project was acceptable.
3. Bill Kevan inquired as to whether a grant had been applied to for installation of water meters. He does not feel that equivalent units are equitable. Hill advised that an engineering firm had given an estimate of over \$300,000 to install meters. Before meters can be installed, each customer must have a marked and appropriate shut-off valve, which the Town is currently working towards. Russell noted that the study conducted by the engineering firm showed that each customer would still have at least 75 percent of their fee as a flat rate, the remainder being based on meter readings.
4. Kevan also inquired into the status of the water line at the Depot. Russell reminded Kevan the matter is in litigation and cannot be discussed.
5. Janice Punger asked if the Town is insured against lawsuits. Arlund stated that it depends on the nature of litigation. Punger asked if the Town is paying for Stitzel, Page & Fletcher in the lawsuit she has against the Town. Brown advised Punger that a Selectboard meeting is not the appropriate forum for her question and she should discuss the matter with her attorney. The Board would not discuss the matter further.
6. Barbara Hart inquired as to why her utility bill is the same rate as Bethel Mills. Russell suggested Hart review her bill with the Town Office.

Appointments:

1. **Members of the Energy Committee re. Status and Application for Grant Funding.** Jose Lazo, Tim Brennan, and Kristin LaFromboise were present on behalf of the Energy Committee. Lazo provided a presentation to the Board covering the goals of the State's Comprehensive Energy Plan, the regional commission's upcoming forum, and the Energy Committee's mission statement. Russell advised that the next draft of the Town Plan, which will begin in 2017, will have energy requirements. The Energy Committee is seeking funding through two programs: (a) the Vital Communities Grant to team up local contractors with residents to assist in weatherizing their homes. This program requires the Board's authorization to participate in the program; (b) the Button Up Day of Action grant which would assist homeowners in increasing efficiency through simple solutions. This grant for \$2,500 has been applied for by Molly LaFromboise as part of her senior project and requires the Board's approval as fiscal sponsor. Russell inquired Sherman as to the administrative burden for such grants. Sherman noted that any grant requires a certain level of administrative time, including reporting requirements as part of the Town's audits. Neither of the proposed grants included an administration fee, which is asked for in other situations. It was noted that future grants should include this provision if possible. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham, to authorize the Town to act as fiscal sponsor and supply a letter of support to complete the grant application. All were in favor. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham, to authorize Keith Arlund to sign as municipal representative for the Vital Communities Program. All were in favor.

2. **Representatives from the Bethel Planning Commission, Bethel Conservation Commission, and Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission (TRORC), re. Discussion of the Draft Unified Zoning Bylaw.** Russell advised that members of the various parties were present to provide clarification to the Board on aspects of the Zoning Bylaws. He noted that small changes to the bylaws would require no further action, however substantial changes would need to be filed with the Town Clerk and the first hearing scheduled no earlier than 10 days after. As these are proposed bylaws at the moment, the Board is allowed to have as many hearings as they wish. John Broker-Campbell was present to answer Board questions as Floodplain Manager providing local assistance to towns. Mary Floyd advised that the Conservation Commission had not yet met to discuss the bylaws and do not have a consensus at this time. Floyd asked how the river corridor was created. Broker-Campbell advised that it has been in progress for many years at the request of the legislature to have state-wide maps. The atlas is a computer model created using a field-based approach. River engineers are now incorporating on-the-ground limitations and periodically updating the maps. Russell noted that the original discussion regarding river corridor was not based on maps. While it appears a large number of properties are affected by the river corridor, many of these already have restriction imposed by the current zoning bylaws. Hill noted that there is the option to participate in the NFIP Community Rating System in lieu of adopting river corridor regulations to be eligible for additional emergency relief funds through ERAF. Broker-Campbell explained the NFIP system and advised that this option is administratively labor intensive and is an option larger towns or cities use. Kevin Geiger (TRORC), Broker-Campbell, and Russell will work on variabilities of the current river corridor maps. There is confusion regarding the basis for the river corridor which is the erodible channel of the stream, not the areas that flood. Russell would like to hold an informational meeting for the public. Brigham suggested TRORC bring the flume to demonstrate as part of that meeting. Motion by Moe Brigham, seconded by Chris Jarvis, to hold an informational meeting on Wednesday, October 19 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Bethel Town Hall. All were in favor.

Reports, Motions, and Ordinances:

1. **Review of Construction Bids for Buy-Out Properties and Award of Contract.** Results of the bid opening held on September 16 were reviewed for accuracy and responsiveness by the Town's engineer, DuBois & King, Inc., with Northwoods Excavating being the recommended selection. The construction project is being paid for by grant funds. Motion to authorize Keith Arlund to execute the Notice of Award and Contract Documents was made by Lisa Hill and seconded by Moe Brigham. All were in favor.
2. **Consideration of Offer to Purchase Property at 30 Densmore Drive.** Lisa Southworth contacted the Town to find out if the Town has interest in purchasing the subject property which is located just east of the Town Hall. Brown abstained from the conversation as she is a neighboring property owner. There was discussion as to whether it would be a suitable location for new Town Offices. Slope, accessibility, and parking were concerns. The Board took no action at this time and suggested the property owner proceed with sale of the property.
3. **Review of Historic Preservation Grant Application.** The Board reviewed a draft application prepared to apply for assistance in repainting the Town Hall's bell/clock tower. The maximum award for the grant is \$20,000 and requires a 50 percent match which must be in hand at the time of application. The Town presently has \$10,000 in matching funds available and is seeking \$10,000 in grant funding. It was noted that maintenance projects such as this are of lower priority for the granting agency and the actual cost of the project may be greater than \$20,000. Arlund is seeking cost estimates at this time which will be made part of the grant application. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham, to approve application to the Historic Preservation grant program. All were in favor.
4. **Review and Filing of Internal Controls Checklist and Discussion of FY16 Audit.** Sherman prepared the Internal Controls Checklist as part of annual audit requirements. It was noted that there are areas that could be improved upon. Further discussion will be made with the Town's auditors when they arrive to begin the fiscal year 2016 audit on November 7. Sherman provided the Board with the list of items required by the auditors and advised that Bill Hall has offered to provide his expertise since the Town is still without a bookkeeper.
5. **Review of the FY2014 Audit for the Bethel/Royalton Transfer Station.** A copy of the completed FY'14 audit was provided to the Board for review and consideration. The FY'15

audit for the Bethel/Royalton Transfer Station is not yet complete. The Board is meeting with the Royalton Selectboard and the Transfer Station Program Board on October 12 at 7 p.m. at the Royalton Town Office. It was noted possible changes to the interlocal agreement may be discussed.

6. Town Manager's Report:

- a. Main Street Flags. Arlund has contacted Neal Fox of the American Legion Post #66, who will replace or remove any damaged flags. Russell advised that the flags have never been the Town's responsibility. It was a project initiated by the former Bethel Business Association. Hill and Russell reiterated that the Town should not take on projects that are initiated by other groups.
- b. Constable's Report. Arlund advised that Constable Mark Belisle will have a presence over the upcoming Forward Festival weekend. Jarvis noted that speeds through town are still excessive and noted that no tickets are being issued.
- c. Status Update of Action Items.
 - i. Russell will work with the Ancient Roads Committee to establish an agenda for next season.
 - ii. Arlund announced that paving on Camp Brook Road is expected to begin on September 27.
 - iii. Flow tests on the water system as part of the Town's Asset Management Grant with the State will occur on September 27.
 - iv. Hill requested a work period for the next Board meeting to address lingering action items.

Minutes and Communications:

- 1. Selectboard Minutes of September 12, 2016. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham, to approved the Selectboard minutes of September 12, 2016. All were in favor.
- 2. Committee Minutes. The Board acknowledged receipt of the Conservation Commission minutes of September 13, 2016.

Any Other Business Necessary to Come Before the Board:

- 1. Determination of October Meeting Dates. Russell advised the Board that the regularly scheduled meeting on October 10 conflicts with a Town holiday and staff will not be available. Motion by Moe Brigham, seconded by Lisa Hill, to hold a meeting on Monday, October 17 in lieu of the October 10 date. All were in favor.
- 2. Brigham advised that he had received an inquiry as to why the town crew does not have a 5-day work week. Russell and Arlund suggested this be reviewed as part of the budgeting process.

At 8:45 PM, Moe Brigham made the motion to recess until the October 12 meeting with the Royalton Selectboard and the Transfer Station Program Board at 7 p.m. at the Royalton Town Office, seconded by Lisa Hill. All were in favor.

Carl Russell

Lisa Hill

Vanessa Brown

Chris Jarvis

Moe Brigham