

Minutes of October 17, 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, Jose Lazo, Janice Pungler, Lucien Hinkle, Joann Wood, Julie Hinman, and Lisa Campbell for the "Herald of Randolph."

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

Approval of the Agenda:

1. Russell advised that he had invited Julie Hinman of the Bethel Revitalization Initiative to attend the meeting to report on the Better Block Project as an additional appointment with the Board.

Public Comment or Inquiry:

1. Jose Lazo, on behalf of the Energy Committee, inquired as to whether the funds for the Button-Up Vermont Grant were available to access. Arlund advised that there are some additional forms that need to be completed prior to release of the funds. Lazo provided the Selectboard with a revised Mission Statement for Energy Committee and asked that it be reviewed and approved. Three additional points were added by the Committee: (1) informing the community, (2) including the State's comprehensive energy plan, and (3) sustainable renewable resources. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Vanessa Brown, to approve the revised Mission Statement. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Lucien Hinkle inquired the Board regarding the amount of money spent defending a current lawsuit and how that compares to the amount budgeted. He also asked why the Town was not using the elected Town Agent, Debra Leahy, to defend the Town. He thought that the money could be better used to come up with an equitable way to charge water and sewer rates and inquired about the solutions suggested by the Town's consultant. Russell advised that the amount charged to date by the Town's attorneys is \$9,845.67, not \$45,000 as was assumed by others. The Town has hired a consultant in correlation with a grant to study the water department's capital needs and to find efficiencies. The fees assessed to the water department are not arbitrary and are based on the budget that is in the annual report. Hill went on to advise that prior to considering the installation of water meters, the Town needs to take steps to secure grant funding using a systems approach. The Town's consultant had advised that 75% of the user fees are fixed and the installation of meters won't make a significant impact to the reduction of bills. Russell noted that the money spent of meters will not make the delivery of water more efficient or improve functionality. Even with a bond from the State of Vermont, the cost of installing meters does not go away. Regarding Town representation of the lawsuit, Russell advised that the Town has to represent the interest of everyone in the Town. Leahy is the Town Agent, not the Town Lawyer, and she does not specialize in municipal case law. Janice Pungler inquired as to the cost of the Town's attorney who have been working on the case for over a year, as she thought the amount presented was low, suggesting the attorneys were inexpensive. Russell and Arlund advised that this is not the subject lawsuit is not the only item the attorneys are working on for the Town.
3. Joann Wood raised concerns she has regarding ditch work that had recently been completed on River Road (Peavine Boulevard) near the Vargo property. She wondered if the vertical cut was too close to the eight trees along the bank and exposed too much of their root system. Russell advised that there is a fine balance between ditch work that can handle water and snow runoff and removal of trees, which also raises concerns. The Town is try to make expenses in the public works department as efficient as possible and the work is being done with good intent.
4. Lucien Hinkle inquired as to the status of audits. Arlund advised that fiscal year 2014 is available online. Fiscal year 2015 is in final form and will be available online very soon. It is anticipated that atleast a draft of fiscal year 2016 will be available by Town Meeting. Hill noted that the Town has been without a bookkeeper since June 2016.

Appointments:

1. **Recreation Committee:** Ele Griffin was present on behalf of the Recreation Committee. Griffin presented the Board with an end of season report from the Bethel Pool Director and an additional report from the Recreation Committee with recommendations for the 2017 pool season. Both parties felt that the pool season ran very well. Griffin requested

an appointment with the Board at their next meeting to discuss disbursement of funds from the Markle Foundation grant. Russell requested that the Committee also concentrate on expanding recreation opportunities at the Recreation Facility so that it is more than a pool facility and include year-round activities.

2. **Better Block Project:** Julie Hinman was present to report on the outcome of the Bethel Revitalization Initiative's (BRI) Better Block Project. An online community survey is presently being conducted regarding the event. A reduction in speed and noise through the village was noted during the event. A community discussion will be held to continue to build momentum and consider next steps. The BRI will return to the Board at a later meeting with a larger presentation. The Board commended the group for all of their efforts.

Reports, Motions, and Ordinances:

1. **Discussion of Graham Street Highway and River Bank Issues:** An area has been staked out for rerouting the Town Highway, which may be acceptable to the property owner. A survey will be required. Arlund will continue to work with surveyor Larry Swanson, Rob Hyde, and the involved property owner. Pat Ross of the Agency of Natural Resources has looked at the bank in the past and felt it would be too large an expense to try to stabilize the area. Temporary winter provisions may need to be provided for. Other involved expenses for relaying the road include material and legal. If the project is not feasible, other options will be considered.
2. **Review of Draft FY18 Budget Schedule:** The draft schedule was reviewed by the Board, it being noted that the December 26 meeting date is a Town holiday and would need to be moved to a different date. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham, to move the December 26 meeting to December 19. Motion passed unanimously.
3. **Consider Pathways Consulting Proposal for Drywell at Town Garage:** The Town had a permitted drywell at the garage, but the State changed the rules in 2014 or 2015 so a floor drain cannot be located where vehicle maintenance is done. Another option is to connect to the Town sewer system, but the closest location is further down Sand Hill Road. The proposal from Pathways Consulting is for installation of a holding tank, where leachate would be pumped out as needed. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Moe Brigham, to approve the proposal by Pathways Consulting. Motion passed unanimously.
4. **Discussion of Informational Meeting on October 19:** Carl Russell proposed an agenda for that meeting, allowing the first hour for information and presentations by the Agency of Natural Resources and Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission. The second hour will be more interactive, allowing for questions and discussion. Discussion ensued amongst the Board regarding the mapped river corridors and changes that could be made. Russell noted that the Board has the full authority to make changes to the bylaws and he would like to bylaws adopted that would be acceptable should a town-wide vote occur.
5. **Discussion of Email Correspondence Between Andrea Dotolo at Trudell Consulting Engineers:** Dotolo requested an opportunity to provide a presentation at the October 19 Informational Meeting regarding her knowledge of State and federal floodplain regulations. Concern was raised in the correspondence as to the whether the consultants would present as being impartial or as representatives of their clients. Russell advised he was unclear as to the applicability of the consultant's presentation. Hill suggested allowing attendees of the meeting to vote as to whether they want to hear from someone who is not a Bethel resident, much as they would at Town Meeting. Brown preferred the consultant make a presentation on their own time. Brigham noted that the Board would need to allow everyone present 20 minutes of time if the consultant was allowed as much. Hill made the motion to put to public vote as to whether the consultant could make a presentation, seconded by Russell. No response was made by other members of the Board, so Russell as Chair allowed that the matter would be put to vote to maintain openness.
6. **Town Manager's Report:**
 - a. Construction has started on the Marsh Meadow property as part of the improvements of the buy-out properties.
 - b. Arlund requested an opportunity to review the action items list before holding a separate session during a Board meeting to resolve them.
 - c. The Board acknowledge the Constable's Report and noted his presence during the Bethel Better Block program and the Forward Festival. Arlund advised that Constable Belisle is preparing a printout of activity from the speed signs.

- d. A report of the season's road grading activities was provided by Robert Hyde. Hyde is also working on reports of culvert repairs and road ditching.
- e. Arlund attended a site visit at the Perez property on Macintosh Hill Road with Troy Dare, Fire Chief David Aldrighetti, and various contractors, regarding installation of a dry hydrant at that location. Pond dredging and access for fire trucks will be included as part of that grant project with a spring construction date.
- f. As a result of the joint meeting held with the solid waste board and the Royalton Selectboard, staff has been working to separate accounts of the solid waste program. Arlund advised this may be best implemented at either the start of the fiscal year or calendar year and not at the present time. Arlund advised that all reports are available to the program manager and the solid waste board. Russell advised that he that he doesn't feel we should entertain the separation of checking accounts too far but would like to see the processes made as transparent as possible for the solid waste board and program manager.
- g. Hill will continue as the Green-Up Coordinator.

Minutes and Communications:

- 1. **Selectboard Minutes of September 26, 2016:** Motion by Hill to approve the minutes of the September 26, 2016 Selectboard minutes, seconded by Brigham. Motion passed unanimously.
- 2. **Committee Minutes:** The Board acknowledged receipt of the following: (1) September 26, 2016 minutes of the Town Meeting Committees; and (2) October 11, 2016 agenda for the Energy Committee.

Any Other Business Necessary to Come Before the Board:

- 1. Russell advised that he would be making minimal improvements to the class 4 portion of Wright Road, to include removal of a culver and replacing it with a broad-based ditch.

Executive Session to Discuss Town Manager's Review:

- 1. At 7:42 PM, motion made by Brigham to enter executive session, seconded by Hill. Motion passed unanimously. No minutes were kept; no other members of the staff or public remained with the Board.

Board resumed open meeting at 8:40 PM. Motion made by Hill to adjourn, seconded by Brigham. Motion passed unanimously.

Carl Russell

Lisa Hill

Vanessa Brown

Chris Jarvis

Moe Brigham