

Selectboard Regular Meeting • December 12, 2019
Approved Minutes

Selectboard Present: Herb Childress, Chris Fenton, Carl Haynes, Patty Kenyon, Terry Redfield

Town Officers Present: Town Clerk Laura Castle; Auditor Sarah Grimm; Road Foreman Bill Reed

Public Present: John Arsenault; Vicki Arsenault; George Gonda; Don Hemenway; Neil Russell; Eileen Stevenson; Peter Stevenson

Called to order: 7:02 p.m.

Another one of these weird Decembers, snow and rain...

Minutes: T. Redfield moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 26th meeting; P. Kenyon 2nd; [*Aye—Childress, Fenton, Kenyon, Redfield; Abstain—Haynes; motion carried*].

Public: Vicki Arsenault reports a problem in the past two months with rats at the store. There's been no problems during any of the past 22 years. Her exterminator has told her that there are other rat reports in the village center, on all four streets. We have no guesses as to the origin. We have fewer feral cats in the village, which may be reducing the predatory pressure that has kept them down in the past. C. Haynes will investigate what resources the County Health Department might have to offer. H. Childress will talk to VT Pest Control about the approximate perimeter of the infestation. George Gonda (on the school board) will contact the MSES to see if they've had any concerns.

George Gonda and Don Hemenway asked about the future planning of the fire building. We are collecting the questionnaires on facility priorities, and will have a report on that in the first days of the coming week. Whatever facilities financing items go on the ballot for Town Meeting will need to be completed within the next five weeks, so decisions will need to be made quickly.

The RRPC has offered to include us in their brownfields grant, for a study of the North Street town yard. We have yet to consider this request, but a site evaluation like this would be necessary prior to any construction permitting.

Neil Russell explained his issues around the facilities vote, which had primarily to do with the costs of projects. He presented listings for real estate for sale in the region that are of similar size, at significantly lower cost. P. Kenyon explained the ten-year history of the building committee's investigations. He offered \$400-500,000 as a reasonable cost for the town office; \$300,000 for the firehouse; a fiberglass hoop building for salt storage; a pole barn for town vehicles with a two-bay garage for maintenance.

Peter and Eileen Stevenson stated that they have felt disrespected, disregarded, and bullied as the Building Committee and Selectboard have progressed in the planning process. Eileen Stevenson also added that P. Kenyon's statement in the prior meeting minutes was unnecessarily divisive, and not reflective of Middletown Springs values.

H. Childress asked all those assembled for ideas about communication, since so many people have felt as though they didn't know what's been happening.

Highway: Bill responded to the complaint that was received about his plowing his own driveway with town equipment. He disputed that claim, and requested that any complaints that come in be directed to town complaint forms so that a written record can be maintained. He is able to provide receipts for his driveway plowing contractor

We will move forward with engineering study of Daisy Hollow, being paid for by RRPC and conducted by Dubois & King. This also feeds into the RRPC's Road Stormwater Management Plan findings that there are five sections of Daisy Hollow that need to be redesigned within the next three years.

We have been fully reimbursed for the West Street paving.

Bill and Patty have mostly resolved the outstanding billing and warranty issues regarding the backhoe. P. Kenyon moved that we thank Bill for moving us to a point of possible resolution, and agrees to accept the resolution proposed by Ron LeBlanc and Ryan Curtis to:

- 1) rebuild the failing bucket and offer a 2-year/2,000-hour written warranty on it once rebuilt, with the board paying transportation to and from the fabricator;
- 2) to credit in full the disputed invoices D62856 and D63369;
- 3) to provide a service manual at no charge for the JCB backhoe;
- 4) to provide a copy of every work order related to our equipment, with full accounting for hours and parts; and
- 5) maintain better communication around scheduling and maintenance/repair visits.

H. Childress 2nd; [*all in favor, motion carried*]. P. Kenyon will draft a letter to JCB/LifTech conveying our understanding of this resolution.

We do, however, have another bill for the replacement of the fuel pump, and need to check that against the terms of the extended warranty.

C. Fenton signed the grant paperwork to be able to be reimbursed \$4,400 against the purchase of the leaf blower.

Bill and Devon Neary have completed an application for a Better Back Roads grant for the culvert replacement on Haley Road.

Bill and H. Childress met with Breanna Schaffer on feedback

Town Lands: Otter Creek Engineering has gotten VTRANS comments on its hydrological study of the Poultney River adjacent to our West Street property. Based on that modeling, it appears that the 100-year base flood elevation is roughly five feet lower than the current determination, meaning that most of what we propose to build will not require flood-resilient design nor flood insurance. Of course, that final determination is up to FEMA, but it appears that that's what the model shows.

RRPC has received a grant to conduct brownfield studies throughout the County, and they have named the Town Yard on North Street as a site of interest. They are asking the Town's permission to allow their engineering firm to conduct site investigations. Participating in this Phase 1 study may allow us to apply for future funding for any required Phase 2 clean-up projects. H. Childress moved that the Town participate in the Rutland Regional Brownfields Reuse Program with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, specifically for an environmental site assessment of the town lot at 8 Firehouse Lane; T. Redfield 2nd; [*All in favor, motion carried*].

Solid Waste: The town now has a new compactor head for the trash unit, replacing the thirty-year-old and often-failing compactor. We have received a long-awaited bill for repair of the electronic unit on the compactor for the recycling unit.

Correspondence:

- VT Rural Fire Protection, with their annual request of \$100 (same as last year)
- An incomplete notice of PACIF rebate for 2020, a surplus distributed among members. The amount of that rebate is not included here, but is on the invoice for 2020 renewal.
- Notice from Rutland County Sheriff's Office of a 14% rate increase for the coming year.
- Notice from NEMRC of a 2020 rate increase, from \$1460.81 to \$5000. The board requests that the Listers, Treasurer, and Clerk investigate whether there is a competing vendor whose services and prices should be explored.
- [email] Kristal Hier, library board present, asked if the town crew could take responsibility for plowing the library driveway. The Board and Bill considered the difficulty of getting the Town's equipment in such tight quarters, and that it would be a low priority in the midst of road clearance. We believe that the library will be better served by continuing to hire a contractor. If the Library board has other reasons why we should consider taking on the plowing, we encourage them to bring it to us. C. Haynes moved that the Library should continue to contract for plowing and snow clearance; H. Childress 2nd [*all in favor, motion carried*]

Board Orders: T. Redfield moved to accept the board orders as presented; H. Childress 2nd [*all in favor, motion carried*].

Other: The Board set a special budget meeting on Thursday, December 16, at 6:30 pm. We will hold our regular meeting on Thursday, December 26, at 7:00 with a possibility of an additional meeting from 6:00 to 7:00 for budget consideration.

Adjourn: H. Childress moved to adjourn; T. Redfield 2nd; [*all in favor, motion carried*]. Meeting adjourned 10:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Herb Childress, Selectboard Clerk