

Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard

January 12, 2015 Special Meeting

SB Attendance: Chair Seth Gardner, Casey Northrup, and Kim Swasey; Town Administrator Bruce Johnson

Public Attendance: Rob Chickering, Lister; Bill Pollock

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Additions to Agenda: None

Public Comment:

Mr. Pollock stated that he would be recording the meeting and posting it on the web.

Discussion on Appeal of 2015 Common Level of Appraisal

East Montpelier's 2015 Common Level of Appraisal (CLA; a state-issued measure designed to ensure equivalent property valuations across the state for education tax purposes) is 94.10%, down from 98.98% in 2014. Although that can be seen as good news for property owners (overall property values are rising), the lower CLA will negatively affect the education tax rate (essentially both the residential and non-residential tax rates will be divided by the CLA to produce the final rates, which will increase the rates by nearly 6.3%). The town listers researched the possibility of appealing the 2015 CLA. Bill Tobin, the interim district Property Valuation & Review agent for our town, met with the listers to go over the various components that go into the CLA formulation.

Lister Rob Chickering presented the update on a potential appeal. He explained that the CLA is based on the 3-year rolling average of property sales in 15 different categories (residential, residential greater than 6 acres, commercial, farm, open land, etc.) weighted by various factors. The only clearly available way to challenge our CLA would be to isolate specific property sales in East Montpelier that were included in the state CLA study that might be considered not valid for some reason. After a lengthy review, the listers determined that the town had no viable grounds for appeal.

Consideration of Policy Letter for Town Sand Pile Usage

Road Foreman Mike Garand requested that the Selectboard clarify the allowable usage, if any, of the town salt & sand piles by private citizens. The board reviewed a draft statement of policy making it clear that the materials are for highway department use on the public roads. Limited use of salt and sand by town residents may be allowed in the interests of public safety. Commercial and business use is prohibited, as is any large-scale personal use. The approved statement will be posted at the town garage.

Motion: To adopt the "Statement on Town Sand & Salt Pile Usage by Town Residents" as presented. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

Development of Selectboard Report for 2014 Annual Report

Item tabled until January 19, 2015 Selectboard meeting.

East Montpelier Signpost 2015 Town Meeting Article

The Selectboard reviewed the written request from Edie Miller of the Signpost. The organization is seeking \$8,400 in town support for FY2016, in the form of a separate article on the 2015 Town Meeting Warning. This is down from the \$9,000 in town funding approved by voters at 2014 Town Meeting.

Motion: To place the East Montpelier Signpost funding request of \$8,400 on the 2015 Town Meeting Warning. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

Discussion on FY2016 Budget Development

The board continued work on the FY2016 budget.

Discussion on 2015 Town Meeting Warning

The board continued work on the 2015 Town Meeting Warning.

Warrants

Members reviewed and signed the warrant.

Other Business

Town Administrator Report:

An update on the Town Treasurer appointment process was postponed. The expectation is that Chair Gardner, Board Member Etnier, and current Town Treasurer Welch will meet prior to the January 19th meeting, with an update provided at the meeting.

Road Foreman Garand continues to work on a plan for use of the Templeton Road Fire Station. Chair Gardner and Foreman Garand will meet this week to discuss options. EMFD would like an updated Memorandum of Understanding that includes both a construction plan and a statement of utility cost share before any actual construction is commenced.

The first conference in the Packard Environmental Court appeal was held on January 12th. Judge Walsh is handling the case. The next conference will be on February 9th.

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator

Approved: January 19, 2015 East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting