

**East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting APPROVED (04/07/14) MINUTES  
March 31, 2014 at the Municipal Office**

**Selectboard members present:** Carl Etnier (recording secretary), Seth Gardner, Casey Northrup, Steve Sparrow, Kim Swasey.

**Others present:** Bruce Johnson (town administrator), Tina Kawecki (Vermont Municipal Employees' Retirement System)

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Seth Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

**B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**D. DISCUSSION WITH VT MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OFFICIAL**

The board discussed the implications for a municipal employee of switching from a defined contribution to a defined benefit retirement plan. Ms. Kawecki reported that the VMERS began offering the defined benefit plan in 1999. Existing employees were allowed to choose whether to opt in to it from the defined contribution plan; new employees needed to make a choice when they began their employment.

After the economic downturn, in response to concerns from members who saw their retirement savings diminish, VMERS asked the legislature to give an additional one-time option to switch from defined contribution to defined benefit, which the the legislature passed last year. The switch needs to be cost-neutral for the plan.

She presented the formula for "buying" years-of-service, up to the actual number worked, in the DB plan for those switching from the DC plan. The payments may be spread over five years, with the first payment due June 30, 2014. More years of service translates into a higher benefit at retirement.

After 5 years, an employee is vested in the DB plan. That means the employee is eligible for disability, for early retirement, for a monthly benefit, and for benefits for a beneficiary in case of death.

For the DC plan, the employee is vested after the one-year anniversary. Also, in the event of changing jobs, the employee is eligible to move the entire invested amount, including the employer's share. Before the thirteenth month, only the employee's share is portable.

Only 38 municipal employees in VMERS have taken advantage of the option to switch, so it is unlikely that the board will ever again offer the switch. VMERS put in a lot of work in preparing the option, for these few employees.

**E. SELECTION OF CANDIDATE FOR PLANNING COMMISSION VACANCY**

The Planning Commission has evaluated the four people who expressed interested in the vacant position and recommended that the SB appoint Rob Halpert.

**Motion: I make the motion to appoint Rob Halpert to the open position on the Planning Commission through Town Meeting 2015, based on the recommendation of the Planning Commission. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Mr. Sparrow. 5-0.**

#### **F. CONSIDERATION OF ANNUAL HIGHWAY FINANCIAL PLAN**

The state is requesting the town to certify that we raise at least \$300 in taxes per mile of Class 1, 2, and 3 Town Highways, as part of annual documentation filed with them. The actual amount raised is closer to \$10,000.

**Motion: I make a motion to approve and sign the Annual Financial Plan - Town Highways. Made: Mr. Northrup. Second: Ms. Swasey. 5-0.**

#### **G. APPOINTMENTS**

Betsy Catlin has expressed interest in being appointed to another term on the Development Review Board.

**Motion: I move to appoint Betsy Catlin to the Development Review Board for a term of three years. Made: Mr. Northrup. Second: Ms. Swasey. 5-0.**

Gray Ricker has sold his house and is moving out of town, so he is resigning from the DRB. He will continue until we don't need him. He is a Planning Commission member; we will ask the PC for a recommendation for a replacement.

#### **H. EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS**

**Motion: I move to approve Excess Weight Permits 14-22 through 14-28. Made: Mr. Northrup. Second: Mr. Sparrow. 5-0.**

#### **I. WARRANTS**

Warrants were signed.

#### **J. OTHER BUSINESS**

Town Administrator Report

- Winter sand bid: Mr. Gardner and Mr. Sparrow will go talk Road Foreman Mike Garand about sand use and estimate the remaining sand, before we decide on the bidding process.
- Roadside mowing: We will put the job out to bid.
- Lawn mowing at the recreation field, the town office, and the little park on Church Street: We will put the job out to bid, including criteria of a local person and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Plainfield Hardware's owners, Gaye and Rich Christiansen, would like help from the town in achieving permission to put a sign on the roof. East Montpelier regulations do not allow signs on the roof. We will hold a site visit before next week's meeting.

#### **K. PERSONNEL MATTER**

**Motion: I move we enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Sparrow. 5-0.**

The SB entered executive session at 8:45 pm and left executive session at 9:25 pm. No action taken.

#### **L. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: I make the motion to adjourn. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Sparrow. 5-0 at 9:26 pm.**