

Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard

August 5, 2013

SB Attendance: Chair Seth Gardner, Carl Etnier, Kim Swasey, Steve Sparrow; Town Administrator (TA) Bruce Johnson

Public Attendance: School Board Chair Rubin Bennett, EMFD Chief Ty Rolland, Abby Bruce, Sean Downey, Jim Brown

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm.

Additions to Agenda: Jewel Love concerns with handicap access to Wrightsville Beach

Chair Gardner explained his phone conversation with Ms. Love. She has been trying to gain improved handicap access to Wrightsville Beach for many years and would like the Selectboard to assist in this effort. TA Johnson will communicate with Central VT Regional Planning Commission (the agency that coordinates the Wrightsville Beach Recreation District Board's activities) regarding the current status of and future plans for handicap access at the beach.

Public Comment: None

Setting of FY2014 Tax Rate

Chair presented proposed FY2014 tax rates, based on a grand list of \$2,917,461.41, as follows:

- Homestead (residential) rate:
 - Town rate (voted town budget) 0.5611 (up 0.0200 from FY13)
 - Local agreements rate (voted town exemptions) 0.0055 (down 0.0002)
 - Education rate (from Agency of Education) 1.6608 (up 0.2092)
 - **Total Homestead rate 2.2274 (up 0.2290)**

- Non-residential rate:
 - Town rate (voted town budget) 0.5611 (up 0.0200)
 - Local agreements rate (voted town exemptions) 0.0055 (down 0.0002)
 - Education rate (from AOE) 1.4661 (up 0.0468)
 - **Total Non-residential rate 2.0327 (up 0.0656)**

Ms. Bruce asked why there is such a large increase in the homestead education rate. A discussion ensued regarding the options the School Board had to fund the EMES renovations project. That board decided, based on the overall savings to the taxpayers, to accept bond financing as of June 28, 2013. This choice ensured that there would be a full year's worth of interest and a principal payment due in FY2014. The net effect on the homestead education rate was approximately 16.4 cents (0.1640).

Ms. Bruce followed up with a query as to how the costs of the bond are reflected in the homestead rate and the non-residential rate. The simple answer is that the bond costs do not affect the non-residential rate at all. This is a state-set rate and the only local change is due to the CLA (Common Level of Appraisal; the method of equalizing property values throughout the state for education tax purposes). Our CLA for FY14 is 98.22%. The state non-residential education rate is 1.44. Dividing that rate by our CLA (1.44/.9822) gives us our non-residential education rate of 1.4661. The homestead rate, however, is directly affected by the bond. The base state-set homestead education rate for FY14 is 0.94 which is generated from a certain base per pupil cost. Our two school districts (EMES & U-32) have significantly higher per pupil costs than the base rate. The bond costs drove the EMES per pupil rate even higher, which when combined with the U-32 rate resulted in the large increase in our homestead education rate.

Motion: To set the FY2014 homestead tax rate at 2.2274 and the non-residential tax rate at 2.0327. Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Mr. Sparrow. Passed unanimously.

Consideration of Contract with Vermont.gov

Vermont.gov is a company with a relatively new service that provides towns with a method to accept credit and debit payments at no cost to the town. Consumers pay either a 3% surcharge on credit payments or a flat \$1.50 charge on debit payments. Payments can be made either directly at the town office or online (once the town's website is operational).

Mr. Bennett, changing hats from School Board Chair to owner of rb Technologies, provided some tips on what to look for in a service of this type. Board members decided to table this item to do more research and would like the company to arrange a demonstration of the service at a future board meeting.

Discussion on Lights for Bridge 68 (the Village Bridge)

The Selectboard has been investigating the possibility of having lights over the sidewalk included in the design for the new Village Bridge. The bridge is owned by the state. VTrans (the VT Agency of Transportation) will not include the lights unless the town pays the entire cost of installation plus agrees to maintain the lights. The cost is projected to be \$49,500. Board members discussed the possibility of setting this cost on the 2014 Town Meeting Warning as a separate article. Another option discussed was to seek outside funding, possibly through a VTrans transportation enhancement grant. The board would like to know if the bridge design can be delayed to allow the board to pursue funding alternatives. TA Johnson will investigate the various issues and provide a follow-up report.

Consideration of Resolution for Tax Anticipation LOC

Chair presented a variety of documents necessary to finalize a \$1,000,000 tax anticipation line of credit for FY2014 through People's United Bank. Should the town need to take advantage of the line of credit, the interest rate on any amount borrowed would be 1.65%/year.

Motion: To adopt and sign the Tax Anticipation Borrowing Resolution, approve & sign the Tax Anticipation Note, and approve & sign the Tax Anticipation Borrowing Non-Arbitrage Certificate. Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Mr. Sparrow. Passed unanimously.

Consideration of CAI Technologies Maintenance Agreement

Chair presented the annual maintenance agreement for the town's Query Manager software that enables the use of our tax map data with ESRI ArcGIS mapping software. The price is the same as last year.

Motion: To authorize TA Johnson to sign the CAI Technologies maintenance agreement. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously.

Update on PACE Program

TA Johnson provided an update on the PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program. In June of 2012 the town finalized the necessary documents to enable residents to take advantage of PACE program funding for energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy projects. The town also contracted with Efficiency VT to serve as our administrator for the program (all other towns that formed PACE districts did the same; 45 communities to date). Unfortunately, no source of financing was secured for the program until this summer. Efficiency VT recently informed the town that financing is in place and the first subscription period for homeowner applications would begin September 1, 2013. However, program

components have been altered slightly, requiring a new set of documents, including a new contract with Efficiency VT. TA Johnson will provide a further update and, if available, the new documents for consideration at the August 19, 2013 Selectboard meeting.

Appointments

Our Wrightsville Beach Recreation District representative, Martha Israel, has declined reappointment and will step down from the WBRD board in September. Bill Merrylees, avid recreationalist and longtime promoter of recreational programs in the greater Central Vermont area, has volunteered for the post.

Motion: To appoint Bill Merrylees as the East Montpelier Wrightsville Beach Recreation District representative for a term ending September 30, 2016. Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

Access Permits

Chair presented access permit application 13-026. Hugh, Susan, and Dennis Hawkins seek to alter the use of two existing curb cuts along Towne Hill Road across from the old Hawkins farmhouse. The Hawkins family is seeking a subdivision from the Development Review Board that would create a new 3-acre non-residential parcel around the existing structures and a 41-acre undeveloped residential lot behind and to the south of the 3-acre lot. The curb cut serving the white "pop-up" barn is currently used for access to the barn and is shown on previous Hawkins subdivision plats as the access to a residential site in the field behind the barn. The curb cut south of the barn serving the materials landing area is proposed as the new access point for the residential site through an easement across the 3-acre lot. Due to the wetness of the remaining property, this is expected to be the final subdivision of the Hawkins land.

Ms. Swasey is concerned with the lack of sound access management throughout the Hawkins development and would like to see alternative plans before approving the access permit.

Motion: To approve access permit application 13-026 as presented. Made by Mr. Sparrow; second by Mr. Etnier. Passed 3-1 (Ms. Swasey).

Excess Weight Permits

Chair presented excess weight permit application EW-13-44.

Motion: To approve and authorize TA Johnson to sign the excess weight permit for Don Crate & Sons (EW-13-44). Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Sparrow. Passed unanimously.

Warrants

Selectboard members signed the warrant.

Minutes

Chair presented the minutes of June 17, 2013. These minutes had previously been reviewed, but not approved, at the July 8, 2013 Selectboard meeting.

Motion: To approve as amended the minutes of the June 17, 2013 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting. Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

Chair presented the minutes of July 8, 2013.

Motion: To approve as amended the minutes of the July 8, 2013 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting. Mr. Etnier will provide the missing dates for the Ormsbee resolution. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Sparrow. Passed unanimously.

Chair presented the minutes of July 18, 2013.

Motion: To approve as presented the minutes of the July 18, 2013 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting. Made by Mr. Sparrow; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed 3-0 (Mr. Etnier abstained).

Consideration of Draft EMFD Services Agreement

Board members reviewed recent changes by EMFD to the proposed service agreement between EMFD and the towns of Calais & East Montpelier. EMFD Chief Rolland provided explanations for the proposed alterations.

1. Clause 4 [description of fire services provided]: EMFD removed licensing statements that apparently aren't true for volunteer departments. The word "volunteer" was added in the last sentence. Board members had no problems with the changes.
2. Clause 5(d) [materials provided by EMFD to both Selectboards during the budget development process]: EMFD cut the ending phrase regarding projections of the current year budget. Board members expect the projections and want the phrase in the contract. Chief Rolland implied that this would not be an issue.
3. Clause 6 [EMFD budget placement as a line item in town's annual budget article on town meeting warning] : EMFD altered the last line to include the name of the Calais/East Montpelier cost allocation agreement. Board members were fine with this addition.
4. Clause 7 [use of the ambulance transport service proceeds]: EMFD added "and/or contingency fund" into the second sentence of the clause dealing with the use of ambulance service proceeds. This would allow EMFD to put some portion of the proceeds into a contingency fund in addition to the capital reserve fund. Board members appeared willing to consider this concept. The issue will be revisited.
5. Clause 11 [EMFD voluntary compliance with the VT Open Meetings Law]: EMFD shifted the emphasis of this clause from free flow of information to information provided, after the fact, on request only. Board members were greatly concerned with the ramifications of this change. The issue will be revisited.
6. Appendix A Clause 6 [town participation in EMFD contract proceedings to provide ambulance services to other entities]: EMFD altered the clause to remove any town oversight. Board members were very concerned with this change. The issue will be revisited.
7. Appendix B Clause 6 [EMFD FAST squad services]: EMFD removed this as there is no longer a FAST squad. Board members accepted this deletion.

The Town of Calais Selectboard will be reviewing this document at its August 12, 2013 meeting. The East Montpelier Selectboard will invite the Calais board to its August 19, 2013 meeting to continue the discussion on the services agreement.

Other Business: Town Administrator Report

TA Johnson presented a variety of items:

- VLCT's Larry Smith will come to the August 19th Selectboard meeting to discuss 2014 health care options for town employees.
- Dick Blake would like the board to consider paving Carleton Blvd from the VT Rte 14 S apron by NCFCU to the Sandy Pines Park apron. The board is not currently interested in increasing the town's paved road inventory.
- The Xerox/ACS land records system will be installed and town employees will be trained on the system during the week of September 23rd.
- Plans for the Riverbend store include apartments and possibly office space. No one has shown interest in reviving the retail store.
- Wayne Michaud of Idle Free VT will give a presentation of the benefits of vehicle idling reduction for the road crew at the Calais Town Garage, August 14th at 7:00 a.m.
- Don Deforge would like the town to do something to improve pedestrian safety on Quaker & Vincent Flats Roads. He is very concerned about speeding vehicles.
- In an effort to take advantage of the structures grant funding available to the town as a result of the historic structure designation placed on the Center Road Mallory Brook culvert, the town is developing grant applications for the following culvert replacement projects:
 - Quaker Road (the culvert near the Browns residence)
 - Dodge Road (the Bennett Brook culvert)
 - Murray Road (the culvert at the Montpelier line)
- The board will face a decision in the near future as to whether the town will collect or decide to waive the mandated 3%/8% penalty for failing to properly file a homestead declaration. The number of improper or failure-to-file cases is expected to be high this year due to the state's recent shift back to the requirement that the declaration be filed every year.
- The Charter Committee recently hired attorney Paul Gillies to assist the committee's charter development effort.

Other Business: Zoning Administrator Report

TA/ZA Johnson presented a report detailing recent zoning permit applications. This continues to be a slow year for new construction. On August 6th the Development Review Board will hold a hearing on the Hawkins subdivision proposal. The clean-up effort of the Sanfacon property continues to show progress.

Legal Matters – Probable Executive Session

TA Johnson explained that was updated information of a sensitive nature regarding the proposed park 'n ride facility.

Motion: To enter executive session to discuss a legal matter. Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Ms. Swasey. Passed unanimously.

Executive session: entered 9:50 pm; exited 10:23 pm. No action taken.

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Ms. Swasey; second by Mr. Sparrow. Passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 10:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator.

Approved: August 19, 2013 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting