

**East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting APPROVED (08/21/17) MINUTES
August 7, 2017 at the Town Office**

Selectboard (SB) members present: Carl Etnier (recording secretary), Seth Gardner, Gene Troia, Kim Swasey, Amy Willis; Bruce Johnson (town and zoning administrator).

Others present: Michelle McFadden, Guthrie Perry (road foreman).

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Potential Shift in East Montpelier Fire Department Quarterly Meeting Concept

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. McFadden suggested steps to secure and preserve the farm house at the Old LaPerle Farm. She would like a work party to do something there in the beginning of November. She's talking to the Planning Commission and the Village Committee, as well.

Someone observed the front door open the other day; the Fire Department has the only key. Mr. Johnson will contact the East Montpelier Fire Department (EMFD) and ask them to make sure the door is secure.

D. ROAD FOREMAN REPORT

Mr. Perry gave his first report to the Selectboard. He said he was impressed with the road crew.

Road crew uniforms don't have workers' names. He is looking into a contract to get personalized uniforms.

The paving project on County Road is mostly finished. The contractor did not connect the pavement with aprons on Fitch Road and Haggett Road. Mr. Perry is investigating finding a contractor who will do this quickly while the project is still eligible for grant funding.

The Murray Road culvert project is finished and looks very nice. Some other work needs to be done on the road.

Sand prices: \$8.25 a yard at LePage's in Barre. \$7.00 from Wolcott, but trucking costs make it prohibitive. The granite sand from Northeast isn't available, because they can't get a permit to operate. But 3/4" cleaned granite stone will be available at the garage to add to our sand, as needed. He plans to buy 3,000 yards of regular sand, just to make sure there's enough. Next year he'd like to investigate where the back of the pile is and mark it.

He is working with the Fire Department to get rid of a storage building behind the garage.

Roadside mowing will start as soon as the tractor arrives; it is in the shop now.

Mr. Perry would like the board to consider the purchase of a hydraulic hose repair machine. It would cost \$3,800 with some fittings and hose. The SB discussed the costs of the equipment versus the costs of down time when a hose breaks at an inconvenient time.

E. CONSIDERATION OF 2017 GORMAN BROTHERS CHLORIDE DELIVERY SYSTEM AGREEMENT

Mr. Perry said he drove the town's chloride truck and found it unfit for use.

The proposed option is to contract with Gorman Group LLC to "rent" a chloride storage tank and chloride delivery equipment at the cost of \$1/year in return for the annual purchase of at least 9,000 gallons of chloride at market price (\$0.89/gallon currently); the agreement has a minimum 3-year term.

Motion: I move to accept the Gorman Brothers chloride delivery system agreement and authorize Town Administrator Johnson to complete the agreement. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Willis. 5-0.

The SB authorized Mr. Perry to work with Mr. Gardner to sell the 1980 chloride truck and a 1982 truck that is no longer used.

F. SETTING OF THE 2017/2018 PROPERTY TAX RATES

The grand list is rounded at \$2,999,000.00, up \$8,737.99 (0.29%) from last year

Reason for the rounding is the expected loss of grand list value as the final clean-up of the grand list occurs in the coming week; the actual number right now is \$2,999,285.77

The resident (homestead) tax rate is calculated at: 2.5045; down 0.0464 (1.85%) from last year

The non-resident tax rate is calculated at: 2.2192; down 0.0006 (0.03%) from last year

Motion: I move to set the 2017/2018 property tax rates at 2.5045 for resident (homestead) properties and 2.2192 for non-resident properties. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Troia. 5-0.

G. CONSIDERATION OF HOMESTEAD FILING PENALTY WAIVER

The town is allowed to assess an 8% penalty for residents who file their homestead declaration late. Or it can waive the penalty for everyone. There are also certain hardship exemptions.

This year, the state has been unable to provide the town with accurate information about who has filed their homestead declarations.

Regardless, the town has chosen to waive the late-filing penalty in the past, for a number of reasons: 1) The penalty only affects those who do file but file late; those who are required to file but don't file are not penalized if they are not caught. 2) The town's revenues are not affected by whether someone declares a homestead in town or not. 3) It is in the town's interest to encourage accurate information about who is a resident here, and waiving the penalty encourages people to file a homestead declaration, even if it is late. 4) For a time, the state allowed a homestead declaration to remain in effect until the land owner rescinded it; the SB does not see a good reason for reverting to a system requiring filing each year.

The Selectboard (SB) determined that they had seen no new information that would cause a reconsideration of the decision from previous years.

Motion: I move to waive the homestead declaration late filing penalty. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Ms. Swasey. 5-0.

H. CONSIDERATION OF DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTION POLICY

Mr. Johnson distributed a document for the SB to consider.

He said a policy can be very simple. For example, Hardwick simply takes properties to tax sale by the end of the summer, and they have only \$25,000 in delinquent taxes on the rolls.

The SB will discuss the draft at a future meeting.

I. DISCUSSION ON POTENTIAL TAX SALES

The SB reviewed the list of properties with delinquent taxes and decided to move to tax sale on three properties.

Motion: I move to authorize TA Johnson to take to tax sale the following parcels: 08-013-100, 06-045-000, and 11-007-000. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Ms. Willis. 5-0.

J. DISCUSSION ON THE CREATION OF A PROPERTY TAX POLICY COMMITTEE AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHARGE TO COMMITTEE

Only two volunteers have stepped forward.

Treasurer Don Welch does not believe a committee is needed at this time; the number of complaints regarding the tax payment parameters is low and there is no reason to alter the current payment dates.

The SB is, nonetheless, interested in the potential to set tax penalties in a way that does more to encourage timely payment. The SB will consider the idea itself at a future meeting.

K. CONSIDERATION OF CEMETERY PERPETUAL CARE CD RENEWAL

This is a \$21,500 certificate of deposit with North Country Federal; Treasurer Welch would like to keep it at NCFCU for either an 11-month or 21-month term; he is still negotiating terms.

Motion: I move to authorize Treasurer Don Welch to renew the CD for up to two years, using his best judgment. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Mr. Troia. 5-0.

L. CONSIDERATION OF LUCA PARTICIPATION FOR 2020 CENSUS

The LUCA (“Local Update of Census Addresses”) Operation helps the Census Bureau make sure it's counting all people in East Montpelier eligible to be counted in the census.

Motion: I move to authorize Chair Gardner to sign form and designate TA Johnson as the LUCA liaison to manage the process. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Ms. Willis. 5-0.

M. CONSIDERATION OF CANDIDATES FOR TOWN CLERK POSITION

Ms. Willis presented the report of the Selection Committee. Per the committee's recommendation, the SB decided to interview Rosie Laquerre and Iphagainia (Iphy) Tanguay. The meeting will continue Friday evening for the interviews.

N. APPOINTMENTS

Motion: I move to appoint Alice Dworkin to the Development Review Board and Mark Lane to the Rural Roads Vegetation Assessment Project Advisory Committee. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Troia. 5-0.

O. POTENTIAL SHIFT IN EAST MONTPELIER FIRE DEPARTMENT QUARTERLY MEETING CONCEPT

EMFD Chief Ty Rolland would like to decrease the number of meetings with the Selectboards of East Montpelier and Calais. The service agreement calls for four quarterly budget presentations plus the annual December operating budget meeting. Chief Rolland would like to have the July end-of-fiscal-year meeting and the operating budget meeting.

The SB decided to decide after seeing what Calais wants to do.

P. WARRANTS

Signed.

Q. MINUTES

Motion: I move to accept the minutes of July 24, 2017 as submitted. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Ms. Willis. 5-0.

R. OTHER BUSINESS

Sullivan Powers is in the office this week to conduct the annual audit.

Meeting Schedule:

August 21st	6:30 pm	SB regular meeting
Sept. 11th	6:30 pm	Selectboard special meeting (no September 4th or 18th meeting)
Sept. 15th	8:30 am	2017 Municipal Day; VT agency workshops at National Life

Zoning Administrator Report

2 permit applications since July 24, 2017.

No Development Review Board meeting in August; the next scheduled meeting is September 5th.

S. PERSONNEL MATTERS

The board entered executive session. Mr. Johnson left the meeting. The SB discussed the resignation letter from Mr. Johnson and crafted a response.

Motion: I move to sign the letter to Mr. Johnson and authorize Ms. Swasey to deliver it. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Troia. 5-0.

T. CONTINUATION

Motion: I move to continue the meeting at 6 p.m. on Friday, August 11, 2017 at the Town Office. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Willis. 5-0. 10:40 p.m.

Selectboard Meeting Continuation on August 11, 2017

Selectboard (SB) members present: Carl Etnier (recording secretary), Seth Gardner, Gene Troia, Kim Swasey, Amy Willis; Bruce Johnson (town and zoning administrator).

Members of the public: Town clerk candidates Iphy Tanguay and Rosie Laquerre appeared in succession.

Mr. Gardner declared the meeting continued at 6:05 p.m.

Motion: I move to enter executive session. Made: Ms. Swasey. Second: Ms. Willis. 5-0 at 6:06 p.m.

The SB interviewed the candidates and then discussed whom to select. Also, Mr. Johnson presented a letter responding to the SB's letter of August 7. Mr. Johnson left the meeting when the discussion shifted to town administrator issues. The SB exited executive session at 8:45 p.m.

Motion: I move to offer the town clerk position to Rosie Laquerre \$46,500 plus benefits and, should she decline, to extend the same offer to Iphy Tanguay. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Willis. 5-0.

Motion: I move to sign the letter of appreciation to CJ Flynn. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Troia. 5-0.

The board desired to respond expeditiously to Mr. Johnson's letter from this evening and agreed to continue the meeting on Monday.

Motion: I move to continue the meeting to Monday, August 14, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. Made: Ms. Willis. Second: Mr. Troia. 5-0. 9:20 p.m.

Selectboard Meeting Continuation on August 11, 2017

Selectboard (SB) members present: Carl Etnier (recording secretary), Seth Gardner, Gene Troia, Kim Swasey (by Skype), Amy Willis; Bruce Johnson (town and zoning administrator).

Mr. Gardner declared the meeting continued at 5:45 p.m. The board reentered executive session.

The board authorized Mr. Johnson to offer the clerk position to Ms. Laquerre. Mr. Johnson then exited the meeting. The SB reviewed and revised a draft letter responding to Mr. Johnson's letter of August 11.

Motion: I move to sign the letter to Bruce Johnson. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Ms. Willis. 5-0.

The board decided to invite the Vermont League of Cities and Towns to present a proposal on how they could assist the board in personnel matters. Mr. Etnier will invite a representative to present at the next SB meeting.

Motion: I move to adjourn. Made: Ms. Willis. Second: Mr. Troia. 5-0. 6:30 p.m.