

**East Montpelier Selectboard Hearing and Meeting APPROVED (02/05/18) MINUTES  
January 8, 2018 at the Town Office**

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

**Others present:** Road Foreman (RF) Guthrie Perry; Conservation Fund Advisory Committee (CFAC) members Ginny Callan, Bruce Howlett, Charles Johnson

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

**B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

None.

**C. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**D. ROAD FOREMAN REPORT**

The Selectboard (SB) reviewed the FY 2019 budget with RF Perry. There were few changes. Overall, it is up 2%.

Two bids were received for a roadside mower purchase. After some discussion, the SB asked the RF to gather more information on other options.

**E. DISCUSSION WITH CONSERVATION FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Three members of the CFAC attended to make the case for further appropriations to the town's conservation fund. The fund currently contains about \$17,060; recent changes are the September 2017 payment of \$6,000 for the trail easement on the Fairmont Dairy property and the FY2018 voter-approved appropriation of \$7,500. The committee suggested continuing adding to the fund, but at a slower pace, perhaps at \$2,500 for FY2019.

While the Fairmont Dairy conservation project has projected stages 2 and 3 at some point, the town is not aware of any conservation project in process at this time.

A fund balance of at least \$20,000 was discussed as being enough to cover 10% of a medium or large conservation project. The fund has accumulated up to \$40,000 in years past.

The SB suggested this year's appropriation be set at \$3,000, to get the fund over the \$20,000 mark, and the CFAC members agreed.

**F. DISCUSSION ON CONTINUATION OF PACE PROGRAM**

Efficiency Vermont, the administrator of the town's PACE (property assessed clean energy) program, has given the required 90-day notice of intent to terminate its agreement with the town. The PACE program was designed to expand the opportunities for homeowners to finance energy efficiency and/or renewable energy. It has never taken off in Vermont, as other options developed that fit homeowner needs more effectively. The town entered into an interlocal agreement to facilitate administration of the PACE program. Town Administrator (TA) Johnson is working to learn more about how or whether to unwind the agreement, now that Efficiency Vermont is pulling back.

**G. DISCUSSION ON JANUARY 26, 2018 DELINQUENT TAX SALE**

The tax sale for the three affected properties is scheduled for January 26. The SB discussed giving TA Johnson authority to make the base bid (equivalent to taxes in arrears plus costs associated with the tax sale) on the properties. If the Town makes the base bid, it will be able to take possession, after the redemption period expires,

if no other bids are received. If the Town doesn't make the base bid, and no other bids are received, the situation remains the same: the same property owner, still in arrears for taxes, and the town is still out the costs of holding the tax sale.

There was some discussion about the advisability of making the base bid on the mobile home up for tax sale. All acknowledged the town was unlikely to breakeven by selling it, and it is likely there will be a net cost to remove it. However, buying and removing the mobile home sends a clear message that the town wants to be fair to all its taxpayers by ending situations of chronic non-payment.

**Motion: I move to authorize Town Administrator Bruce Johnson to make the base bid on all properties scheduled for tax sale January 26, 2018. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Willis. 4-0.**

#### **H. CONSIDERATION OF CARLTON SMITH FUND CD RENEWAL**

The \$50,000 fund principal is currently in a one-year CD at 0.80%. Income is set aside for future distribution to (in one-third shares) Four Corners Schoolhouse Association, the Recreation Board, and EM Trails. Treasurer Don Welch would like to renew for at least one year, trying to balance the available rates (all better than the 0.80) with the likelihood that rates will continue to increase.

**Motion: I move to authorize Town Treasurer Don Welch to renew the Carlton Smith Fund CD, using his best judgement, for a term of 12 to 18 months. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Troia. 4-0.**

#### **I. DEVELOPMENT OF 2017 SELECTBOARD REPORT FOR ANNUAL REPORT**

The SB gave input to TA Johnson for items to include in the report.

#### **J. DISCUSSION ON FY2019 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT**

The SB continued discussing details. One item that received special attention was the appropriation for the Cemetery Commission, which receives a separate town appropriation even though, in practice, its employees are municipal employees and the town writes its checks. A charter change would be necessary to completely incorporate the commission within the town; before that, the budget could be incorporated into the municipal budget. The SB may raise the issue with the town at this year's town meeting.

#### **K. DISCUSSION ON 2018 TOWN MEETING WARNING DEVELOPMENT**

Townspople Rick Barstow and Brian Tokar have asked the town to warn a non-binding, advisory article for Town Meeting on state energy policy; the article is being promoted in many towns by 350VT.org. The SB reviewed a draft of the article and is willing to include a version of it on its own motion, rather than asking the organizers to gather signatures. The SB will discuss exact wording at a future meeting.

#### **L. WARRANTS**

Signed.

#### **M. MINUTES**

**Motion: I move to approve the minutes of December 18, 2017 as amended. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Willis. 4-0.**

#### **N. OTHER BUSINESS**

*Update on October 29/30 2017 Wind Storm*

Washington County is included in the federal disaster declaration for the October storm event. The town's "damage" was essentially limited to clean-up expenses, but those costs (labor of town employees and equipment use) potentially can be recouped (at 92.5% of value) assuming FEMA accepts our application. The process starts with a January 12 briefing for applicants.

*Update on Park and Ride*

The project is essentially complete for the winter, although the windows for the bus shelter are to be installed at

some point when the weather cooperates. The town is still awaiting a remediation plan from the contractor for the pavement waves; we have not yet signed off on substantial completion, so technically the contractor is still responsible for the property. To ensure that it functions as a park and ride for commuters and car sharers, the facility needs to have some parking restrictions. This will require an amendment to the town's traffic ordinance at a future meeting.

### **Potential Land Records Committee**

There are a number of issues coming to a head regarding land records:

- The vault is full, but the need for storage continues to grow;
- The town has no retention schedule, but both former clerk Flynn and current clerk Laquerre have taken steps to develop one;
- There is no plan/policy for protecting the older books, both the land records and grand list records;
- The ACS land records system is in its 5th year – the original contract expires in May 2018; whether we renew or switch is an issue that needs study;
- We have made no effort to digitize the land records beyond the original 2000 date, despite the intent to add past years when funding was available.

It may be time to form a committee to develop the necessary policy(ies) and guide the town's decision making in this area

The SB decided this is an important but not urgent need, and it could be handled through a committee or simply through conversations with the town clerk. The SB asked TA Johnson to solicit interest in a committee on Front Porch Forum; the issue will be raised in the annual report either in the SB report or the town clerk report, as well as orally at Town Meeting.

### *Meeting Schedule*

January 22	6:30 pm	“Special” Regular Selectboard meeting (in lieu of a January 15 meeting)
January 26	10:00 am	3-property tax sale at town office
January 29	6:30 pm	Special Selectboard meeting, if necessary
February 4	6:30 pm	Regular Selectboard meeting

### *Zoning Administrator Report*

There were a total of 53 permit applications in 2017; no applications in 2018 to this point.

The next DRB meeting is expected to be on February 6, 2018. There are no warned hearings as yet, but there will be two subdivision sketch plan reviews.

### **Q. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: I move to adjourn. Made: Ms. Willis. Second: Mr. Troia. 4-0. 9:10 pm.**