

East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting APPROVED (10/07/19) MINUTES
September 23, 2019 at the Town Office

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

Others present: Don Welch, Treasurer; Steven Mills, Times-Argus; Nick D'Agostino, Regional Community Transit (RCT); Bonnie Waninger, Central Vermont Community Planning (CVRPC).

A. CALL TO ORDER

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

Additions to the agenda

Proposed Nomination of Center Road Culvert to National Register of Historic Places

Review of Minutes

Motion: I move to approve the minutes of September 9, 2019 as submitted. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Swasey. 5-0.

Public comment

None

B. TOWN TREASURER REPORT

Treasurer Don Welch provided a budget update. It is still early in FY2020, but expenditures and revenues are as anticipated at this point.

Proposal for Mandated Records Preservation Fund

Legislative changes in 2019 require the town to put aside the equivalent of \$4/recorded page in a land records preservation fund. Mr. Welch presented a proposal to set up a separate accounting sector in our NEMRC modules, similar to the capital reserve fund accounting, and channel land records expenditures/revenues into that sector. The proposal anticipates the movement of the existing budget lines for the digital land records system, the vault expenses, and records restoration. The fund will receive interest, like our other small accounts.

In the budget, the proposal would consolidate three budget lines:

100-3630-59.00 Mnc Opr - Public Rcds Mgm

100-3730-70.00 TC&T - Restoration / Pres

100-3730-90.00 TC&T - Vault Exp / Town R

The SB approved the suggestion. Since the records preservation fund concept is a new statutory requirement, there will likely be methodology recommendations forthcoming from VLCT, the town clerks and treasurers association, and others regarding both budgeting and accounting in this area.

Presentation of Enhanced Security Tools for Bank Transactions

Mr. Welch presented two layers of protection available for the towns People's United Bank main account: Check Payee Positive Pay, a service that essentially tells People's exactly what checks are coming its way, and ACH Positive Pay, a similar service for electronic bank transactions. The approximate net cost of the two services is \$1,300/year; currently our interest income on the bank account is well over ten times that amount.

In discussion with the SB, it became clear that Mr. Welch was not sure how much protection in these areas the town currently enjoys, and how much additional protection we would receive with the services. Nonetheless, as Mr. Welch is eager to obtain the protection and it is paid for--and can be cancelled--on a monthly basis, the SB agreed to approve the expenditure, an approval to be re-evaluated when Mr. Welch reports back with more information.

Motion: I move to adopt Peoples United Banks Check Payee Positive Payee and ACH Positive Pay.
Made: Ms. Willis. Second: Ms. Swasey. 5-0

Discussion on Draft FY2019 External Audit

The draft audit has been received. The auditors have no areas of significant concern. There are a couple of minor issues, including how the capital reserve fund transfer of \$104,650, the FY2018 audited fund balance, authorized by the board in June 2018 is being treated as an FY2019 budget expense, which skews the bottom line for FY2019 (with no effect overall). A second concern was raised regarding the incorrect placement of a large gravel invoice, received in early July 2019, in FY2019 instead of FY2020. Mr. Welch and Mr. Johnson argued that allocating the transfer to the wrong fiscal year was simply a mistake, and it is not appropriate or necessary for the auditors to raise it as a control issue.

The auditors also continue to recommend the town perform a fraud risk assessment and document internal control systems. Mr. Welch would like to do that this year. For internal control systems, the town already has some documentation, just not in the format specified by the auditors. Mr. Johnson reported that a search by another town for something like that in a town our size recently turned up nothing useful. This is a wheel East Montpelier may need to invent.

C. CONSIDERATION OF VLCT'S RESOLUTION ON TOWN SELF-GOVERNANCE

At the board's September 9 meeting, the SB agreed to consider a VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns) resolution at the next meeting when a full contingent of board members was in attendance. The resolution in support of the VLCT self-governance agenda supports the passage of S.106 in the current legislature and states: *To express strong support for the Vermont League of Cities and Towns proposal to the Vermont State Legislature to create a limited self-governance pilot program for Vermont municipalities.*

Motion: I move to adopt the VLCT resolution on town self-governance. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Troia. 5-0.

D. CONSIDERATION OF VLCT PACIF MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The annual VLCT PACIF (Property and Casualty Intermunicipal Fund) membership renewal is due October 11. Assuming the board wants to continue with the VLCT insurance program, the board should authorize TA Johnson to sign and submit the paperwork.

Motion: I move to authorize the town administrator to sign and submit the paperwork to renew the towns membership in VLCT PACIF. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Ms. Willis 5-0.

E. MEETING WITH GMT, RCT, AND CVRPC REGARDING A NEW ROUTE 14 COMMUTER BUS

Nick D'Agostino of Rural Community Transportation (RCT) and Bonnie Waninger of Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) presented plans for a new commuter bus running through East Montpelier, beginning as early as October 7. Jamie Smith of Green Mountain Transit was also scheduled to appear but had other obligations.

VTrans will be funding a Route 14 commuter bus, from Morrisville to Hardwick to Barre, with a connection to the Rt. 2 commuter at the East Montpelier Park and Ride. RCT will operate the route; the company operates transportation services in the Northeast Kingdom. CVRPC is facilitating meetings with affected municipalities, with visits earlier this evening with the Woodbury and Calais selectboards.

Ms. Waninger explained that when VTrans moved from National Life in Montpelier to Barre, part of the deal was improved public transportation to Barre. While GMT and RCT jointly operate the Route 2 Commuter route, it was decided that it is easier on the new route if one transportation provider provides service, rather than two with different fee structures. (RCT does not charge riders on its routes; GMT charges \$1-4, depending on the route.) She reported there is a lot of demand from Hardwick, which now has no public transportation options to

get to nearby Morrisville.

Mr. D'Agostino explained RCT is in the process of deciding where all the stops will be along the way. In East Montpelier Village, its established the bus will stop at the park 'n' ride and meet up with the Route 2 Commuter. He asked about stops in North Montpelier. The SB said they thought many residents there would appreciate the opportunity and suggested pulling into Route 214 for north-bound buses and Factory Street for south-bound buses.

He reported there will be wheel chair lifts on all buses. The bus will be smaller than the Route 2 commuter, 22-24 passengers.

For funding, he said RCT uses a fare-free model because ridership is low in rural areas and the company has decided to reduce its money-handling costs and attract more riders through not charging for trips.

This route is initially funded 100% by federal government., Mr. D'Agostino said. After 3 years, RCT is on the hook for 50% of operating costs and 10% of administrative costs. RCT also has a 10% match on the cost of busses, or \$12K. RCT typically asks all the towns served to donate something, often somewhere between \$500 and \$1,000 dollars. The SB informed him of the Funding Request Study Committee process and deadline.

In response to a question about electric buses, Mr. D Agostino said RCT has applied for VW settlement money to purchase an electric cutaway bus. He doesnt know what their chances are, but the grant application said those controlling the money are interested in testing at extremes, which RCT has in the NEK. If they get funding for an electric bus, they would probably try it in different scenarios, including this route.

Mr. Etnier asked about the Hitching Post pilot for augmented hitchhiking between Montpelier and Worcester and whether RCT was exploring that. Mr. D Agostino said it could be interesting, since many alternatives are needed for transportation. Ms. Wanager reminded the SB of an October 2 regional meeting for municipal officials on transportation, 6 pm in City Hall in Montpelier; Phoenix Mitchell of the Hitching Post will be there. She also said CVRPC is working with Capstone Community Action to come up with new ideas for transportation for an aging population in rural areas.

F. CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO EAST MONTPELIER VILLAGE SIDEWALK PROJECT GRANT AGREEMENT

VTrans recently awarded the town a \$116,000 80/20 FY2020 Bicycle & Pedestrian Program grant to cover cost escalation of the EM Village sidewalk project. This increases the total grant funding to \$823,800 with a \$112,200 town match. The project is on target for a January 2020 bid process with construction expected early- to mid-summer. All permits are in place now.

Motion: I move to authorize the town administrator to complete the agreement for Amendment #4 to standard grant agreement #CA0338 for the village sidewalk, to cover cost escalation. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Mr. Etnier. 5-0.

G. PROPOSED NOMINATION OF CENTER ROAD CULVERT TO NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The Center Road/Mallory Brook stone culvert will be before the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places on October 24, 2019.

Because the historic stone culvert is undersized, and the town is not allowed to remove it, the town will get a grant to find a new location for the effectiveness of the existing culvert, i.e., move the brook. The town will have to cover some of the cost. The town will need to apply for a wetland permit and an Army Corps permit to move the stream. People responsible for both permits attended a meeting in the town office and signed off on the process. Because the historic preservation people said the existing culvert cannot move, the Army Corps and wetlands staff proceeded from that assumption. If the culvert is destroyed by a storm, the town is allowed to

rebuild it in the current location.

No action taken.

H. APPOINTMENTS

There is an opening for the Wrightsville Recreation District. No appointment was made; Mr. Johnson will advertise the opening.

I. WARRANTS

Signed.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

Town Administrator Report

Mr. Johnson presented the town's request for village center designation for North Montpelier today before the Downtown Development Board; the board approved the designation.

The town has been awarded a \$4,196 Recreation Facility Grant for recreation field equipment (bleachers, benches, soccer goals).

Cross Vermont Trail has filed the anticipated request for conservation fund use in support of the trail easement over Fairmont Dairy land (the old Lylehaven main farm parcel); the request for \$5,000 is before the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee.

Meeting Schedule

October 2 - 3, 2019	All day	VLCT Town Fair and annual meeting, Killington
October 7, 2019	6:30 p.m.	Selectboard regular meeting
October 21, 2019	6:30 p.m.	Selectboard regular meeting

Zoning Administrator Report

There have been seven new applications since the September 9 SB meeting; 52 applications so far in 2019.

The next DRB meeting is October 1, 2019; 3 hearings including:

- Change of use to a mix of professional office and residential uses at 2641 US Rte. 2
- Setback waiver to allow construction of a garage at 2100 Center Road
- Setback waiver to allow installation of a concession shed at 555 Vincent Flats Road

Selectboard Member Resignation

Ms. Swasey announced she is regretfully resigning from the selectboard, effective at the end of tonight's meeting. The board regretfully accepted her resignation; Mr. Johnson will advertise for candidates for an appointment, with interviews to be scheduled for the October 21 SB meeting.

K. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 pm.