

**East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting APPROVED (12/16/19) MINUTES
November 19, 2019 at the Town Office**

(The meeting was rescheduled from November 18 on account of forecast weather.)

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

Others present: Casey Northrup; Bonnie Waninger (executive director, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, CVRPC).

A. CALL TO ORDER

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

Additions to the agenda

Consideration of Old Trail Road Maintenance Agreement

Delete scheduled Conversation with Planning Commission on Zoning Update w/ PC Chair Julie Potter

Review of Minutes

Motion: I move to approve the minutes of November 4, 2019 as amended. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Willis. 4-0

Public comment

None.

B. CONVERSATION WITH CVRPC'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BONNIE WANINGER

Ms. Waninger provided an update on CVRPC activities and plans.

She congratulated the town on the news that the Hazard Mitigation Plan has received approval, pending adoption of the draft plan by the selectboard.

The commission has started working on its regional plan after a few years' hiatus. The process was put on hold to give the commission time to update the existing plan to meet new statutory requirements. Now they will take a fresh look at everything in the plan, a process she anticipates will take two years. She is also checking in with municipalities to make sure they have updated their plans. At one point 9 of the RPC's 23 municipalities had plans at or near expiration, but nearly all are in good shape now.

On transportation: Green Mountain Transit (GMT) is in a budget crunch. State and federal funding has been staying level, while operational costs are increasing. CVRPC is anticipating cutbacks on public transportation services and is looking to do so sensibly. One option under consideration is "microtransit" in Montpelier, in which some existing local bus services would be scrapped in favor of a taxi-like service serving the same area.

CVRPC has been working with Thrive, a new partnership of regional organizations, including social service providers, CVRPC, GMT, and other organizations. The organization has started a couple groups, with one starting to focus on housing and homelessness, and the other on public transportation.

She described the Working Communities Grant from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. The Federal Reserve Bank has been looking at communities that had been declining and now are on the rebound, to discern what it took to turn them around. They determined that partnerships were a key factor, through a Working Cities program that operated for some years; they are now trying a similar program in a rural setting in Vermont.

In this work locally, social services groups are working with hospitals and economic development (thus, partnerships) to define a problem and how the grant funding will help them address it. CVRPC is acting as a neutral facilitator. The direction seems to be something related to workforce, employers, and employees: how to

help the unemployed transition into jobs and stay in jobs, especially in the face of transportation difficulties. It will be a 10-year effort, with funding for the first three years.

It is time to implement energy plans now. This is a regular cycle: make plans, and then implement them. Regional commissions have a contract with VEIC (Vermont Energy Investment Corporation) to assist in reducing energy use and are working with local energy committees. The first project is with public transportation and expanding the Hitching Post ride-sharing experiment, looking to fund an employee for 20 hours a week.

For wood heat, they are holding a workshop to help energy committees learn more about wood heat incentives.

On stormwater management: Woodbury, Berlin, and Moretown are all starting to implement their stormwater master plans.

Municipal Roads General Permit: The money available now is through the Grants-in-Aid program, through ANR; the funding may be wrapped into VTrans' Better Roads Program.

CVRPC is hosting a VISTA member, Nick, who is trained as a mathematician and is now working on housing issues. He recently drove the region with seven cell phones and mapped the service. He is compiling a list of things municipalities are doing to address childcare.

Grace Vincent started two weeks ago and is working on a variety of projects related to climate change.

C. CONSIDERATION OF CANDIDATES FOR SELECTBOARD VACANCY

Two candidates are interested. Casey Northrup, a recent alumnus of the selectboard, was the one who showed up and expressed his interest in person.

Motion: I move to appoint Casey to serve in the position Kim Swasey resigned from, until 2020 town meeting. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Mr. Etnier. 4-0.

Mr. Northrup's appointment will become effective when the town clerk administers the official oath/affirmation.

D. CONSIDERATION OF LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Application for Funding to Complete the Design for Town's Stormwater Plan Morse Farm Element from Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District (WNRCD)

The proposal is to complete the design for the Morse Farm swale and gravel wetland stormwater infrastructure improvements that received 30% design treatment as part of the town's 2019 stormwater master plan. Gianna Petito, WNRCD District Manager, is requesting a town letter of support for the proposed funding use.

Motion: I move to authorize the chair to sign the letter of support for the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District's application for funding to complete the design for the town's stormwater plan Morse Farm element. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Ms. Willis. 4-0.

Cross Vermont Trail's VTrans Transportation Alternatives Grant Program Application for Winooski Bridge Trail Section Funding

The Cross Vermont Trail Association is requesting a town letter of support for its grant application to gain \$300,000 (\$240,000 state funding; \$60,000 match) in additional funding for the bridge section of the trail. The grant is necessary due to cost increases for the project, especially for the bridge construction.

Motion: I move to authorize the chair to sign the letter of support for the Cross Vermont Trail's VTrans Transportation Alternatives Program grant application for Winooski Bridge funding. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Mr. Troia. 4-0.

E. CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT REQUEST FOR VTRANS MALLORY BROOK/CENTER ROAD CULVERT REPLACEMENT STUDY GRANT

The engineering study grant awarded in July 2017 expires December 31, 2019. The VTrans district project manager, Shauna Clifford, has already agreed to both increase the grant amount and extend the time period due to the gyrations the engineer has had to perform simply to meet the regulatory expectations involved in protecting the existing historic stone culvert and moving a brook to a new stream bed location. The exact amount to be requested is still unknown, as the town is awaiting an estimate for the state wetlands permit; the total will be in the \$35,000-\$40,000 range. The intent is to get the request in to Shauna before Thanksgiving to give her time to process the request before the deadline.

Motion: I move to authorize the town administrator to complete and submit the request for an amendment to the FY2018 VTrans Structure Grant for TH 3, Center Road. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Willis. 4-0.

F. DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR REPORT

Discussion on Potential Town Bid at December 5, 2019 Tax Sale

On Thursday, December 5, 2019, the town is holding a tax sale for the Bernard Corliss property at 1528 County Road, the Charles Holt property at 1240 Vermont Route 14 S, and the Brenda Kaiser property at 161 Dodge Road. A base bid covers the delinquent taxes along with legal fees and costs. The board needed to decide whether the town will submit a base-level bid if no one participates in the sale. If the town doesn't submit a base bid, and no one purchases the property, the work and expense of preparing the tax sale will have gained the town nothing.

Motion: To authorize the town administrator to make the base bid on properties in East Montpelier scheduled for tax sale December 5, 2019. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Ms. Willis. 4-0.

G. TAX YEAR 2019/20 STATUS UPDATE AFTER FIRST INSTALLMENT DEADLINE

Mr. Johnson reported tax payments levels after the November 15 deadline were routine, with 5.5% late from first installment, and almost 1% more of the total now already paid. With 20.4% of the second installment already paid, the total is 57.4% overall. This is well within norms; last year at November 15 the town had collected 57.7% of the year's taxes.

H. CONSIDERATION OF NEMRC ANNUAL SUPPORT AGREEMENT

This is the annual maintenance and support agreement for the town's suite of NEMRC database modules. Last year the cost was \$1,418.26; this year it is \$1,460.81, the standard 3.0% increase.

Motion: I move to authorize the town administrator to sign the annual support agreement with NEMRC. Made: Mr. Etnier. Second: Ms. Willis. 4-0.

I. DISCUSSION ON POTENTIAL TOWN OFFICE HEAT PUMP INSTALLATION

The town has received a quote of \$11,950 from Cacicio's Heating for a system with four internal units; there appear to be rebates available from both Efficiency VT and GMP totaling \$1,000.

Mr. Troia reviewed the bid. He says it will work great for cooling, far better than the existing wall air conditioning units. The heat pump system will work for heating down to around zero degrees. The existing oil furnace will be retained to provide backup heat at colder temperatures.

The SB is inclined to have the system installed and wants to see if another local vendor has an interest in bidding.

Motion: I move to direct the town administrator to ask Brian Phillips whether he has interest in bidding on the heat pump installation and, if not, to complete the agreement with Cacicio's Heating. Made: Mr. Troia. Second: Mr. Etnier. 4-0.

J. CONSIDERATION OF OLD TRAIL ROAD MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

Vice-chair Troia chaired this part of the meeting, as Mr. Gardner recused himself because of a conflict of interest.

Old Trail Road is a legal trail; the property owners utilize and maintain the “road” up to 375 Old Trail with permission of the town. The owners (including Mr. Gardner, who is selling a property in the agreement) have put together a road maintenance agreement and are requesting town acceptance of the agreement.

Motion: I move to correct the agreement to reflect that Old Trail Road is a legal trail, not a Class 4 road, and to authorize the town administrator to sign the agreement. Etnier-Willis. 3-0-1 (Gardner abstaining)

K. WARRANTS

Signed.

L. OTHER BUSINESS

Rob Hall Concern Regarding Cell Towers

Mr. Hall asked whether the Selectboard could take the lead by reaching out to service providers to work cooperatively with the town on cell tower locations. The selectboard saw no feasible way to do so.

EMFD (East Montpelier Fire Department) Thanksgiving and Christmas Baskets

In 2018, EMFD used over \$10,000 in unbudgeted funds for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets. When the Calais and East Montpelier selectboards learned of the expenditure, both boards objected to using funds in this way. There is concern that there will be a lack of funds for the 2019 program. There will likely be a line in the proposed FY2021 EMFD budget for the 2020 program.

Preliminary Results from the Funding Request Study Committee

The final total for the funding article is recommended to be \$21,541. To stay under the town's \$25,000 limit for appropriations by floor vote, the committee recommends that the SB set a separate warning article for Twin Valley Seniors at \$5,000.

VLCT Cannabis Resolution

VLCT is asking towns to support a resolution upholding a strong local role in whatever regulatory scheme put in place for the commercial cannabis marketplace. The SB will consider this at a future meeting.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

As Ms. Waninger noted, the draft plan has been approved. The board now needs to formally adopt the plan (likely at a December meeting). It will then be returned to Vermont Emergency Management for formal approval, and FEMA will then issue the official approval letter.

Potential Candidates for CVSWMD (Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District) Board of Supervisors

Chris Beling and Ann Stanton have expressed interest as a result of Gabrielle Malina's (the town's former representative) Front Porch Forum post.

Town Office Generator Installation Update

Town office will be closed Friday, November 22. An electrician and GMP will be on site to upgrade the service to 200 amp. The electrician will install the transfer switch and do the necessary upgrades for the generator and a possible heat pump installation. The generator and propane service are already in place.

Meeting Schedule

December 2, 2019	6:00 p.m.	Selectboard forum; 7:00 p.m. regular meeting; at village fire station
December 5, 2019	7:00 p.m.	Joint budget meeting with Calais and EMFD at village fire station
December 9, 2019	7:00 p.m.	[Tentative] Joint EMFD budget meeting with Calais

December 13, 2019	5:00 p.m.	Town volunteer appreciation event
December 16, 2019	5:00 p.m.	Selectboard regular meeting

Zoning Administrator Report

There have been 4 new applications since November 4th SB meeting, for a total of 65 applications so far in 2019.

The next development review board meeting is December 3, 2019, with two warned hearings: a 2-lot subdivision of the Thornton parcel at 3205 North Street and a 3-lot subdivision of the Coburn property at 139 Daggett Road.

M. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.