

Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard

June 1, 2020 Selectboard Meeting

This meeting was conducted remotely using the Zoom conferencing platform. Participation options were provided to the public.

SB Attendance: Chair Seth Gardner, Carl Etnier, Jon Jewett, Amy Willis and Casey Northrup; Town Administrator Bruce Johnson

Public Attendance: Rebecca Schrader (Revolving Loan Fund Advisor); Ann Stanton (town representative to CVSWMD board); Cathleen Gent (CVSWMD General Manager)

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Additions to Agenda:

- **Consideration of Letter of Intent to Include Town's Revolving Loan Fund as Part of the State's Proposed Small Business Loan & Grant Program**
- **Update on Fontaine Purchase of Town-owned Old LaPerle Farm Parcel**

Minutes:

Chair Gardner presented the draft minutes of the May 18, 2020 board meeting.

Motion: To approve the May 18, 2020 minutes as presented. Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Discussion on Town Management in Light of Covid-19

The board discussed the possibility of opening up the town office to in-person services given Governor Scott's continued relaxation of the Covid-19 restrictions and updated guidance from the Agency of Commerce & Community Development. Concern was raised about the planned heat pump installation (scheduled for June 5th) and how that might affect air circulation and air quality. TA Johnson will research the issue and the board will revisit the situation at its June 22nd meeting. Until then, the town office will remain closed to the public, but researchers and attorneys can access vault materials by appointment from Town Clerk Laquerre. Mandated protocols (one-at-a-time; masks; health survey; etc.) are in effect for such appointments.

Mr. Etnier brought up the possibility of allowing town committees to hold outdoor meetings while still adhering to the recommended safety measures. At present the board has banned all non-essential, in-person meetings. Even under the relaxed guidelines, indoor meetings remain challenging due to the per person square footage requirements. The town office meeting room, at 350 square feet, is too small for a public meeting. The Emergency Services Facility's public

room remains closed, but once available, would be a more accessible location for committee meetings so long as spacing protocols remain in place.

With indoor meetings still off the table, the board turned the discussion back to Mr. Etnier's suggested amendment to the board's emergency order to allow outdoor meetings. Members agreed that this would be a good step to take.

Motion: To make a second amendment to the Selectboard's March 16, 2020 order, to state "[a]ll non-essential, indoor, in-person town committee/commission/board meetings and events are canceled until further notice. Meetings at public sites outdoors are permitted for gatherings of 25 or fewer, provided that physical distancing and protocols for hygiene consistent with guidance from VDH and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), are observed:

- **Always staying home and away from others if you are sick with COVID-19, have recently been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, or just don't feel well.**
- **Keeping a 6-foot distance from others when you meet people outside of your household.**
- **Frequently washing your hands (hand sanitizer is acceptable when soap and water are not available).**
- **Coughing and sneezing into your elbow (even if you are wearing a facial covering).**
- **Wearing a facial covering over your nose and mouth."**

Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

Conversation with CVSWMD General Manager Cathleen Gent

Ms. Gent provided an update on Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District's effort to bring a household hazardous waste facility to central Vermont by Spring 2022. The projected cost is \$1.2 million dollars, with much of that already in place through a \$500,000 state grant and the commitment of \$594,000 in CVSWMD reserve funds. The remainder will be raised from non-bond, non-tax sources. The current challenge is locating and securing a suitable site in the core central Vermont area. Mr. Jewett is a member of the new ad hoc facility committee designed to help guide the process as it moves forward.

Ms. Gent moved on to address other topics of interest. The popular household hazardous waste events have been on hold due to Covid-19. There will now be a collection event in Barre Town on August 1st, followed later in the season with events at Bradford and Montpelier. The drop-off protocol has changed: stay in your vehicle with mask on; all waste in the car trunk or truck bed; \$20/carload in exact change.

The ARCC (Additional Recyclables Collection Center) has reopened, but with a limited scope of accepted items: batteries; e-waste (computers, televisions, etc.); household paint; fluorescent bulbs; and food scraps.

The Montpelier office remains closed to the public. Compost equipment is still available for purchase at discounted rates and the popular outreach education programs are ongoing – just

online for now. Further information on all of CVSWMD's activities is online:

<http://www.cvswmd.org/>

Consideration of Town Credit Card for Assistant Sexton

Tim Lamson, who is the Cemetery Committee chair and the lead cemetery maintenance person as well as assistant cemetery sexton, is having to utilize his own cash/credit card for expenses (with reimbursement by the town) due to the fact Elliott Morse, the town sexton, has had limited mobility under the Covid-19 restrictions. Mr. Morse has a town credit card with a \$1,500 limit. Mr. Lamson has requested a second cemetery card in his name, subject to the same limit. Mr. Morse supports the request.

The board discussed the use of town-provided credit cards instead of utilizing town accounts at the necessary businesses. Eight years ago the town shifted to card use for certain small purchases to limit the number of open town accounts and to enable purchases where accounts were not available, such as at the post office. TA Johnson, Road Foreman Perry, and Mr. Morse currently carry town cards. Board members agreed, given the unusual circumstances, to provide a town credit card for Mr. Lamson.

Motion: To authorize Town Treasurer Don Welch to request a town credit card for Tim Lamson from People's United Bank. Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

Consideration of Letter of Intent to Include Town's Revolving Loan Fund as Part of the State's Proposed Small Business Loan & Grant Program

The Agency of Commerce & Community Development is seeking legislative approval for the Restart Vermont Loan and Grant Program in an effort to provide financial assistance to small businesses affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. To enhance the pool of money for this program, ACCD is requesting that towns with revolving loan funds submit a memorandum of intent to participate in the program. For a town like East Montpelier participation would be in the form of committing all or a portion of our available RLF cash (around \$70,000). ACCD or its designees would handle the program mechanics, with the town only responsible for approval of the specific grants/loans that would utilize our fund.

Ms. Schrader, the East Montpelier Revolving Loan Fund Advisor, noted that the town has no current projects utilizing the fund. The town has been working on two potential projects, but neither will need assistance in the near future. The Twin Valley Senior Center appears ready to purchase the building it utilizes without town funding, although the organization may look to the RLF if it proceeds with a planned housing expansion. The Central Vermont Habitat for Humanity project slated for the town-owned parcel located at 2812 US Rte. 2 is on the back burner as both the town and the organization work through a variety of issues affecting the project. Ms. Schrader supports the ACCD program, both for the laudatory purpose and due to the fact the town will not be responsible for program management.

Board members were uniformly in support of the program goals and willing to contribute a significant portion of our RLF. At this point the board does not want to place the entire current

fund balance into the program, capping the initial contribution at \$50,000. The board does not want to foreclose the option of using the RLF for a worthy local project. The board is willing to revisit this decision after the program is operational.

Motion: To authorize TA Johnson to sign the Memorandum of Intent to participate in the Restart Vermont Loan and Grant Program, with the understanding that the town is capping its Revolving Loan Fund contribution at \$50,000. Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

Update on Fontaine Purchase of Town-owned Old LaPerle Farm Parcel

Due to concern over potential Act 250 jurisdiction attaching to his abutting business property, Marc Fontaine is requesting that Pat Malone be allowed to replace him as the prospective purchaser of the town-owned Old LaPerle Farm property. Mr. Malone will submit a purchase & sales agreement for the same \$200,000 cash price as Mr. Fontaine offered. Mr. Malone will also submit a deposit which the town's attorney will hold in escrow. Mr. Malone would like 30 days to complete his due diligence and 15 days thereafter to close.

Mr. Malone is aware that Mr. Fontaine has fenced in the LaPerle parcel without permission and is grazing cattle on the land. He is further aware that the board will not condone this trespass for an extended time period. So long as Mr. Malone moves expeditiously to complete the transaction, the board has no issue with him replacing Mr. Fontaine as prospective purchaser.

Motion: To allow Pat Malone to replace Marc Fontaine as the prospective purchaser of the town-owned Old LaPerle Farm property, subject to the agreed terms & conditions. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

Appointments:

➤ **Funding Request Study Committee**

- Sandal Cate and Darci Coleman-Graves have declined reappointment. Ginny Callan and Sarah Kinter have volunteered for the two open seats. The remaining five members request reappointment.
- **Motion: To appoint Ginny Callan, Sarah Kinter, Lindy Johnson, Paul Erlbaum, Sue Racanelli, Kate Rader and Jeanne Malachowski to one-year terms on the Funding Request Study Committee.** Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

Warrants

➤ **June 1, 2020 Warrant for Approval**

- Board members reviewed the warrant. Following a protocol developed at the board's April 13th meeting to deal with the difficulties inherent in individually signing a warrant during a remote meeting, board members decided to approve the warrant by motion and have Chair Gardner sign the warrant as certification of the board approval.
- **Motion: To approve the June 1, 2020 expense warrant and authorize Chair Gardner to sign the warrant on behalf of the board.** Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

Other Business

Town Administrator Report

- Update on EM Village Sidewalk Project:
 - The project is underway. This week will feature installation of drainage infrastructure.
- Update on Town Office Building Heat Pump:
 - Cacicio's Heating will be installing a heat pump system in the town office building over the next week. Cowan's Electric will handle the electrical service components.
- Meeting Schedule:
 - June 11, 2020 7:00 pm EMFD budget & service update at ESF
 - June 22, 2020 6:30 pm Selectboard "special" regular meeting
 - July 13, 2020 6:30 pm Selectboard "special" regular meeting

Zoning Administrator Report

- There have been 4 new applications since the May 18th SB meeting. There have been 17 zoning permit applications in 2020.
- The next DRB meeting is scheduled for June 2, 2020. There is one warned hearing for a reconfiguration of the Northrup residential and business properties on US Rte. 2. There are also two sketch plan reviews for subdivisions, the first for a 2-lot subdivision of the Fitch property along Fitch Road, and the second for a 3-lot subdivision of the Rogers property running along VT Rte. 214. In both cases the subdivisions are designed to create smaller lots around existing houses.

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator

Approved: June 22, 2020 East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting