

## **Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard**

### **May 2, 2022 Selectboard Meeting**

**This meeting was held in-person at the town office building with a remote participation option using the Zoom conferencing platform.**

**SB Attendance:** Chair Seth Gardner, Jon Jewett, Amy Willis (remote), Judith Dillon (remote) and Carl Etnier; Town & Zoning Administrator Bruce Johnson; Town Administrator Gina Jenkins

**In-Person Public Attendance:** ORCA Media; Ty Rolland, EMFD Fire Chief

**Remote Public Attendance:** EM Clerk Rosie Laquerre; Rebecca Schrader, Revolving Loan Fund Advisor; EM Tree Warden Paul Cate; EM Resilient Roads Committee Chair Jeff Cueto; David Delcore, Times Argus

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**Additions to Agenda: None**

Chair Gardner welcomed new Town Administrator, Gina Jenkins.

### **Minutes:**

Chair Gardner presented the draft minutes of the April 18, 2022 board meeting.

**Motion: To approve the April 18, 2022 minutes as amended.** Made by Mr. Jewett; second by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously.

Chair Gardner presented the draft minutes of the April 20, 2022 board meeting.

**Motion: To approve the April 20, 2022 minutes as presented.** Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

**Public Comment:** None

### **Discussion on Revolving Loan Fund Program**

**Rebecca Schrader, Revolving Loan Fund Advisor**

In a follow up to the discussion from November 15, 2021, Rebecca returned to present options for the potential use of the RLF. The funds are to be used either for public projects, housing or supporting small businesses. The guidelines state that the funds are to be used to support areas where at least 51% of the population is low to moderate income.

One option presented was for the town to transfer the balance to CV Fiber with the plan that the funds would ultimately be covered by ARPA funding down the road. This option would require that CV Fiber comply with all regulations/reporting as required for the town. SB opted to shelve this option.

Another option is to transfer the funds to a local non-profit that would put the funds to use in community through loans or grants that would meet the program's criteria. The state is putting together a list of acceptable central VT entities to which the town could assign the funds. Usage of the funding would be limited to support of EM residents for 1<sup>st</sup> 2 years. Board consensus was to pursue this option in support of housing initiatives.

### **Discussion on Proposed Amendments to the East Montpelier Land Use & Development Regulations**

Board members discussed the proposed amendments to the EM Land Use & Development Regulations. The Planning Commission's report lays out an outline of the proposed amendments; the changes for the most part are intended to integrate the zoning plan laid out in the 2017 EM Village Master Plan into the town's land use regulations.

The board would like to meet again with PC Chair Zach Sullivan to help refine board member understanding of the reasoning underlying the revisions. If the proposed town plan amendments are ready to be presented to the board, he'll be at the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. Otherwise, he'll be at the June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Discussion on EMFD Projects**

#### **➤ Consideration of EMFD Fire Engine Purchase Plan**

- The board discussed how to proceed with EM's contribution of \$133,333 to the purchase of the new fire engine. The funds are to be paid upon chassis delivery.
- **Motion: To contribute \$133,333 to the purchase of the new fire engine when the chassis is delivered.** Made by Mr. Jewett; second by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously.
- The board then discussed the use of up to \$250,000 of the EMFD capital reserve motion to pay for the new fire engine.
- **Motion: To authorize EMFD to use up to \$250,000 of the EMFD capital reserve fund for purchase of fire engine.** Made by Mr. Jewett; second by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously.

#### **➤ Consideration of EM ESF Bond Remainder Fund Use Request**

- The board discussed the request from EMFD to use the remainder of the ESF Bond Remainder Fund to upgrade light fixtures both inside and outside to LEDs and to improve/pave a section of the parking lot that is currently not paved.
- **Motion: To grant permission to EMFD to use up to \$13,830, the total remaining ESF Bond Remainder Fund for the paving and lighting projects.** Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

**Discussion on Proposed Shade Tree Preservation Plan**

The board discussed next steps for the proposed plan, deciding to forego further consideration until it sees the results of the Resilient Roads Committee's ongoing conversations with the public. The RRC's next public meeting is scheduled for May 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Discussion on EM Personnel Policy Revisions**

Board discussed potentially altering the vacation leave staircase chart. The proposal essentially wipes out the chart, with a first year vacation benefit of 3 weeks, with all employees receiving 18 days. The proposed revision would also allow leave, which accrues in monthly increments, to be used once earned, eliminating the 6-month ban on use imposed on new hires.

**Motion: To adopt the revised personnel policy as presented.** Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

**Discussion on Stipend for Green Up Day Coordinator**

The board discussed a recommendation from current Green Up Day Coordinator Chris Racanelli to provide a stipend for serving as the coordinator.

**Motion: To pay \$500 stipend to Green Up Day Coordinator starting in 2023.** Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

**Discussion on Professional Oversight of Highway Projects**

Board discussed the lack of resource to provide oversight of highway projects, specifically the pending culvert replacement projects on County Road. Chase & Chase Surveyors & Septic Designers, a Barre firm often used by the town for aspects of culvert projects, has provided a proposal outline that incorporates a degree of oversight but not the full-on daily service provided by construction inspection services firms. The proposed cost is \$9,000 for one culvert project, which is about 50% below what a full-service oversight effort might cost (10-15% of contractor cost).

The board directed TA Johnson/Jenkins to request full proposal from Chase & Chase for the anticipated work on County Road this summer.

**Discussion on Agreement for Town Office Cleaning Services**

Board reviewed proposal from Kennison's Janitorial Services to provide janitorial services for the Town Office. The cost is \$60/week with services to begin on Saturday, May 7, 2022.

**Motion: To accept the proposal from Kennison's Janitorial Services to clean the Town Office.** Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

**Discussion on Town Management in Light of COVID-19**

The board's resolution on face coverings and vaccinations states that the board will continue to review the matter at every regularly scheduled meeting. Board members discussed the current situation in Washington County. The weekly case rate has risen to 465/100,000 and the county is at "high" under the CDC's community level tool. The board decided to maintain the current protocol and revisit the issue at its May 16, 2022 meeting.

**Warrants****➤ May 2, 2022 Regular Warrant for Approval**

- Board members reviewed the warrant. The warranty was physically signed by 3 board members in attendance: Chair Gardner, Mr. Etnier, Mr. Jewett.

**Other Business****Town Administrator Report**

- Doner Road Access Request:
  - The site visit to review the Doner Road situation and, in particular, curb cut application 22-021, is set for Monday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 p.m.
- Update on ARPA Funding:
  - The town has completed the required March 31, 2022 initial annual report of fund utilization. As part of this process the town elected the "standard allowance" for the entire town award.
- Meeting Schedule:

○ May 5, 2022	7:00 pm	PC Town Plan Amendments Hearing
○ May 16, 2022	5:00 pm	Site visit to Doner Road
	6:30 pm	Selectboard regular meeting
○ June 6, 2022	6:30 pm	Selectboard regular meeting

**Zoning Administrator Report**

- 4 new applications have been received since the April 18<sup>th</sup> SB meeting. There have been 25 applications so far in 2022.
- The next DRB meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2022. There are 4 warned hearings:
  - 22-012/U-32, for recreation program improvements including 2 new dugouts and 3 scoreboards;
  - 22-015/Dion/75 Fair Road, for the addition of a commercial use (heavy equipment sales) to an existing residential use;
  - 22-017/OVWS, for a new agricultural barn plus numerous site improvements; and,
  - 22-019/Land Care/2368 Towne Hill Road, for 2 new structures, one for materials storage and the other for equipment storage/service.

**Personnel Matters [Potential Executive Session]**

- **Discussion on Town Administrator Transition**
- **Discussion on Zoning Administrator Transition**
- **Other Personnel Matters**

**Motion: To go into executive session under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) – the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that the public body shall make a final decision to hire or appoint a public officer or employee in an open meeting and shall explain the reasons for its final decision during the open meeting.**

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

An objection was made by Times Argus reporter David Delcore to the abrupt nature of the move into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Delcore objected on grounds that transition of personnel could be discussed openly. The board acknowledged Mr. Delcore's concerns, but ultimately decided that executive session was warranted.

The board entered executive session at 8:45 p.m. and exited at 9:09 p.m.

The board directed TA Johnson/Jenkins to extend the application deadline for the zoning administrator job to May 16, 2022. The Planning Commission will be responsible for interviewing candidates and presenting recommendation(s) to the Selectboard for consideration.

The board directed TA Johnson/Jenkins to advertise a position for a minutes taker for meetings of the Selectboard, Planning Commission and Development Review Board in the Front Porch Forum, Montpelier Bridge, Times Argus, and Washington World.

**Motion: To adjourn.** Made by Mr. Jewett; second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Gina Jenkins, Town Administrator

**Approved: May 16, 2022 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting**