

Minutes for the East Montpelier Selectboard

DRAFT

June 6, 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, Carl Etnier, John Jewett, Amy Willis, Judith Dillon (remote), Town Administrator Gina Jenkins, Town Clerk Rosie Laquerre, Town Treasurer Michele Pallas (remote)

In-Person Public Attendance: Sean Temple, ORCA Media; Deirdre Connelly

Remote Public Attendance: Planning Commission Member Scott Hess (remote)

Vice Chair Etnier called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Additions to Agenda: None.

Public Comment: None.

Minutes:

Mr. Etnier presented the draft minutes of the May 16, 2022 board meeting. Mr. Etnier suggested a few edits to clarify decision-making during the meeting.

Motion: To approve the May 16, 2022 minutes with tonight's recommended amendments. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously. Ms. Dillon abstained from voting as she was absent from the May 16, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Etnier presented the draft minutes of the May 23, 2022 board meeting. Mr. Etnier suggested adding a sentence to the discussion of the revised quote for 2022 Dodge Ram to clarify that the board is not excited about the increased cost.

Motion: To approve May 23, 2022 minutes with tonight's recommended amendments. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

Zoning Administrator Transition

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. Jewett, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

The board entered into Executive Session at 6:50 p.m and exited at 8:10 p.m.

No action taken.

Planning Commission Member Scott Hess joined the meeting remotely during the Executive Session.

Chair Gardner joined the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Town Clerk Report**Rosie Laquerre, Town Clerk**

Town Clerk Laquerre requested an addition to the document retention plan that specified how long to keep checks after they have cleared. Town Clerk Laquerre explained that she has been concerned about the potential liability of the current policy of holding checks in the vault for up to a year after they clear. She spoke with other clerks in the area about their policies on this matter and found that most clerks don't keep checks after deposit. The board discussed possible benefits to keeping the checks and determined that if information on the check was needed, it could be obtained by requesting an image of the check from the bank. The board suggested that the policy be amended so that checks may be destroyed one week after they clear. Ms. Laquerre will update the retention policy for the board to review and vote on at the next meeting. The board expressed gratitude to Ms. Laquerre for developing and adhering to the record retention policy.

Consideration of Warrant to Impound Unlicensed dogs

The board reviewed the standard statutory warrant. Ms. Dillon suggested changing instances of "humane society" to "animal shelter" for consistency and to remove the phrase "Given under our hands at" from the end of the document. The board agreed to these changes.

Motion: To approve the Warrant to Impound Unlicensed dogs for June 6, 2022 with tonight's recommended amendments. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously. Mr. Etnier recused himself from this vote.

Consideration of quote for completion of land records digitization project

TA Jenkins explained that this revised quote is for work to complete the digitization project of all land records dating back to 1849. Town Clerk Laquerre explained that the quote is as high as it is because it covers the work of the hand-written records, which take more time and attention to process, and because many of the modern land records contain more pages than estimated at the time of the original quote. She added that she believes the fees are fair and that Avenu has done a fantastic job so far, their work has been meticulous and thorough. The board agreed that the expense is worthwhile and that it is important to complete the digitization work.

Motion: To approve the additional expenditure to complete the digitization of land records dating back to 1849. Made by Mr. Etnier, second by Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

Town treasurer report**Michelle Pallas**

The board reviewed the financial reports, there were no expenditures out of line with budget.

Delinquent tax collector report and policy review

The board discussed the current outstanding tax balance and noted that it is significantly higher this year. Town Treasurer Pallas noted that approximately \$30k came in today that is not reflected in the outstanding balance. TA Jenkins added that notices just went out and they expect the balance to decrease in the coming weeks.

The board reviewed the Delinquent Tax Policy and accepted it as is.

Discussion of Chase & Chase proposal for County Road culvert oversight

The board discussed the benefits of working with Chase & Chase for oversight on these two culvert projects, including the engineering documentation and field reports that they will provide, and the knowledgeable oversight they can offer throughout the projects. The board noted that the documentation may come in handy if we are ever audited by the state.

Motion: To accept the proposal from Chase & Chase for oversight on the Morse Road and Barnes Road culvert projects. Made by Mr. Etnier, second by Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

Consideration of notice of intent to participate in the FY2023 municipal roads grants-in-aid program

TA Jenkins presented this document and noted that this is an annual form to be signed to participate in this program.

Motion: To approve the submission of the notice of intent and authorize Chair Gardner to sign the letter. Made by Ms. Dillon, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

Board of listers request to consult town attorney

The board of listers has denied a request and are concerned that it may lead to a legal situation. They are requesting to consult with the attorney in the event that future legal action may be needed. The board felt that there will be plenty of time to consult the attorney if this denied request does in fact lead to legal action, and that this request for an early consultation is unnecessary. The consensus was for the board of listers to wait to consult the attorney until legal action is necessary.

Banking revisions due to staff transitions

TA Jenkins requested that Town Treasurer Pallas, TA Jenkins, and Town Clerk Laquerre be added to the People's bank account to access the account and sign checks. She explained that this change is, in part, to allow Town Clerk Laquerre to be the default employee to sign checks. This change in procedure would correct the material deficiency noted in the last audit, since Town Clerk Laquerre does not enter invoices or create accounts.

TA Jenkins also requested approval to cancel the credit card held by Bruce Johnson and obtain a credit card on behalf of the town for herself.

Motion: In anticipation of consultation with the auditors about the best method to correct the material deficiency, to adopt a resolution as provided for People's United Bank and authorize Chair Gardner to sign bank resolution document. Made by Mr. Etnier, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

Motion: To authorize TA Jenkins to obtain a credit card on behalf of the town with a limit of \$4,000. Made by Mr. Etnier, second by Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

Discussion on town management in light of Covid-19

Community update:

Washington County is currently at low status according to the CDC community level tool. TA Jenkins asked if the board would like to continue to discuss Covid-19 at every board meeting. The consensus was that it will be good to keep it in front of everyone as a regular check-in.

Discussion on Covid-19 vaccination and mitigation policy for employees:

TA Jenkins noted that the state-run testing sites are closing at the end of June and once they close PCR tests will be difficult to find in the state. Once PCR tests are unavailable, it will be difficult to follow the policy as written. The majority of employees have been vaccinated, and keeping the policy is unlikely to get them vaccinated if they haven't done so by now. The consensus was that the mandates are hard to justify now that the state has dropped its mandate, and that the board can revisit the topic and reinstate the mandate as needed at any point in the future.

Motion: To rescind the Covid-19 vaccination and mitigation policy for employees. Made by Ms. Willis, second by Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

Development of selectboard's summer schedule

The board reviewed and agreed to the following summer schedule:

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| • June 20, 2022 | 6:30 p.m. | Regular meeting date |
| • July 11, 2022 | 6:30 p.m. | Regular meeting date |
| • August 1, 2022 | 6:30 p.m. | Regular meeting date |
| • August 22, 2022 | 6:30 p.m. | Regular meeting date |
| • September 12, 2022 | 6:30 p.m. | Regular meeting date |

The selectboard will also attend a budget and service update by the EMFD on August 11, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Appointments:

Town Treasurer: Michele Pallas

TA Jenkins noted that this is needed to add Ms. Pallas to the bank account.

Motion: To appoint Michele Pallas as Town Treasurer through June 2022. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

Warrants

June 6, 2022 Regular Expense Warrant for Approval

The warrant was signed by all present board members.

May 31, 2022 Special Expense Warrant for Review (2022 Dodge Ram)

The warrant was signed by all present board members.

Other Business: None

Personnel Matters: None.

TA Jenkins briefly reviewed the permit applications. The board briefly discussed commemorating the retiring town administrator.

Motion: To adjourn. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly