

Minutes for the East Montpelier Selectboard

July 11, 2022 Selectboard Meeting

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

SB Attendance: Chair Seth Gardner, Jon Jewett, Town Administrator Gina Jenkins

Remote SB Attendance: Judith Dillon, Amy Willis

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

Remote Public Attendance: Scott Hess, Katie Rumley

Public Hearing

Proposed Amendments to the Town Plan

Ms. Willis called the public hearing to order at 6:33 p.m.

Chair Gardner assumed control of the public hearing at 6:34 p.m.

The town plan revisions primarily address the issues around the siting of telecommunication facilities. Since the last public hearing, Planning Commission Chair Zach Sullivan submitted revisions to the opening introduction to include the dates of public hearings and the projected date of adoption.

No concerns or points of serious discussion were raised.

Chair Gardner closed the hearing at 6:43 p.m.

Selectboard Meeting

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m.

Additions to Agenda: None

Minutes:

The board reviewed the draft minutes of the June 20, 2022 board meeting and made a few edits for clarity.

Motion: To approve the June 20, 2022 minutes with tonight's recommended amendments. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

Public Comment: Planning Commission member Scott Hess thanked TA Jenkins and Road Foreman Perry for their prompt work on restoring a road sign.

Review of hearing feedback and discussion of next steps

The board reviewed the town plan revisions. The revisions primarily explain the preservation of scenic views and none of the language would prevent someone from building a cell tower in the future as long as

they pay attention to siting. The document was well vetted by the Planning Commission and public comment was incorporated into the final document.

Motion: To adopt the proposed amendments to the town plan. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

Town Treasurer Report

TA Jenkins discussed the current budget status and noted that the numbers are not yet final. She and Treasurer Pallas are closely monitoring invoices to ensure they are put into the correct fiscal year. Mr. Jewett asked if the general fund deficit was due to decreased revenue; TA Jenkins explained that it was due to increased expenses and personnel changes. TA Jenkins also mentioned that she and Treasurer Pallas plan to present more detailed financial reports moving forward.

TA Jenkins brought up the Treasurer's Financial Management Questionnaire and explained that it is essentially the same as previous years in both form and answers.

Motion: To authorize Chair Gardner to sign the Treasurer's Financial Management Questionnaire. Made by Ms. Dillon, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

VCRD Community Leadership Summit Attendee Nomination

The board discussed the summit and Mr. Jewett shared that he had attended one in the past and found it to be a useful opportunity to set goals for economic development. The board wondered if Mr. Etnier might be interested in attending. TA Jenkins will reach out to him to gauge his interest.

Discussion on Capital Improvement Committee's annual request for information on future capital projects

The board discussed the potential town garage upgrades and potential town office upgrades as two options to submit to the Capital Improvement Committee. The board suggested TA Jenkins complete the Future Capital Projects Questionnaire for an engineering study for the town garage and for a planning assessment for a new town office. Chair Gardner pointed out that while it is still unclear how the ARPA money can be spent, it would be great if some of that money could be allocated toward these projects.

Preview of 2022-2023 property tax rates

TA Jenkins has updated the tax rate calculation based on the latest data. Overall, the rates have decreased. TA Jenkins and Treasurer Pallas will reevaluate these calculations as the listers continue to work. They hope to set the rates at the August 1 Selectboard meeting.

Consideration of VTrans FY23 Better Roads grant

TA Jenkins received the VTrans Better Roads grant agreement for the culvert replacement and requested the board authorize her to sign the agreement.

Motion: To authorize Town Administrator Gina Jenkins to sign the VTrans Better Roads grant agreement for \$56k to replace the Cherry Tree Hill culvert. Made by Ms. Dillon, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

County Road Project Update

TA Jenkins reported that this project began today. The road will become gravel soon and will remain so until late August. Pike is fine tuning the final schedule to minimize road closure. TA Jenkins is using Front Porch Forum to communicate with the town about expected road closures.

TA Jenkins mentioned that she has received an updated quote from Pike of \$1,056,639.90. The final cost may go down as the price of oil drops. Chair Gardner asked if any grants were helping to fund this project and TA Jenkins confirmed that the town received approximately \$350k from the state to help with the culvert and paving.

Discussion of Town Management in light of Covid-19

The CDC's community level tool shows Washington county at "Low" status with a case rate of 46.23 per 100,000 population as of July 7, 2022.

Warrants: July 11, 2022 Regular expense warrant

The board reviewed the July 11, 2022 regular expense warrant.

Motion: To authorize Chair Gardner to sign the warrant on behalf of selectboard. Made by Ms. Dillon, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

Access Permits

Access permits 22-026 and 22-027 were both submitted by Kitchen Sync Holdings related to an approved subdivision on Wheeler Road. Road Foreman Perry has approved both curb cuts.

TA Jenkins requested that the board also vote to authorize Chair Gardner to sign access permit 22-041 submitted by Komline and Son. This permit was approved at the last selectboard meeting but was accidentally not signed during that meeting.

Motion: To authorize Chair Gardner to sign access permits 22-026, 22-027, and 22-041. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

Personnel matters

The board briefly discussed a retirement celebration for the outgoing Municipal Assistant and Town Treasurer. TA Jenkins will plan something to thank the individuals for their service.

The board reviewed the Municipal Assistant job description. TA Jenkins noted that she hopes to leverage this position to cover more administrative work, particularly website updates. Ms. Dillon recommended a change to the education requirement for clarity. The board supported advertising the position by consensus.

TA Jenkins requested the board approve a mobile stipend of \$40 per month for ZA Brown. She explained that in the past the town issued a cell phone to the ZA for town business, but that account has since been closed. ZA Brown already has a cell phone and would prefer to use the same device for town business. He has an 802 phone number through Google that he will use for town business to keep those communications separate from his personal communications.

Motion: To approve a mobile stipend in the amount of \$40 per month for Zoning Administrator Brown. Made by Ms. Dillon, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

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. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

The board entered into Executive Session at 7:58 p.m. and exited at 8:15 p.m.

No action taken.

Town administrator report

TA Jenkins noted that five permit applications were submitted since the last meeting, bringing the total for the year to 49.

Meeting Schedule:

- August 1, 2022 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting date
- August 22, 2022 6:30 p.m. Special meeting date
- September 12, 2022 6:30 p.m. Special meeting date

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly.

Approved: August 1, 2022 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting