

Minutes for the East Montpelier Selectboard

October 3, 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, Carl Etnier, Amy Willis, Jon Jewett, Town Administrator Gina Jenkins

Remote SB Attendance: Judith Dillon

In-Person Public Attendance: Sean Temple, ORCA Media; Deirdre Connelly, Dexter Lefavour, Michael Duane

Remote Public Attendance: Scott Hess, Bill Powell, Guthrie Perry

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

Additions to Agenda:

TA Jenkins requested adding a discussion of the Listers Errors & Omissions memo.

Minutes:

The board reviewed the draft minutes of the September 12, 2022 board meeting.

Motion: To approve the September 12, 2022 minutes as presented. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

The board reviewed the draft minutes of the September 14, 2022 board meeting.

Motion: To approve the September 14, 2022 minutes as presented. Made by Ms. Willis, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

Public Comment: Dexter Lefavour is on the ballot and came to the meeting to introduce himself to the board. Michael Duane requested that the board publish selectboard meeting agendas on Front Porch Forum to help get the word out about meetings.

Consideration of VLCT PCIF Membership Renewal

TA Jenkins noted that this membership renewal is essentially the same as previous years, the main difference is that the amount is higher. The amount is calculated based on a percent of payroll, which is higher this year due to the staff changes in the town office.

Motion: To authorize TA Jenkins to sign and submit the renewal paperwork for the VLCT PACIF membership program. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously.

Listers Errors and Omissions

The board reviewed the memo of errors and omissions. The board wanted clarity on the first two parcels on the list, which are the same size and on the same road. Mr. Etnier suggested the board vote to approve the changes with one nay vote and invite the listers to the next meeting to discuss further. The board supported this process.

Motion: To approve the changes of assessment to the 2022 As Billed Grand List as submitted by the listers. Made by Ms. Willis, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed 4-1. Mr. Etnier voted nay for procedural reasons.

Road Foreman Report

County Road Project Update

RF Perry reported that the pipes are in the culverts and have been carrying water for a while. This week they will be working on regrading and getting the surface ready for blacktop. Guardrails should arrive in the middle of October and whenever Lafayette has a free day, they will install the guardrails. RF Perry stated that he is pleased with the work and that any outstanding concerns have been dealt with. Chair Gardner asked how he liked working with Chase & Chase. RF Perry said they were great to work with and that they checked in daily and were onsite frequently.

TA Jenkins noted that the board needed to approve two change orders. These were presented to the board at the April 4, 2022 meeting, but not voted on. The numbers have not changed since that meeting.

Motion: To authorize TA Jenkins to sign the change orders for the Morse Farm culvert to the adjusted contract amount of \$142,818 and the Barnes Road culvert to the adjusted contract amount of \$178,462. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously.

Mr. Etnier asked for RF Perry's assessment of the detour traffic during the work. RF Perry noted that the week of rain was not ideal for the volume of traffic on the detour, but once drivers got used to the route it seemed to work fine. Mr. Etnier explained that he had received feedback expressing concern about the speed and amount of traffic on the detour. TA Jenkins noted that speeding has been a consistent complaint from residents, and not solely related to the construction detour. She has spoken with the Washington County Sheriff's Department and they may have capacity in the coming months to work with the town. She will look at expenses from the past few years to get a sense of how much time the Vermont State Police have been able to dedicate to the town in recent years. She will also work with RF Perry on pricing for a speed bump for Center Road.

Winter Roads Policy

RF Perry stated that he thought the policy worked well last year and had no changes to request.

Motion: To adopt the Town of East Montpelier 2022-2023 winter operations plan. Made by Ms. Willis, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

Mr. Etnier noted that new people in town may not understand expectations for winter roads and suggested TA Jenkins post a link to the policy on Front Porch Forum.

Discussion on ChargePoint Level II EV Charger

Mr. Etnier explained that at the end of November WEC will no longer maintain the ChargePoint charger and it will become the responsibility of the town. The town has the option to maintain the network services at a cost, decommission the charger and turn it into a dummy charging station, or remove the charger. Bill Powell suggested that if the town decides to remove the charging station there could be a value in selling it. Mr. Etnier noted that the current station has been error-prone for years and he suggested the town remove the ChargePoint charger and replace it a Clipper Creek charger, which does not need to connect to a network, is very easy to use, and costs about \$1,600.

Ms. Willis asked if the town paid for the purchase and installation of the current charger. Mr. Etnier explained that WEC paid for it through a grant. Ms. Dillon asked if the town had any recent usage reports for the charger. TA Jenkins didn't have exact numbers available, but thought that it was around 10 charging cycles in the past few months. She noted that the number of charging cycles may not realistically represent demand, since the charger has been so difficult to use. The board generally supported replacing the current charger with a new one that works.

Mr. Etnier will work with Dave Roberts at Drive Electric Vermont to figure out next steps. Bill Powell offered to connect the town with electrical contractors for the work.

Capital Reserve Fund Discussion

Mr. Jewett reported that the Capital Improvements Committee met on September 22nd and discussed the requests to upgrade the town office and town garage. TA Jenkins noted that with some new furniture the town office can continue to work for a while. The town garage is too small for the equipment and therefore a more urgent need. The board agreed that the town garage was the priority. Mr. Jewett suggested a town garage committee be formed to set some milestones and get the project moving forward. Chair Gardner, RF Perry, and Mr. Jewett will participate on the committee. They will meet at the current town garage to figure out their next steps.

Regional Planning Transportation Advisory Committee Town Representative

Frank Pratt has decided to step away from his role as the Town Representative on the Regional Planning Transportation Advisory Committee. TA Jenkins will reach out to the committee to get a better sense of their work.

Discussion on 2023 Employee Health Insurance Options

The board reviewed the 2023 health insurance options from Hickok & Boardman. Because of the rate increase, the plans from BCBS and MVP now cost nearly the same amount. Mr. Etnier suggested a representative from Hickok & Boardman come to a future meeting to discuss the options in greater detail. Chair Gardner noted that the town currently covers the whole premium for employees and suggested they continue to do so to help retain workers.

Discussion on Town Management in Light of COVID-19

According to the CDC community level tool Washington County is at "low", though this is likely an undercount. Covid-19 is still one of the leading causes of death in the nation.

Warrants: October 3, 2022 Regular Expense Warrant

The present board members signed the warrant.

Town Administrator Report

The DRB meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 4th was cancelled because the application to be reviewed was withdrawn by the applicant.

TA Jenkins and Treasurer Pallas will be attending VLCT Town Fair October 6-7 and will be out of the office.

Ms. Dillon followed up on an idea from past meetings to look at the VLCT workbook on DEI training and possibly bring in Xusana Davis to meet with the board. Ms. Dillon will send out the link to the workbook to board members after the meeting.

Meeting Schedule:

- October 17, 2022 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting date
- November 7, 2022 6:30 p.m Regular meeting date
- November 21, 2022 6:30 p.m Regular meeting date

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly.

Approved: October 17, 2022 East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting