

Minutes for the East Montpelier Selectboard

October 17, 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, Judith Dillon, Jon Jewett, Town Administrator Gina Jenkins

Remote SB Attendance: Amy Willis

In-Person Public Attendance: Chris (last name?) ORCA Media; Deirdre Connelly, Chief Larry Brown, Jonathan Boucher

Remote Public Attendance: Scott Hess, Stephen Miracle, Teri Martineau, Allen Ploof, Road Foreman Guthrie Perry

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

Additions to Agenda: None.

Minutes:

The board reviewed the draft minutes of the October 3, 2022 board meeting.

Motion: To approve the October 3, 2022 minutes as presented. Made by Ms. Dillon, second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.

Chair Gardner assumed control the meeting at 6:31 pm.

Public Comment: None.

EMFD Request to use Capital Funds to purchase power lift system

Chief Larry Brown attended the meeting to request use of capital funds to purchase a second power lift system for the fire department. He explained that a cot can weigh 150 lb. on its own, and with the added weight of a person it takes at minimum two people to lift a standard cot. The power lift does the same work with the push of a button and makes the work much safer for all employees. He also explained that the power lift system can easily be reinstalled in a new ambulance at future date. Chief Brown showed the board a video demonstrating the process of lifting a cot with and without the power lift system.

Chair Gardner asked how much the new power lift will cost. Chief Brown explained that they were requesting approval to spend up to \$35k for the lift and installation. The manufacturer quoted the cost of the lift at approximately \$28k and the installation is expected to cost approximately \$2k, and Chief Brown wanted flexibility in case some of those costs go up. He added that the lift has a 20-25 year lifespan. Ms. Dillon asked how long the lifespan is for the ambulances. Chief Brown explained that they are estimated to last 10-15 years, but that EMFD may use an ambulance for longer if it isn't experiencing mechanical issues.

Motion: To approve the use of East Montpelier Fire Department capital funds up to \$35k for the purchase of a second power lift for the fire department. Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously.

Listers Errors & Omissions Revised Request

The board reviewed the updated document from the Listers.

Motion: To reconsider and reject the approval of changes of assessment to the 2022 As Billed Grand List as submitted at the October 3, 2022 Selectboard meeting. Made by Mr. Etnier, second by Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

Motion: To approve the changes of assessment to the 2022 As Billed Grand List as submitted at the October 17, 2022 Selectboard meeting. Made by Mr. Etnier, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

Consideration of EM Gully Jumpers Snowmobile Club Road Use Request

RF Perry reviewed and approved this use request. The board reviewed it and had no comments.

Motion: To approve the East Montpelier Gully Jumpers' request for road crossings as detailed in their letter to the Selectboard of October 13, 2022. Made by Mr. Etnier, second by Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

Discussion on Front Porch Forum Post of Agendas

TA Jenkins proposed that she make Front Port Forum posts about upcoming meetings with a link to the meeting page on the East Montpelier website to encourage town citizens to utilize the website for this information. Mr. Etnier agreed that posting the link to the website is helpful, but also suggested posting the full agenda for transparency and ease of access. TA Jenkins explained that she is concerned about the volume of emails she may get in response to full agenda posts. Chair Gardner suggested that Selectboard members should take on the work of responding to inquiries about upcoming meetings rather than town staff, and Mr. Jewett supported that idea.

Mr. Jewett suggested creating email accounts for Selectboard members to use for this purpose. TA Jenkins pointed out that Microsoft licenses for email accounts can be expensive; Mr. Jewett suggested creating free Google email accounts and offered to find out more information about accounts through Google.

TA Jenkins will try posting the full agenda for the next Selectboard meeting to Front Porch Forum.

Discussion on 2023 Employee Health Insurance Options, Teri Martineau, Hickok & Boardman

Teri Martineau from Hickok & Boardman joined the meeting to discuss the employee health insurance plan options with the board. She explained that the rate increases have been extreme across all plans this year. The MVP plan cost increased approximately 19%, but is still slightly less than Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Mr. Etnier asked for more information about the stacked deductible. Ms. Martineau explained that it only applies to families of two or more. In that case, if one person on the plan meets the \$425 individual deductible, they are eligible for post-deductible benefits. If a second person on the plan meets the \$425 individual deductible, then everyone else on the plan is eligible for post-deductible benefits.

Ms. Martineau noted that prescription drug costs have separate deductibles. For individuals the maximum out of pocket cost for prescription drugs is \$1,400 and for families it is \$2,800.

Ms. Dillon asked what non-preferred brand meant in the list under Retail Prescription Drugs. Ms. Martineau explained that it refers to prescriptions that are FDA approved but not on the formulary. These are generally uncommon medications.

Mr. Etnier asked what advice the board should pass along to employees about appealing denials of coverage. Ms Martineau explained that employees should always appeal a denial of coverage and that the process is laid out in the certificate of coverage.

The board discussed how they should proceed. Chair Gardner suggested they offer both the MVP and BCBS plans to employees as they did last year, and that the full premium be covered. TA Jenkins requested that if an employee takes the stipend instead of the health insurance, that the payment be divided across 26 pay periods instead of the current 24 pay periods. The board supported this change.

Motion: To offer all full- and part-time employees, in accordance with the personnel policy, 1.) 100% payment of the MVP Platinum plan; 2.) the option of either an MVP or a Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance plan; 3.) a stipend equal to 50% of the single MVP Platinum plan in lieu of a health insurance plan. Made by Mr. Etnier, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

County Road Project Update

TA Jenkins noted that the culvert work is complete and that the board had been provided all reports from Chase & Chase. The board invited members of the public to ask questions about the County Road project; there were none.

RF Perry noted that Pike Industries began repaving this week and they are hoping to have the second layer complete by the end of the week if the weather cooperates. RF Perry is pleased with the work.

Chair Gardner asked how the apron work is going and RF Perry explained that the crew will begin work on the Cummings Road apron on Wednesday. The Templeton Road apron needs some fill work and will be ready for blacktop soon.

Cemetery Committee Request

Mr. Boucher explained that Ms. Laquerre requested representation on the committee for the Town Clerk because a lot of the committee's work comes through her office. The board agreed that this made sense.

Motion: Whereas the Selectboard created a five-person Cemetery Committee on March 18, 2019; and Whereas the Town Clerk is responsible for cemetery deeds and the upkeep of the cemetery records; Be it therefore resolved that the Town Clerk is *ex officio* an additional voting member of the Cemetery Committee, making a total of six members on the committee. Made by Mr. Etnier, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

Ms. Dillon asked why the Town Clerk needed be an *ex officio* member and Mr. Etnier explained that it is because the member isn't an individual, but rather whoever holds the position of Town Clerk.

Mr. Boucher explained the funding request. Doty Cemetery needs to be surveyed because the existing maps don't correspond consistently to the existing boundaries. The Cemetery committee requested approval to spend up to \$10k on survey work for Doty Cemetery. Mr. Boucher noted that they do have

the southern portion by the road surveyed and can continue to sell plots in that area, but they are not intending to sell plots in the east section until it is surveyed.

Mr. Jewett asked if any money was set aside for this kind of work and Mr. Boucher explained that, as far as he knew, there was not. He also wanted to request cemetery maintenance be included in the capital fund. The board discussed the history of perpetual care for cemeteries. Mr. Etnier checked the East Montpelier Cemetery Rules and Regulations which state that perpetual care entails mowing and trimming and specifically does not include reconstruction or care for stones.

Mr. Etnier noted that the 2021 town report Cemetery Funds page listed non-expendable perpetual care funds totaling approximately \$100k and expendable funds totaling approximately \$15k. Chair Gardner suggested the \$10k for surveying work come out of the expendable cemetery funds and the board agreed that was reasonable.

Motion: To authorize the Cemetery committee to spend up to \$10k on survey work for Doty Cemetery. Made by Mr. Etnier, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

Discussion on ChargePoint Level II EV Charger

Mr. Etnier looked into the Clipper Creek charger and both Dave Roberts from Drive VT and Tom Fisher from Efficiency Vermont agreed it is a good option. The cost for the charger with ruggedized cables is approximately \$1,700. Mr. Etnier has the contact information for an installer recommended by Bill Powell at WEC and will reach out to talk through the process of de-installing the old charger and installing the new one. He also investigated the secondary market for ChargePoint chargers and found they are going for approximately \$1,500. If the town chooses to sell the ChargePoint charger it could cover most of the cost for the Clipper Creek charger. Mr. Etnier hopes to have some final figures at the next Selectboard meeting.

Town Treasurer Report

The board reviewed the August report. TA Jenkins noted that she just received the September statement from M&T. She is working on a forecast for the rest of the year in preparation for the budget process for FY2024 and she is planning to build more detail into the budget and to revisit the structure of the monthly reports. In the light of the messy transition to M&T, she and Town Treasurer Pallas are setting up meetings next week to look at local banking options.

Discussion on Town Management in Light of COVID-19

Using the CDC's community level tool, last updated October 6th, Washington County is at "Low." The latest data is as follows:

- Case Rate per 100,000 population: 111.28
- New COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population: 7.6
- Staffed inpatient beds in use by patients with confirmed COVID-19: 3.8%

Mr. Etnier cited [a recent article about the impacts of long Covid](#).

Warrants: October 11, 2022 Special Warrant and October 17, 2022 Regular Expense Warrant

Mr. Jewett asked for more information on the vaccine expense. Mr. Etnier explained that, as Animal Control Officer, he was vaccinated against rabies earlier this year and was recently tested to see how well the vaccine took.

Mr. Etnier asked for more information about the hazmat disposal. TA Jenkins explained that it was for the hydraulic fluid spill from a town truck that occurred last winter near North Country Credit Union.

TA Jenkins noted a expense for vault maintenance and explained that it was for a locksmith to service the vault and install an electric keypad to replace the dial, which was becoming concerningly difficult to operate. She explained that the new electronic keypad is battery operated and the batteries are very easy to change. The code is also easy to change, which will be helpful in the event of future staff changes.

The present board members signed the warrants.

Town Administrator Report

TA Jenkins will be taking Wednesday through Friday off this week.

Meeting Schedule:

- November 7, 2022 6:30 p.m Regular meeting date
- November 21, 2022 6:30 p.m Regular meeting date
- December 5, 2022 6:30 p.m Regular meeting date
- December 19, 2022 6:30 p.m Regular meeting date

Personnel Matter

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 Ms. Dillon. Passed unanimously.

The board entered executive session at 8:18 pm

No action was taken.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly.

Approved: November 7, 2022 East Montpelier Selectboard Meeting