

## **Minutes for the East Montpelier Selectboard**

### **May 1, 2023 Selectboard Meeting**

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

**SB Attendance:** Vice Chair Carl Etnier, Jon Jewett, Zoe Christiansen, Town Administrator (“TA”) Gina Jenkins

**Remote SB Attendance:** Scott Hess

**In-Person Public Attendance:** Finn Cook, ORCA Media; Deirdre Connelly; Road Foreman (“RF”) Guthrie Perry

**Remote Public Attendance:** Jeff Cueto, Paul Cate, Deb Fillion, Stephen Miracle

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

**Additions to the Agenda:** None.

### **Minutes:**

The board reviewed the draft minutes of the April 17, 2023 forum and Board meeting.

**Motion: To approve the minutes from the April 17, 2023 forum and Board meeting as presented.**  
Made by Mr. Hess, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

**Public Comment:** None.

### **Welcome to Zoe Christiansen as Newly Appointed Selectboard Member**

Mr. Etnier, Mr. Jewett, and Mr. Hess welcomed Ms. Christiansen and offered to answer questions at any time. TA Jenkins mentioned she will set up town email addresses for Ms. Christiansen and Mr. Hess.

### **Discuss Murray, Bliss, Barnes Roads Ash Tree Removal Project**

Mr. Cueto explained that the tree count in the RFP for the ash tree removal project was off by 21 trees. The contractor pointed out the discrepancy and the Resilient Roads committee counted stumps and standing trees and confirmed the error. The contract provided a revised quote to include the additional trees and Mr. Cueto said he feels it is reasonable to compensate for this additional work. Mr. Etnier asked if the Resilient Roads committee was sure that all of the cut trees were all ash trees. Mr. Cueto confirmed that they were either ash trees or other hazard trees the committee had marked for removal. Mr. Hess asked if all the trees were cut and Mr. Cueto explained that approximately 28 trees are still standing. The contractor is waiting until the question of the revised quote is resolved.

Mr. Cueto noted that emerald ash borer chambers were found on some of the cut trees on Barnes Road. The committee marked the trees last fall and did not notice damage at the time. Mr. Cate stated that he is glad the town is proactively addressing the ash trees and the committee hopes to keep the work going and possibly accelerate it in the coming years.

Mr. Etnier asked where the town is in the overall ash tree removal project. Mr. Cueto explained the town is in the fourth year of ash tree removal and around 800 trees have been addressed out of a total of approximately 2,400. He added that East Montpelier is well ahead of many other towns in the state.

Mr. Cueto noted that the state is expecting to make more forest service money available in the coming year and the committee is hopeful about grant opportunities to help pay for tree removal. Mr. Cate added that the town road crew also helps with ash tree removal when they can. Mr. Etnier asked how they approach adding that work to their schedule. RF Perry explained that when the weather is dry in the winter, the road crew tackles tree removal where they can. He added that they tend to focus on roads with just a few trees that need attention, where it may not make sense to hire a contractor for the work.

Mr. Miracle is a resident on one of the roads affected by tree removal. He asked who is responsible for removing the cut wood. Mr. Cate replied that the town will take care of wood removal.

**Motion: To authorize TA Jenkins to accept the revised quote to remove ash trees at an additional cost of \$3,134.** Made by Mr. Hess, second by Mr. Jewett. Passed unanimously.

### **Consideration of Notice of Intent to Participate in the FY2024 Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program**

TA Jenkins explained that this is an annual program that gives the town the opportunity to submit for funds for any project complying with the program. Mr. Etnier asked if there were any drawbacks. TA Jenkins explained that there are none, it just gives the town opportunities. Mr. Etnier asked if TA Jenkins or RF Perry have any applications in mind for the coming year. RF Perry stated that they do.

**Motion: To approve the submission of the notice of intent and authorize Vice Chair Etnier to sign the letter.** Made by Mr. Jewett, second by Ms. Christiansen. Passed unanimously.

### **Access Permit 23-010: New Curb Cut Lot 8, Pine Ridge Road**

Mr. Etnier asked if this curb cut is related to new development. RF Perry explained that it will create a path for travel across the first lot to a further undeveloped lot.

**Motion: To approve access permit 23-010.** Made by Mr. Hess, second by Ms. Christiansen. Passed unanimously.

### **Warrants: May 1, 2023 Regular Expense Warrant**

The present board members signed the warrant.

### **Town Administrator Report**

TA Jenkins reminded the Board that Town Clerk Laquerre is out of the office this week. Denise Sparrow is filling in on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. TA Jenkins and Town Treasurer Pallas will cover the desk on Thursday and Friday.

Mr. Etnier noted that the special election was concluded and the allocation for Kellogg-Hubbard Library passed.

Meeting Schedule:

- May 15, 2023 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting date
- June 5, 2023 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting date

- June 19, 2023 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting date
- July 24, 2023 6:30 p.m. Special meeting date
- August 7, 2023 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting date
- August 10, 2023 7:00 p.m. EMFD meeting date
- August 21, 2023 6:30 p.m. Regular meeting date
- September 11, 2023 6:30 p.m. Special meeting date
- September 18, 2023 6:30 p.m. Special meeting date

**Other Business**

None.

**Motion: To adjourn.** Made by Mr. Hess, second by Ms. Christiansen. Passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deirdre Connelly.

Approved May 15, 2023 Selectboard meeting.