

East Montpelier Board Meeting January 8, 2024

SB Attendance: Scott Hess, Town Administrator (“TA”) Gina Jenkins

Remote SB Attendance: Zoe Christiansen, Carl Etnier, Chair Seth Gardner.

In-Person Public Attendance: Zach Zorn, Orca Media. Janice Walrafen, Carol Canneveno, All Together Now; Steven Miracle. Albert Petrella

Remote Public Attendance: Renée Carpenter, Denise Wheeler, Richard Brock, Rosie Laquerre.

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

Additions to the agenda:

Consideration of Request for Proposals to obtain H&H Study and Design/Engineering of replacement structures at Sodom Pond Rd. and Sanders Circle
Consideration of change to Purchasing Policy
Selectboard Consideration of Green Burial

Minutes: The minutes of the December 18, 2023, SB minutes were not yet ready for review.

Public Comment:

Renée Carpenter appreciates road crew plowing on both sides of the Coburn Bridge and would like them to take a swipe in at the pullout for Coburn Pond.

Consideration of Contributions to East Montpelier Nonprofits: Mr. Hess made the motion to approve the following funding from ARPA funding: \$25,000 Twin Valley Senior Center for their paving project; \$10,000 for the All Together Now boiler, \$10,000 for East Montpelier Trails Inc. for the Mallory Brook Trail Bridge, \$5,000 for the East Montpelier Historical Society for cabinetry. Second by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously.

Discussion on Annual Voted Articles Presentations to Selectboard: Mr. Hess asked about the process that is utilized to get information from organizations who are requesting funding from the Town. He suggested getting their request in writing prior to the meeting and inviting them back only in the event there are questions. Mr. Etnier suggested that the visits to the Selectboard by these organizations were beneficial not only to the Selectboard, but also to the viewing public. Mr. Gardner agreed. No changes in the process were made.

Discussion on FY2025 Budget Development: No action taken.

Discussion on 2024 Town Meeting Warning: No action taken.

Development of 2023 Selectboard Report for Town Report: TA Jenkins presented a draft for review and asked that comments or changes be given to her for approval by the January 22 meeting.

Discussion on EMFD FY2025 Budget: Mr. Gardner suggested reducing the amount of ambulance revenue that is generally added to the capital fund and instead booking that revenue to the general fund to subsidize the budget. He expressed concern about double-digit increases over the last several years. Mr. Petrella responded that equipment is costly to replace, and they need to continue to fund the capital budget.

Update on Town Garage Project: Mr. Gardner asked the group if the board's intention is to move ahead with this project. There will need to be some work done on the front end in order to have the information needed for a possible future bond vote. A committee has met with the design firms that responded to the RFP. The decision was made to work with Weimann Lamphere Architects. Mr. Hess made the motion to allocate up to \$40,000k; using \$27,600 for pre-design schematic work for Wiemann Lamphere architects and \$12,000 for soil boring by Scott Associates. Made by Mr. Hess, second by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously.

Mr. Gardner noted that the board also needs to hire an owner's representative for this project. Mr. Shapiro noted that having an owner's rep can save a lot of money. It was decided by board consensus that TA Jenkins will put out the prepared RFP for owner's representative.

Consideration of Request for Proposals to obtain H&H Study and Design/Engineering of replacement structures at Sodom Pond Rd. and Sanders Circle: TA Jenkins spoke to the proposals that were received for each job and asked for direction. She would like to release RFPs tomorrow so that we can get engineers on board and get with quick turnaround. Her hope is that the Selectboard will be able to choose a firm at their next meeting. The Selectboard agreed to this plan of action by consensus.

Consideration of change to Purchasing Policy: Current language in the policy does not allow for emailed or electronic responses to RFPs. TA Jenkins suggested the language be changed to reflect this. Mr. Hess made the motion to add language to the Purchasing Policy that permits Town officials to accept bids and other documents related to Requests for Proposals both electronically via mail. Second by Ms. Christiansen. Passed unanimously.

Selectboard Consideration of Green Burial: Mr. Gardner got an email from a neighbor saying that a neighbor wanted to pursue options for green burial and that they understood that would require Selectboard approval since current cemetery rules don't allow it. The Selectboard will reach out to Cemetery Committee chair, Jon Boucher, for clarification and to find out what next steps are.

Warrants: Made by Mr. Etnier and seconded by Ms. Christiansen to appoint Scott Hess to sign the warrant on the Selectboard's behalf. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Administrator Report: Report included with handouts. There were no permit requests.

Adjourn: Motion To adjourn made by Mr. Hess, seconded by Mr. Etnier. Passed unanimously. Adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosie Laquerre, Town Clerk