

R I C H M O N D S E L E C T B O A R D
R E G U L A R M E E T I N G
N o v e m b e r 5 , 2 0 1 2 M I N U T E S

Members Present: Chris Granda, Chair; June Heston, Vice-Chair; Neil Boyden; Amy Lord; Ashley Lucht
Absent: None
Others Present: Geoffrey Urbanik, Town Manager; Cara LaBounty; Rand Larson and Nick Irwin-Testa was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

Chair Granda called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

1. Public Comment

Chair Granda reminded everyone that the election was tomorrow, and to please come and vote. Mr. Granda asked if there was any comment from the public.

Rand Larson said that he was only familiar with June Heston, of the Selectboard, but he explained his past roles as volunteering in various capacities and said that he understood the issues in town. He said that the zoning vote should not happen tomorrow and urged the Selectboard to cancel it. He said that there was an apparent conflict, and the Selectboard had to stop the vote. He said that there was an issue with a zoning conflict and land ownership that "smacks" of civil and criminal complaints. He said that at the public information session on October 29th people were told they would be taken care of if they supported the zoning, and that could be perceived as coercion. He added that there was a need for low cost homes in town. He felt that laws were possibly broken, and if there was an appearance of impropriety then we shouldn't do it. Mr. Larson was referring to his earlier accusation in an online message forum where he accused Planning Commission Gary Bressor of a conflict of interest with Mr. Bressor's 2011 purchase of land owned by Betty and Bill Preston, where that land was proposed to be part of the new Village Residential South district and would go from one acre lots to one-half acre lots, increasing the development potential. Mr. Larson said he was disappointed that the vote was happening, and that it should "be shelved." He also mentioned that the Planning Commission could not legally have an executive session, as was on the agenda posted for November 7th.

Chair Granda said that the Selectboard cannot stop the vote, and these comments come too late. The issue of conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, should be separate from the merits of the zoning regulations. He felt that people should vote their conscience and there is no reason not to vote on this question. Chair Granda said that the issue of the conflict was being looked into.

Mr. Larson said that there was a rumor that a member of the Planning Commission would resign at the next meeting, and that was no reason for an executive session. He said that the town needed to look at the hiring and oversight issue, saying that the relationship between Town Planner, being Mr. Bressor's sister in law, created a personnel oversight issue.

Blueberry Farm Road - Larry Copp

The Manager explained the issue, which was a request from the owners of Owls Head Blueberry Farm to have the rural road specifications applied to the improvement of Blueberry Farm Road, instead of the subdivision private road standard. Mr. Copp was here as one of the owners, to explain the details of the road plan.

1 Mr. Copp said that first of all, Blueberry Farm Road was now private and was going to remain private.
2 It currently serves three lots and the farm was a total of about 200 acres that was proposed to have an
3 additional three residential lots subdivided, creating five homes and the remaining farm. Therefore,
4 Blueberry Farm Road was no longer a private drive, but would be a private road of about 1,200 feet.
5 This section would need to meet certain standards to width, grade and turn-around capability. Mr.
6 Copp requested that the rural road standard be applied, and not the subdivision regulation private road
7 standard. Plus, there were width waivers in the floodplain requested. Mr. Copp brought exhibits
8 showing the development and the construction details of the road, which Mr. Boyden reviewed.

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10 Mr. Copp noted he also wanted the street trees requirement waived, since the area was mostly wooded
11 to begin with and the cleared areas provide access to the blueberry farm. He said these waivers were
12 permitted by the Development Review Board if the Selectboard also agreed.

13
14 The Manager had prepared a draft resolution. Some edits were made, including the addition of the
15 waivers requested by Mr. Copp to the DRB.

16
17 Mr. Boyden asked if the right of way width would be sixty feet as required, and Mr. Copp said yes.

18
19 Cara LaBounty asked Mr. Copp what the status of the application was, and Mr. Copp said he was
20 going for final approval.

21
22 After some discussion, Ms. Lucht offered a motion to approve the resolution granting the request for
23 the rural road standards to be applied to Blueberry Farm Road and was seconded by Ms. Lord and the
24 motion carried 5-0.

26 **2. Other Business**

27 Budget Discussions - FY2014 Capital Plan and FY2014 Budget

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29
30 The Manager explained that most of the capital plan had been agreed to, however, the Library and
31 Highway department plans were the most extensive and costly. He suggested making some final
32 determinations on the capital plan and modifying the budget accordingly. Progress should also be
33 made on setting a cost of living adjustment.

34
35 Ms. Lord asked what recent budget increases were like, in terms of a percentage. The Manager replied
36 one-half percent for FY11, two and one half percent for FY12 and two percent for FY13.

37
38 Chair Granda said he wanted to avoid harsh increases, especially in a difficult economy, but the
39 budget cannot continue to rise above CPI levels. He didn't want to burden the citizens but also
40 cautioned against being penny wise and pound foolish by cutting so much that services will suffer.

41
42 There was discussion about setting a budget target. It was decided that spending would be capped at
43 three percent over the prior year. The Manager requested that the additional items added with non-
44 taxation revenues be exempt from the cap, and the Selectboard agreed.

45
46 Cara LaBounty suggested that the town departments could hold fundraisers to contribute monies to
47 capital contributions.

48
49 Chair Granda added that if departments cannot meet the three percent cap to explain why.
50

1 Ms. Lucht said that with the roofs for the park structures the labor might be able to be donated, and the
2 costs of the roofing replacements seemed high.

3 4 Discussion of Town Website

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6 Ms. Lucht said that at the VLCT Town Fair she sat in on a web design session, and GovOffice
7 explained a little about the services they provide. There were many parts of having a website, from
8 hosting and support to adding content and design. Mobile websites were popular and the use of
9 ecommerce was growing. There were also many providers, and she spoke of several that the State has
10 used and some other towns. The most important thing was developing and designing a new site.

11
12 There was discussion about this, and how to move forward. Chair Granda said that this would need to
13 be a discussion on future agendas also. Ms. Lucht suggested that we look at other sites to get some
14 ideas of where we'd like to go and what we'd like to see in our own.

15
16 Cara LaBounty thanked Ms. Lucht for speaking about this and our site needs improvement. She asked
17 if there were emergency management grants for mobile applications, and we should explore selling
18 advertisement space on the website. The documents section needed to be updated.

19 20 Financial Reports

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22 The Manager explained the updating of the revenues and expenditures report, with actual cash
23 expenses, and no encumbrances. The budget status report would continue to show the full
24 encumbered amounts.

25
26 On the debt report, Ms. Lucht said that the repayment schedule of WPL-170 should be changed to
27 begin two years further out, since the project isn't finished and will start two years after completion.
28 If any projects were to come up for a vote, then they would include permanent debt funding to repay
29 the planning loans.

30
31 The Manager reported that at the last meeting it was requested that the interest rates be examined to
32 see if a refunding of a bond may save money on a lower interest rate. Most of the town's long term
33 debt was from the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank, which would make the determination on whether
34 to refund a bond or not. They have certain criteria to meet, such as at least a three percent net present
35 value savings and avoiding negative arbitrage. Therefore, the town had little influence on obtaining
36 lower interest rates. Most of the long term debt was either at a fairly low rate now, or about to be paid
37 off in the next few years. The 2006 fire truck and the highway garage were the only bonds that might
38 be considered for refunding by VMBB, and Jericho Road was too new for this to be considered. Other
39 debt was short-term, recent, and under three percent interest.

40
41 Ms. Lucht said that the debt load for the general fund was ok, but the growing debt for the water
42 system was high. This did not include future projects like the water tank and other village
43 infrastructure projects.

44 45 Transition to Town Manager

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47 Mr. Boyden reported that a draft employment agreement was being developed and would be discussed
48 in executive session. There was a discussion on the need to conduct outreach with the public, and
49 train town staff on the transition. Mr. Boyden said he would work on a press release, and Chair
50 Granda said he would work on expectations with the change, and goals.

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2 Approval of Minutes of October 15, 2012
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4 Ms. Heston offered a motion to approve the minutes of October 15, 2012 with minor edits and was
5 seconded by Ms. Lord and the motion carried 5-0.
6

7 **3. Reports from Selectboard and Town Manager**
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9 The Manager explained that Marie Thomas and Representative Anne O'Brien were working on
10 developing an emergency planning committee that will develop essential emergency management
11 plans and recruit personnel to serve in emergency management positions. More meetings and training
12 were being planned for January, and the group wanted to update the Selectboard on their progress in
13 late January or early February.
14

15 Chair Granda said that we needed to identify a good candidate for the Emergency Management
16 Director.
17

18 Ms. Lord reported on the Economic Development Committee's recent meeting and their plans to urge
19 the board to consider funding the Depot Street parking lot sooner rather than later. Also, for the
20 creamery parcel it was learned that only a town or a nonprofit could apply for brownfields funds for a
21 cleanup of the property, but since it was privately owned this was not possible. The committee was
22 exploring the possibility of forming a nonprofit community organization that might partner with the
23 owner to make this possible. The committee also wanted to hold a workshop for tax credits for
24 business improvements in the designated village center and using the Borden Street housing loan
25 monies to benefit the community. A business breakfast was being planned for January.
26

27 **4. Consent Agenda**
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29 The Manager explained the letter from the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation urging support of
30 establishing a Foreign Trade Zone in Chittenden County to benefit import/export businesses. The
31 second items was a request from the organizers of the Holiday Market (Barbara Willis) to again sell
32 closed containers of wine from a local vendor, which was allowed last year.
33

34 Ms. Lucht offered a motion to approve the consent agenda and was seconded by Mr. Boyden and the
35 motion carried 5-0.
36

37 Approval of Warrants
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39 Chair Granda and Ms. Lucht reviewed the warrants and pulled out a charitable contribution from the
40 Police Department. There was discussion on this item and Chair Granda said that he did not object to
41 charitable contributions from the town but wanted to discourage departments from using their
42 operating budgets for them. There was an appropriations section under the budget where items could
43 be considered for inclusion. The Manager said that typically these nonprofit donations were to
44 organizations that provided a direct benefit or service to the town rather than a national level nonprofit.
45

46 There was also discussion on a purchase by an employee at Home Depot where some sales tax (a
47 small amount) was requested in the reimbursement. The Selectboard agreed that a store card should
48 be used for these items and that reimbursements for sales tax should be discouraged.
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1 Chair Granda requested a written policy against paying sales tax, and that employees should use a tax
2 exempt form and know in advance that they would need one.

3
4 Executive Session

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6 Chair Granda noted an executive session for personnel discussions had been warned.

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8 Mr. Boyden offered a motion to enter executive session at 9:20 pm to discuss personnel matters and
9 was seconded by Ms. Heston and the motion carried 5-0.

10
11 At 9:55 pm Mr. Boyden offered a motion to adjourn the executive session and reconvene the public
12 session and was seconded by Ms. Heston. The motion carried 5-0.

13
14 **Adjourn**

15 Motion by Ms. Lucht to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Heston. So voted.