

Called to order: 7:07pm

In Attendance: Bard Hill, David Sander, Christy Witters, Roger Brown, Josh Arneson, Jessica Draper, Guy Roberts, Mark Fausel, Karen Yaggy, Jean Bressor, Stefani Hartsfield, Mary Houle, Mike Donohue, Ed Wells, Jim Monahan

Public Comment:

Mary Houle asked if the highway foreman was salaried and if so, why is there overtime indicated on his timesheet. Josh Arneson said yes he is salaried, Jessica Draper said he puts those hours on his time sheet just to keep track of his hours, but he doesn't get paid overtime.

Mary Houle asked if it was determined that Ryan Gosselin and Pete Gosselin were related. Josh Arneson said yes they are father and son. Mary Houle asked what follow up is being done in regards to the no nepotism policy. Josh Arneson said it will be discussed with the selectboard. Mary Houle said she was adamantly opposed to having the discussion under executive session, that this was unethical, and she looks forward to hearing the outcome.

Recreational Trails Grant:

Guy Roberts gave an overview of the grant program. He said the grant can be from \$5000 to \$50,000 and requires a 20% match. The grant would cover trail construction and signage at the Andrews Community Forest. Guy also mentioned that an archaeological study would be required, and it is yet to be determined who will pay for that the grant or the town upfront. Bard Hill mentioned that the proposed grant request is \$30,000. Guy Roberts explained that the \$30,000 is an estimate and he is working with VYCC to determine proper figures. Bard Hill also mentioned the Andrews Community Forest reserve funds that can be used for the match. Guy Roberts also noted that the project would be paid upfront by the town and reimbursed by the grant. Christy Witters discussed the possibility for state permits such as wetlands or stream crossing. Guy said they were hoping for no permits and will try to revise the trails to avoid certain areas that may trigger permits. Roger Brown asked if there were other trail systems that had these kinds of permits required. Christy answered that there are examples of this elsewhere.

Jessica Draper mentioned the statement of landowner approval requirement. She also mentioned that the match could run anywhere from \$5,000 to \$7,000 depending on where the exact figure lands. Roger Brown asked about possibly running out of funding before completion. Guy Roberts indicated that they would be doing the more expensive and technical construction first in order to save the basic trail construction for later. Bard Hill mentioned that the trails are intended to be built with or without this funding, but this funding will get the process started. Roger Brown asked if it was possible to back out if permits are needed and become too expensive. Guy Roberts and Christy Witters further discussed the possible permits.

Roger Brown moved to approve the grant application. Motion was seconded by Christy Witters. Jessica Draper mentioned the need for funding fund 69, the Andrews Community Forest fund for future maintenance. Stefani Hartsfield mentioned the opportunity for RiseVT

funding to help with costs. Josh Arneson offered to follow up with Robin Katrick. Bard Hill offered a friendly amendment to the motion to include “ not to exceed \$7,000 in cash match in town funds, considering other funding sources and in-kind match could be additional to the \$7000 limit in cash match. Also, to name Josh Arneson as the grant program manager.” Seconded by David Sander. All were in favor. Motion passed.

Review of EV Grant Process:

Mark Fausel presented a formal letter on behalf of the planning commission outlining their concerns regarding the approval process. Mark stated that the planning commission was not aware of the discrepancy between the application presented to the planning commission and the application presented to the selectboard. Bard Hill asked Mark to clarify the discrepancy. Mark explained that a \$0.01 per kWh had been added to the fee structure after the planning commission had approved the grant.

Bard Hill stated that the selectboard had agreed to a one year limit of the subsidy. Bard also stated that it was within the selectboard’s authority to allow that subsidy. Mark Fausel said he agreed that the selectboard has the authority but the planning commission was asked for approval and it was changed post-approval. Bard Hill said that according to the application, the subsidy made the application more competitive. Mark Fausel said that he wanted to bring this to the selectboard’s attention, and recognized that there were timing issues. Bard Hill said that the only limit the planning commission gave itself was the siting. Mark said yes, but there was more to it.

Bard Hill said that the grant procurement policy allows the selectboard to make these decisions. Mark Fausel said he agrees, but the planning commission had to endorse the grant for the application to be submitted and should have received full information. Bard Hill said that the town policy was silent on planning commission approval. Mark Fausel said it was the principle of making changes after approval. Roger Brown said he believed it was an honest mistake and based on Steve Bower’s apology email, it sounded more complicated because of PUC requirements. Roger suggested a motion of noting and appreciating the planning commission’s concerns to maintain transparency. Bard Hill stated that the policy was followed. Jessica Draper stated that there was indeed a timing problem with no opportunity to inform the planning commission, and that the planning commission assumed the project would be cost-neutral or cost-beneficial. All parties agreed to avoid these issues in the future and the discussion ended.

Parking for Trails:

Jean Bressor presented the Trails Committee’s suggest of using the old water tank property and Cochran Road property to create parking areas for recreational trail use. Bard Hill asked if this would also benefit cyclists using trails and roads. The Trails Committee suggested it would be open to all. Bard Hill stated he thought Mary Houle as an abutter on Cochran Road would have input as well as the Highway Department regarding access and maintenance. Roger Brown asked about Cochran Road floodplain and structure restrictions. Bard Hill mentioned that these parking areas would be unimproved space and the water tank parcel could eventually house a different use.

Mary Houle provided input stating that the 1 acre parcel next to her property has been vacant for three years, and she would like the selectboard to require fencing or barriers of some kind to keep users from crossing her property. She also stated that FEMA would have to give approval, and that there is no trailhead at the parcel, so people would have to walk to where trails actually open. She also suggested that many of the users are non-residents, and this project would need rules and regulations. She asked that the healthy existing trees be preserved, and that the town's rules regarding dog-leashing still apply. She also mentioned that the trails in that area are on private land.

Bard Hill asked which trees are on the parcel. Mary Houle said that there are some Black Walnut and Coniferous trees. Bard Hill also mentioned the limitations of structures such as a fence in the floodplain. Stefani Hartsfield said that the reason a dog park couldn't be built at Volunteer's Green was because of the floodplain regulations. Jessica Draper clarified that certain enclosures are not allowed, but certain types of barriers may be allowed dependent on type and size.

Bard Hill asked if there were any comments from Southview regarding the water tank parcel. The Trails Committee suggested it would likely alleviate unauthorized roadside parking. Roger Brown mentioned that Cochran Road itself is used recreationally, not just the trails. Karen Yaggy encouraged the selectboard to open both parking areas, because of the popularity, but agrees that there should be limits. The Trails Committee suggested that Cochran Road parcel could also serve as an overflow from the canoe access parking. Mary Houle suggested that boulders as a natural barrier could be effective. Bard Hill asked the Trails Committee to pursue a site plan and discuss the maintenance with Pete Gosselin.

Other Business:

- Glebe Lots: Josh Arneson gave a brief description of glebe lots, stating that they are old lots of public land that predate the revolutionary war and were absorbed by other parcels. The State of Vermont recently passed a law stating that all glebe lots must be claimed by a certain date or would be forfeited to the current landowner. Josh explained that a glebe lot has been found in a title search during a property transfer process, and the town's and owner's attorneys have created a motion and quitclaim deed for the selectboard to execute in order to resolve the issue. Josh said that there is a 30-day waiting period that allows for public protest by petition against the quitclaim. Roger Brown asked about the revenue, and Josh Arneson explained that the lot has always been taxed as part of a large parcel. Christy Witters moved that the selectboard authorize the Town Manager to execute, post, and publish notice consistent with 24 VSA 1061 in connection with the proposed transfer of glebe land interests on 130 Cote Road, if no qualified petition is received calling for a vote of the voters on such issue, within thirty days of the posting and publication of that notice, the Town Manager be authorized to execute and deliver a Quitclaim Deed transferring the Town's glebe land interests.
- Southview Drive Access Permit: Josh Arneson explained that the access permit is a permit to build an access that is already built. He explained that the original access

permit was denied due to a multiple use request. Josh Arneson stated the applicaiton before the board has been reviewed by Pete Gosselin and Suzanne Mantegna. Bard Hill mentioned the previous discussion with the Water and Sewer Commission regarding permits for work done without a permit or work done incorrectly with a permit. He also mentioned the discussion about incentives or disincentives to encourage compliance. Stefani Hartsfield mentioned a discussion from the past with Greystone about undersized culverts. Roger Brown pointed out the difference between unpermitted work that does meet our standards and unpermitted work that does not meet our standards. Jessica Draper explained that public works permits such as access and use of right of way do not have a consequence for as-built situations like zoning permits. She explained that in order to address the issue, the penalty of a double-fee will be assessed on the construction permit which is a zoning permit. David Sander moved to approve the access permit. Seconded by Roger Brown. All were in favor. So moved.

- School Choice Proclamation: Bard Hill presented a request from an organization for the selectboard to proclaim national school choice week. He stated that the proclamation could be controversial because of the current political climate in Vermont surrounding school choice. Roger Brown pointed out the various meanings of school choice. Christy Witters said the proclamation request is funded by a partisan organization and didn't think acting on it was appropriate. David Sander said he had no desire to act on it.
- Police Activity: Bard Hill mentioned seeing the police in different areas than he's used to seeing them and is happy to see less along Route 2. Stefani Hartsfield asked if there was any indication in their reports about mental health calls. Christy Witters said that calls are catalogued a certain way and don't necessarily indicate mental health or substance abuse issues. Stefani mentioned Wednesday's meeting about the Howard Center program and first-call data that may be useful to the discussion.
- Police Chief Hiring: Josh Arneson said he has posted information about the process and hiring committee and has received some interested applicants for the committee. He also stated that they have received roughly five applications for the chief position.
- Volunteer's Green RipRap: Josh Arneson said he met with Judy Rosovsky about the funding, and that he is working with her and Jon Kart to move forward with the funding request.
- Town Meeting Warning: Josh Arneson presented a draft warning for Town Meeting and mentioned the deadline of January 22nd for the selectboard to finalize the waring and budget.
- Selectboard Update: Bard Hill said he was working on the selectboard letter and requests ideas for content from other members. Mary Houle suggested including an explanation of how to meet with the selectboard formally.
- Town Manager's Report: Josh Arneson mentioned the performance review process and executive session. Christy Witters desired to publicly express that she has been receiving a lot of positive feedback about Josh's performance. Roger Brown indicated he had also heard positive feedback.
- Minutes Approval:

- David Sander moved to approve the minutes from December 3rd. Seconded by Christy Witters. All were in favor. So moved.
- David Sander moved to approve the minutes from December 10th. Seconded by Christy Witters. All were in favor. So moved.
- Warrant Approval: Bard Hill mentioned that Roger Brown had already reviewed the warrant and invoices on the previous Friday. Roger moved to approve the purchase order for VLCT semi annual payment for insurance. Seconded by David Sander. All were in favor. So moved. David Sander asked Josh to look into competitive insurance rates from other sources. Roger moved to approve the purchase order for Reynold's & Son for fire department equipment. Seconded by David Sander. All were in favor. So moved. Roger Brown offered to do the warrant review on January 4th.
- Items for next agenda: The selectboard agreed to discuss performance evaluation, a police chief update, and the budget on January 7th.

Executive Session:

David Sander moved to find that premature public knowledge about the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee would cause the Town or person to suffer a substantial disadvantage. Seconded by Roger Brown. All were in favor. So moved.

David Sander moved that they enter into executive session to discuss the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee under the provisions of 1 VSA 313(a)(3) of the Vermont State Statutes and to invite the town manager Josh Arneson into the executive session. Seconded by Roger Brown. All were in favor. So moved.

The selectboard entered executive session at 9:15pm. Christy Witters moved to exit executive session at 10:30pm. Seconded by David Sander. All were in favor. So moved.

Christy Witters moved to adjourn. Seconded by Roger Brown. All were in favor. Adjourned 10:31pm.