

Selectboard Minutes 3/16/2020

Members Present: Bard Hill, David Sander, Christine Werneke,
Members Present by phone: Katie Mather, Roger Brown

Absent:

Others Present: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Linda Parent, Town Clerk; Ruth Miller was present to videotape the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15, also attending –

Others Present by phone: Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Mary Andes, Bob, Land Trust; Steve Bower,

Called to Order: 7:05 PM

1. Welcome by David. No comments.

2. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

I. Additions or Deletions to Agenda

Josh added East Main St. outfall project also dog licenses will follow after liquor licenses. Delete III H. unanimous consent for changes to agenda.

II. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a. Thank you to Christy Witters and Welcome to Christine Werneke

David thanked Christy Witters for her service to the Town and welcomed Christine Werneke to the Selectboard.

b Appointment of Selectboard representation to the Water and Sewer Commission

It was discussed that since Christy Witters was one of the Selectboard Water and Sewer Commission representatives she needed to be replaced. Katie was agreeable to taking over that position if another member would take over her role on the Town Center Committee. Christine volunteered to be on the Town Center Committee, Katie will help her get up to date.

David moved to appoint Katie to the Water and Sewer Commission, Roger seconded. All agreed.

Christine is on the Town Center Committee.

c. Town Meeting follow up: Thanks to voters and candidates, reminder of Monday date for 2021 Town Meeting, and suggestions for next year

Linda reminded the Board that with the decision to change Town Meeting to Monday night and that since meetings can last 3-4 hours the Selectboard will need to take their shifts with the justices for an orderly Town Meeting.

d. Linda Parent: liquor licenses for vote on approvals

Linda reported that the Police Chief had no problem with any of the applications being presented.

Roger moved to approve the liquor licenses presented, Bard seconded. All agreed.

Linda also reported that the Town Clerk's office was closed to the public effective 3/17. Water and Sewer bills could be paid at the drop box and dog licenses could be mailed. Notices would be posted on the Town Center doors and Front Porch Forum. Anyone needing to search land records will need to make an appointment to come in.

Dog licenses by state law are due 4/1. Linda asked the Selectboard to waive any penalty until 7/1 to allow pet owners time to get dogs vaccinated due to vet clinic delays caused by covid-19 changes in business hours.

Bard moved to waive the penalty until 7/1/2020, Katie seconded. All agreed.

e. Update from Lake Iroquois Association

Chris from the Lake Iroquois Assoc. came to report on the milfoil problem and plans to remediate using ProcellaCOR which is low risk to people, animals and other vegetation.

Chris reported that there has been a 28% decline of Native aquatic species between 1984 and 2019 due to Milfoil. The impact of milfoil is beginning to have a negative affect the value of properties on Lake Iroquois. Milfoil is difficult to eradicate because it has no natural predators and pulling it by hand has not been effective. A permit has been submitted to VT Dept. of Enviromental Conservation to use the herbicide ProcellaCOR. If the permit is granted it would be late August to early September before application of the herbicide.

The Board thanked him for coming.

f. Vote on approval of FEMA Hazard Mitigation Elevation Grant for 54 Jonesville Rd.

Mary Andes on the phone: Josh asked that the Selectboard approve the FEMA elevation grant for Mary Andes residence at 54 Jonesville Rd., not to exceed \$150,060.47 - 75% paid of which is paid by the town, 25% paid by the owner, FEMA reimburses the town.

The application needs to be updated before the 4/3/2020 deadline with work beginning in the fall or spring.

Bard moved to approve submittal of the FEMA elevation grant application for 54 Jonesille Rd., not to exceed \$150,060.47, Christine seconded. All agreed.

g. Request by the Vermont Land Trust, supported by the Richmond Conservation Commission to use \$20,000 of Conservation Funds to purchase an easement on the Peet Farm

Bob on the phone, from the Vermont Land Trust reported that 3yrs ago the Peet family approached the land trust about conserving the 68 acres owned on either side of the village asking about facilitating the sale to Jericho Settlers Farm at agricultural value. He reported that all the land is in the flood plain and prime farming soil. He spoke about the potential for a mile of trail into the village. The rational for facilitating the purchase is to keep the land farmed.

In discussion with the Board it became clear that the proposed trail would need an easement from Buttermilk, that there is no current trail, that a fence would need to be moved and that the land is not currently posted, that there is an existing home and agricultural structure, and that the remaining land would probably never be developed due to being in the flood plain.

Bard moved to approve the expenditure of \$20,000 to purchase an easement on the Peet Farm, Katie seconded. Roger agreed. David abstained.

III. Other Business

a. Update on Dugway Rd. project

Josh reported that a FEMA call had taken place during which the damage the town sustained during the Oct. 31, 2019 flooding was reported. Another meeting is scheduled for 3/3/2020 and has already been changed from an in-person meeting to a conference call.

b. Update on Dugway Rd. summer parking and recreation at the Gorge

Josh reported that Pete & Larry met with the Vermont Land Trust regarding safety on Dugway Rd and the gorge area. The Land Trust agreed to send the message that the gorge will be closed for the summer. The area will be gated so emergency vehicles can access if necessary.

c. Update on Bridge St. infrastructure project

Josh reported on the meeting with JHutchins where the contract for the Bridge St. infrastructure project was signed. Wednesday there is a meeting with town staff, J. Hutchins, Green Mountain Engineering and the State, to review the project and a date will be set for a meeting with residents and business owners. 4/15/2020 is still the construction start date.

It was discussed that there may be COVID 19 issues. Josh will find out if it will be possible to get an extension if completion cannot be done on time to ensure the 50% loan forgiveness budgeted.

d. Discussion of precautions and planning for COVID-19

Josh reported that town staff is closing the town offices and clerk's office to the public, that appointments will be necessary to access land records or other files, that staff will work from home as much as possible, and that staff feeling sick have been instructed to stay home, that the Library closed as of Friday for a week and then will provide limited access, that the Fire, PD, Water & Sewer and Highway departments are considered essential and will continue as usual with some exceptions. We are encouraging Public meetings to be call in.

It was agreed that Commission and Committee meetings should be done virtually whenever possible and that a staff person or board member needs to be at Town Center to preserve the meeting place, everyone else can attend remotely. Josh will be looking into what technology will be necessary to make meetings run smoothly. Josh reported there are new guidelines coming out every day and we will take the state's lead. In addition, we are watching unemployment changes as some library personnel are not working due to covid-19 measures. The Selectboard decided to meet every Monday to check in on developments related to covid-19. Regular business will be conducted at regularly scheduled meetings. It was discussed that there will be challenges such as approval of warrants with virtual meetings.

e. Review of EVSE bids and vote on acceptance of a bid

Josh reported that there were 2 charging station bids submitted with \$29,798 being the lowest, nearly \$8,000 more than the grant, that the state was asked if the Town could get an increase in the grant award, the response was no, but that a location change might be possible where trenching would not impact the cost as much. Steve Bower appeared by phone and offered to help determine the best way forward.

f. Update on legal fees and agreement with current law firm

Deleted from the agenda.

g. Review of deed for Depot St. lot

Josh updated the Board on parking at the Depot St lot reporting that the deed has a restriction making the number of overnight spaces a maximum of 10 or 25% of the overall spaces which is 8, whichever is lower. After consulting with the attorney it was determined that if Dan Noyes, who put the restriction there at the time of the transfer, agreed the restriction could be changed. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

h. Signature on paperwork for electronic transfers at Union Bank

Removed from the agenda.

i. Update on formation of an Affordable Housing Board

Josh reported that Ravi was looking into having an affordable housing board that would review applications for housing although it's probably not the right time to ask people to join a group.

The Board thought it was reasonable to explore at a later time.

j. Discussion of refinancing loans

Josh reported that the Town has 5 loans that could be looked at since interest rates have dropped dramatically.

Bard moved to go out to bid on the towns outstanding loans, Roger seconded. All agreed.

k. Vote on acceptance of bid for construction of hazard mitigation work on Dugway Rd. to repair damage caused by the May 4, 2018 rain event

Josh reported that the town applied for money through FEMA to repair a culvert that was overwhelmed in the May 4, 2018 rain event. The culvert needs a new concrete headwall to be installed. The low bid came in at \$28,587.50 from John Scott Excavating. FEMA covers 75%, the state covers 17.5% and the town covers 7.5% of the costs.

IV. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

a. Bard moved to approve the Minutes of 3-2-20, Christine seconded. All agreed.

b. Bard moved to approve the Minutes of 3-9-20, Christine seconded. All agreed.

c. Bard moved to accept PO 3891 in the amount of \$28,587.50 for the culvert repair on Dugway, Rd., 7.5% of which the town is responsible for, Christine seconded. All agreed.

d. Josh reported that initially the Town had an agreement with FEMA for \$50,000 to replace the storm water pipe from East Main St. to the Railroad by doing the work in house the amount will be less. From the savings Josh would like to spend money on having a survey done of the properties involved. He will come back with cost information at the next meeting.

e. Josh reported that on Dugway Rd. the Savoi easement will need to be 8.5' wide the length of the road to allow for the potential need to move the road over some. Mr. Savoi is in agreement and a more formal agreement will be presented at the next meeting.

V. Discuss Items for Next Agenda

Savoi easement on Dugway Rd.

Financing

Legal

Bridge St.

COVID 19

Dugway

FEMA

VI. Executive Session if necessary

VII. Adjourn

Bard moved to adjourn, Christine seconded. All agreed.