

Selectboard Minutes 4/20/2020

Members Present by Zoom: Christine Werneke, Katie Mather, Bard Hill, David Sander

Members Present by phone: Roger Brown

Absent: none

Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Connie Bona, Finance; Pete Gosselin, Hwy; Superintendent; Ravi Venkatataman, Planner; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent; Larry Muldoon, Police Chief; Kyle Kapitanski, Police; Dennis Gile, Fire Chief; Jerry Levesque, Asst. Fire Chief, Chris Cole, Transportation Committee; Virginia Clarke, Planning Commission; Cathleen Gent, Transportation Committee; Dillon LaForce, Highway; Glenn Murry, Highway; Josi Kytly, Buttermilk; Brendon O'Reilly, Buttermilk; Becky Vigneault, Bonnie Steuer, and Angelica Contis recorded the meeting for MMCTV Channel 15.

Called to Order: 7:06 PM

II. Welcome by David.

2. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

I. Additions or Deletions to Agenda-

Kendall reported that Richmond was 1 of 100 facilities chosen for testing of COVID-19 genetic markers and that he had submitted samples for testing. The results of the sample submitted showed 0 markers for COVID-19, Kendall noted that the sample included septage from haulers. Kendall advised that there is a Zoom meeting scheduled for Friday that will provide additional information on the testing.

III. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a) Richmond Transportation Committee for approval of public participation plan and the list of priorities to present for public discussion

Cathleen Gent reported that the Committee has been developing the Richmond Transportation Implementation Plan and Public Participation Plan for consideration. Cathleen provided information that that the transportation implementation plan has several items for consideration and discussion.

Discussion included:

- information from Jon Cart that some items presented were very specific because they were taken from other studies that have been done while other items being considered are new
- that the bicycle storage lockers being considered are for the park and ride
- that the recommendations would improve safety and efficiency of public roads, bridges, paths and all modes of transportation
- that the Transportation Committee noted a concern that there should be uniform enforcement of the town no idling policy. Bard noted that enforcement conjures images of the police doing something and one of the strengths of our PD is it favors

behavioral changes through education as opposed to punishment. Kyle Kapitanski noted that the policy is enforceable through a state law if education doesn't work.

Catherine Gent continued with her presentation providing information on the Public Participation Plan. She reported that the plan encourages public input and formulated outreach strategies that would include Front Porch Forum, newspapers, local organizations, traditional methods like flyers, conversations, and online surveys

Discussion included:

- Christine's thought this was a good strategy
- Roger noted that the sidewalks on the east side of Bridge St had been considered previously and the decision made that there were higher priorities
 - o Pete added that this grant was for new sidewalks only, it could not be used to fix the sidewalks we currently have
 - o Jon Kart would like the Selectboard to consider that the sidewalks on Bridge St are a priority
 - o Bard noted that there are no sidewalks in other parts of town
 - o Chris Cole shared that by having the conversation the Transportation Committee can be in line with what the Selectboard is looking for. He added that the committee can retool the document and let the planning process take care of itself.

Board members were in agreement that the Transportation Committee should proceed with their work and thanked them for the effort they have put in so far.

a) Consideration of approval of Midwives Move Mountains 5/10K Fun Run & Walk

Larry stated he had no problem with the event.

Roger moved to approve the Midwives Move Mountains 5/10K Fun Run & Walk, Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Christine, Roger, David, and Katie voted affirmatively. Bard did not vote.

b) Update on Bridge St. infrastructure project

Josh reported:

- that things are changing daily due to new information out of the Governor's office.
- that the project would not be starting Wednesday
- that the schedule has been pushed back due to the 2 persons on any job site rule that the Governor has mandated
- that Steve Palmer believes that construction will start 5/4/2020
- that the Town is looking for guidance from the state about the start date
- that all supplies for the project are here or on the way so once we have a green light to begin we are shovel ready.

c) Update on Dugway Rd. project

Josh reported:

- that FEMA is reviewing our estimates
- that he has been working with Richmond Land Trust regarding the Huntington gorge
- that Pete has put up new signage and reinforced fencing, the new signs say "No Parking You Will be Towed".

Discussion included:

- Larry reported that the Land Trust did not want to put “No Trespassing” signs up at the gorge to prohibit swimming entirely partially due to the inability to enforce no swimmers and that the Land Trust purchased the signs that say the gorge is closed
- that the town is being consistent with discouraging anyone from being on the closed portion of Dugway Rd for any reason
- that reducing the number of vehicles would mitigate the danger of not being able to get emergency vehicles to the gorge if it were necessary
- Roger said he was concerned that if parking is allowed outside the right of right a way there will be continued traffic to the gorge for swimming and thought changing the ordinance was the answer
- whether to change the traffic ordinance to prohibit parking within ½ mile of the closed portion of the road in both directions to prevent use of the gorge
- that it would be mid-July before any new ordinance change could be enforced
- that reducing the number of people/ vehicles that are accessing the gorge is the best action that can be taken.

After discussion Roger removed his opposition and thanked everyone for taking the time to explain the background information surrounding the decisions that have been made and what the process has been.

Bard moved for the “No Parking, You Will be Towed” signage to be put on Dugway Rd, Katie seconded. Roll call vote: David, Katie, Bard, Christine, and Roger voted affirmatively.

d) Review Highway Summer Work Plan

Pete reported:

- that brush cutting will not take place this year
- that roads have been graded and gravel put on those that needed it
- that the outfall project can be started once the land survey is done
- that in October sand is stockpiled for the winter, with COVID restrictions Hinesburg Sand & Gravel has offered to deliver material now and not bill until the new fiscal year in July.

Discussion included:

- Connie providing information that it would still be a physical year 20 expense, but it could be a matter of overspending this year and underspending in physical year 21 adding that a note could be added to refresh everyone memory at budget time.

Josh will make certain the PO has a notation on it reflecting the information Connie provided.

e) Consideration of approval of Class 2 Roadway Grant and Structures Grant

Pete requested that the Selectboard approve of the class 2 Roadway Grant

Katie moved to approve of the submission of the class 2 Roadway Grant with Pete Gosselin named as the grant manager, Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Katie, Roger, David, and Christine voted affirmatively. Bard did not vote.

Pete requested that the Selectboard approve a Structures Grant to replace a 40' culvert with a 70' culvert

Katie moved to approve the submission of a Structures Grant to replace a 40' culvert with Pete Gosselin as the named grant manager, Christine seconded. Roll call vote: David, Roger, Katie, and Christine voted affirmatively. Bard did not vote.

Josh will send documents related to the grant out to the Board for signature using DocuSign.

Katie Moved to approve the TA60 Annual Financial Plan and the Certificate of Compliance documents as presented, Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Katie, David, Roger, and Christine voted affirmatively. Bard did not vote.

f) Update on COVID-19 response

i) Employee Compensation

Josh reported that the COVID-19 update on employee compensation is an ongoing topic adding that this week the Governor relaxed some of the restrictions allowing highway to get employees working more hours and that hopefully Library employees will be able to do the same shortly.

ii) Discussion of communications with, and assistance to, Richmond residents

Josh reported that the proposed post card had been updated by Christine as the board requested. After review Bard thanked Christine and Josh for the effort to convey important information to the residents adding that the post card was well done and timely. Josh will send the information to the printer tomorrow.

iii) Review of changes to Jolina Ct. Zoning Amendment and consideration of setting a date for a public hearing

Ravi reported that he made no changes in the Jolina Court section and that the affordable housing could be done in the next week then he asked how would the board like to proceed? As separate items or as one amendment?

Discussion included:

- Brendan O'Reilly's belief that this is where we were 15 months ago, he was not confident that everything with affordable housing could be put together by Monday. He would like to continue with the Jolina Ct section and take the time we need on affordable housing to do it right.
- Bard added that the risk is that Jolina Ct gets slowed down adding that the point of affordable housing was to create incentive. He posed the question: If we move forward with Jolina Ct now and add affordable housing later is there any harm in waiting?
- Virginia Clarke stated that the Planning Commission has wrestled with this for a long time. Now that Ravi is helping us with this it is going well but its difficult for a small town to decide how this is going to work and it could take more time as there are issues that need to be decided. She would like to see the rest of the ordinance put in place then work on the affordable housing piece.

- Christine's opinion was that affordable housing is critical. If we proceed without the affordable housing but continue to pursue it that makes sense but she doesn't want to miss an opportunity with the Jolina Ct project.
- Brendan responded that he has a plan for building 2 already adding that COVID has changed everything and there will be new incentives. He added that pushing affordable housing into building 2 is not possible. Affordable housing would be better to do in building 3 and to plan for it. Josi Kytile added that as a "bonus" Buttermilk would need a 3rd party to partner with and that finding the right partner and timelines could be very complicated. Some partner/ organizations require a separate building for affordable housing. Josi's recommendation was to do affordable housing well it should be looked at separately.
- Bard asked, how quickly can we get this done?
- Virginia responded, one approach would be for the Selectboard to form an affordable housing committee adding if there was a committee it could move things along. Virginia thought it would take months for the Planning Committee to move forward due to their inexperience and lack of fundamental knowledge about affordable housing.
- Ravi stated he did not believe a committee was needed to make progress. He thought that having the Selectboard meet every week is helpful and that a public meeting would have to happen. Ravi added that in the coming months the Planning Commission could bring a version to the Board for consideration.
- Virginia added that the last few Planning Commission meetings were not successful, that April meetings were cancelled due to an inability to have a quorum and the Commission was trying to make the online meetings work. Virginia stated she was not certain the Planning Commission is enthusiastic about working on affordable housing citing the size of the town as a problem as well as the need to know who would manage the program. The Planning Commission assumes there would be a third party to manage a program since it requires time that town staff doesn't have
- Ravi responded that the Zoning Administrator would have to take on the responsibilities whether it is managed in house or by a 3rd party.

It was the will of the Board to move forward without affordable housing while committing to affordable housing regulation as a priority. Virginia will work with Ravi on a timeline and strategy for how to move forward on affordable housing to be presented to the Board at a later meeting.

Bard moved to approve the Jolina Ct regulations as presented, without affordable housing, Katie seconded. Roll call vote: David, Katie, Bard, and Christine voted affirmatively. Roger did not vote.

III. Other Business

a) Consideration of approval of the Local Emergency Management Plan

Roger moved to re-adopt the Local Emergency Management Plan, Katie seconded. Roll call vote: David, Roger, Katie, Bard, and Christine voted affirmatively.

b) Consideration of approval of Policy Regarding Acting Zoning Administrative Officer

Josh reported that for years the Town Planner has been the Acting Zoning Officer and that it has been pointed out that the Town needs to have a policy regarding that appointment and spelled out the duties of the position.

Roger moved to approve the Policy regarding the Acting Zoning Administrative Officer, Bard seconded. Roll call vote: David, Katie, Bard, Roger, and Christine voted affirmatively.

c) Richmond Rescue Quarterly Report

Josh reported that Richmond Rescue calls have been down due to COVID and that less emergencies corresponds to less revenue. At the time of the report Richmond Rescue had no financial problems. Josh noted that they are operating under their Pandemic Plan.

Bard noted that Rescue's financial planning has been done well considering other similar organizations are failing.

d) Consideration of short-term rental of office space on third floor of Town Center to J. Hutchins Inc.

Josh reported that J Hutchins would like to rent space on the 3rd floor of Town Center for about 3 months during the Bridge St. construction project at \$600 per month. Josh requested authorization to enter into an agreement with J Hutchins as described.

Bard moved to authorize the Town Manager to negotiate a lease with J Hutchins, Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, David, Katie, and Christine voted affirmatively. Roger did not vote.

e) Consideration of approval of liquor licenses

Josh reported that the license is for Sweet Simone's.

Roger moved to approve the liquor license presented, Katie seconded. Roll Call vote: David, Bard, Katie, Roger, and Christine voted affirmatively.

IV. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Katie moved to approve the Minutes of 4-13-20, Roger seconded. Roll Call Vote: Katie, Bard, Roger, Christine, and David voted affirmatively.

Purchase Orders:

Roger moved to approve PO 3988 to Hinesburg Sand & Gravel, for \$40,000 Katie seconded Roll call vote: David, Katie, Roger, and Christine voted affirmatively. Bard did not vote.

Roger moved that the money for PO 3988 be spent in FY20, even though this is a budgeted expense for FY21, Katie seconded. Roll call vote: David, Katie, Roger, and Christine voted affirmatively. Bard did not vote.

Invoices and warrants:

Roger looked through the invoices and thought they looked ok.

Roger moved to approve warrants as presented, Katie seconded. Roll Call Vote: Roger, Katie, Bard, Christine, and David voted affirmatively,

Josh will send the warrant out for signatures using DocuSign.

V. Discuss Items for Next Agenda

Update COVID 19- budget, powers towns might have, what ability does the town have to help residents

Comments on Affordable Housing from Michael Monty

Ravi outline on Affordable Housing

Discussion:

Kathy let the Board know that in following the Legislature it seems that there may be a bill presented that would allow municipal authorities to make changes to how and when property taxes are paid by residents without the need of a town wide vote. Additional information will be presented as it becomes known.

VI. Executive Session if necessary -none

VII. Adjourn

Katie moved to adjourn, Bard seconded. Roll Call Vote: Bard, Katie, Christine, David, and Roger voted affirmatively. The meeting ended at 10:30 PM.