

**Town of Starksboro
Selectboard Meeting minutes
October 17, 2017
DRAFT**

PRESENT: Susan Jefferies, Peter Marsh, Tony Porter, Keegan Tierney, Koran Cousino
Rebecca Elder (SB assistant)

VISITORS: Tom Estey, Kris Pearsall, Chris Lamonina

The meeting was called to order by Susan Jefferies at 5:30 p.m.

Road report – Tom Estey

- The improvements to the end of Big Hollow are nearly complete.
- Tom will attend a 2-day seminar on management of rivers and roads (Participants include: Better Back Roads, ANR, VT Fish and Game, and many others)
- 10/23 – A workshop in Brandon for grants for 2018
- Ploof request re: speed limit signage – State requires signage following intersection and within specified footage. Perhaps there is a need for a reduced speed ahead sign? [35 to 30 mph]
- Speed limit on State's Prison Hollow is currently 45 mph – Susan asked Josh Donabedian at the Addison County RPC twice in the past for a speed study. Tom will ask Otter Creek Engineering if they can do a speed study for the town.
- Area with dumping on State's Prison Hollow – Freezer must be removed (must be brought back up over the bank). The Board discussed whether such removal is the responsibility of the road crew. This case requires rental of a flat bed with a winch to pull the heavy item up the hill. The SB will consider this.
- There have also been repeated reports of illegal trash dumping on Shaker Hill Rd, Hillsboro Rd, and Ireland Rd.
- Susan asked how much of the clean-up should the town be responsible for? How much has the road crew done and been doing over time without the SB realizing it? How can we quantify the time spent and money needed for disposal/removal? (In general, trash goes in town dumpster. Tony noted that tires are frequently picked up and a fee is required for disposal. other trash can go to the transfer station as needed for fee per load/items.)
- The SB acknowledged the Green-Up Day efforts and other volunteer clean-up work that occurs by residents.

General Business

The Town's payroll didn't process correctly last week. At least one employee received late fees because of the delayed auto deposit. The Town will reimburse employee(s) for such fees as needed.

Minutes approvals

MOTION: Tony Porter moved and Keegan Tierney seconded the motion to approve the minutes of 9/19/17 with edits.

VOTE: All in favor.

MOTION: Koran Cousino moved and Keegan Tierney seconded the motion to approve the minutes of 10/3/17 with edits.

VOTE: All in favor.

MOTION: Peter Marsh moved and Tony Porter seconded the motion to approve the minutes of 10/10/17 with the addition of Susan Jefferies to the board members in attendance.

VOTE: All in favor.

Mt. Abe Renovation Bond Vote

Kris Pearsall, the chair of the Mt. Abe Renovation Committee, attended to give a summary of the upcoming request for a bond vote on November 2, 2017 and answer questions from the Selectboard. Sup. Patrick Reen was unable to attend.

- In 2014 there was a \$36.2 M proposal to renovate. It included “a lot of extras” including many light wells to bring natural light into the interior, windowless classrooms. These were expensive. The vote failed.
- In Feb. 2017, the SU formed a new committee to examine the need for renovation. The gym floor failure last year started the. The 13-member committee toured the entire school (available as a YouTube video to watch from home). Following the tour, the group unanimously agreed renovations are needed now.
- There have been no major renovations in 50 years.
- The surplus wood chip money was moved to the renovation budget.
- A \$750K construction line has been added in budget – If the bond does not pass, at least there will be \$1M per year for construction needs.
- Bond would freeze costs – the \$1M could be shifted; \$87 per 100K house value (cost estimate by Engleberth)
- Renovation adds: (all priorities of the students, staff, committee)
 - Improved entryway with more glass, visibility to library and offices
 - 2nd gym to be added & locker rooms updated (expands available time for middle school)
 - stage and auditorium;
 - ventilation (some parts replaced in 2004)
 - natural light – Move classrooms to the outside of building – courtyard to bring in light
 - Science lab upgrades
 - Metal shop to move to 1st fl (currently on 2nd – safety issues)
 - Library, gym, pool, new gym would be connected; restrooms on outside perimeter of building – increasing availability to community, lessening impact on rest of school
 - New furniture to replace broken, cracked, and outdated pieces
- The committee designed this proposal in a future-focused way so that no other bonds will be needed in the short term (Other communities such as Vergennes did not request enough)
- Student population ~ 650 now, with an anticipated rise to 680 in next few years

Questions from SB:

- Susan asked if the plan will address asbestos? YES. Where it can be accessed (about \$1M more to do in abatement)
- Tony asked about the project timeline.
 - 11-month design phase – concept to detailed design, then to bid – awarded, scheduled
 - Start construction in 2019
 - Gym will be built first (but not outfitted) – will serve as swing space for classrooms so ongoing work can continue. This eliminates the need to rent temporary classrooms, which would cost ~\$1M.
- Is the pool and operation costs very high? The energy saving cover purchased a few years ago has helped with costs. The committee discussed removing the pool, but rejected it. It is a highly used part of the school and a valued community asset and resource.
- Wood chip boiler still in use and working well. Desire to be energy efficient. Locally purchased
- Keegan asked about the slope to the pit and testing performed; 300K budgeted for evaluation and shoring up the bank – Engleberth provided the estimate
- Were energy efficiencies for regular costs included? YES, better ventilation; air handlers with sensors; light sensors; new gym will have windows around the top for natural light; windows replaced throughout for energy efficiency and increased light where possible.
- Safety improvement: Extension of driveway around the building; buses can drop off in the back to reduce conflict with car drop offs.
- Best sale point? 45% of the cost would come from the \$1M/annual construction line item

October 25 – Five Town meeting at Mt Abe at 7pm; tours of the building starting at 5:30pm

Aegis Renewables and Solar Savings

Chris Lamonica from Aegis visited to discuss an immediate project 325 kW project in St. George that would bring savings to VEC customers. Unfortunately, the town offices are not in VEC territory and therefore is not eligible. Residential customers are not eligible for this project. Aegis will be in touch if future projects could be helpful to Starksboro or its residents.

Notice of Appearance – Steven Palmer grievance

BCA meeting occur. Susan noted that the DRB works hard to do its best on decisions and the town should provide legal counsel to back up those decisions. In the Palmer situation, both parties feel they are right. There was a grievance hearing. Palmer believes land is only worth \$100K because he has no ROW, leases bridge, etc. Susan noted the process: three (3) people from the BCA visit site and can assign their own valuation number. Value can be adjusted based on site visit.

The Town can hire anyone for legal services. Some years Starksboro has had a town attorney, others not. BCA rules require a quorum to vote, but a majority vote of those present can allow for decisions without full board present. The SB concurred that the town will want to back up the listers, the BCA, and their decisions.

Susan will ask Jim Carroll if he is familiar with issue and interested in taking the case. If not, she will contact Cindy Hill. Legal counsel should be present at the BCA meeting and help them through the process. All SB members agreed to this plan.

Zoning Admin advertising

Koran distributed the ad used by Town of Bristol for recent hiring of ZA. Bristol did include minute taking and some administrative work. Susan reported that Monkton is not looking for a ZA. She has not spoken with Huntington yet. In New Haven, the PC will be conducting the search process for ZA.

Thatcher Hurd easement discussion follow up

GMP doesn't understand why the Town is agreeing to an easement where slated. Perhaps the proposal needs to be reconsidered considering the town garage placement, road access, and need to travel beneath lines. GMP does not think VLT has covenants on main part of gravel pit—it might have been filed differently. Susan contacted VLT for more information.

GMP is not willing to sign an easement with specification about pole height. T. Hurd has a deeded ROW and can do what he wants in that 50 ft ROW. GMP said T. Hurd planned to bury power. SB to table this conversation until response received from VLT and T. Hurd's plans are clear.

Class 4 Road discussion update

Koran attending PC meeting on Thursday and will report back. Peter and Keegan to attend CC meeting and hear their questions and concerns. Especially given the 3 different situations, both PC and CC may have a range of questions.

Building and Maintenance Updates

- Roof/porch RFPs are out – Keegan will report on responses in November
- Light still needs adjustment - needs long ladder
- Exterior bulletin board needed for posting - Peter will talk with Cheryl about taking down the enclosed board from the old town building and putting it up by the current office entry/porch.
- Mold issue – Keegan noted that this should be resolved over the winter to avoid mold issues beginning again in spring with warmth/moisture.
 - Koran asked if there had been any mold level tests by an expert.
 - Peter said there are no conclusive tests of mold toxicity. Best approach is to reduce the conditions for growth via use of dehumidifier.
 - Peter will talk with CV Plumbing and Heating to start process and report in November.

Green Lantern/Russell

Sam Carlson and Dave Russell went on a site visit with Green Lantern's landscape architect. Koran will speak with the Robinson School board on 10/24 regarding solar options on land by school. The SB concurred that the solar opportunities with Green Lantern weren't settled and the last conversation with Dave left open some issues. Particularly regarding the water health for future wells, there are several unknowns including when future building might take place and the number of wells and lines needed. The current SB is willing to draft an MOU to describe the scope of plans and the intention to provide funds to defray costs due to distance of well because of proximity to landfill to be determined by the SB at that time. Keegan suggested the lines could be put in and capped until needed in the future.

Mail, Bills, Orders

Mail was reviewed. The Red Cross was the first to submit request for appropriation from Town budget.

MOTION: Tony Porter moved and Peter Marsh seconded the motion to pay all orders and bills as presented.

VOTE: All in favor

Email from Rooney re: zoning ordinance violations – 326 a and b, 123 c – regarding neglected junk vehicles, refuse, and the like. Inquiry received during Zoning Administrator departure. Tony Porter will contact the Rooneys to follow up.

Tony mentioned there have been some dog issues lately. He has been talking with Town Animal Control Officer Heather Ragsdale to resolve an ongoing issue on Jim Dwire Road. She has tried to contact the dog owner via phone repeatedly. Tony and Heather went to owner's home but there was no response. There have been multiple bite reports. The dog has its shots and license. If another incident, Heather will need to contact Sheriff for the next visit to owner's home. Action will need to be taken. The dog is not leashed and wanders down on Jerusalem Road where it chases and nips at people. All bite history and contact is being documented.

Board member availability for November:

Tony not available 11/7

Susan and Keegan not available 11/21

MOTION: Peter Marsh moved and Keegan Tierney seconded the motion to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.

VOTE: All in favor

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Selectboard Assistant

Approved X/X/2017