

Selectboard members present: Peter Marsh, Mathew Norris, Susan Jefferies (Chair)

Others present: Tom Estey, Dan Dubenetsky, Kerry Kurt, Peter Ryersbach, Chris Zeno, Trixie Zeno

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 pm.

**Minutes:** S. Jefferies moved to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2015 meeting. P. Marsh seconded. Voted and approved.

**Bills:** M. Norris moved to instruct the Treasurer to pay the bills as presented. P. Marsh seconded. Voted and approved.

**Visitor's Business:**

- **Warning for Town Meeting** – Dan Dubenetsky and the Selectboard reviewed a draft warning for town meeting. There are two proposed articles that are out of the ordinary. One is that a petition was presented to have the proposed sale of land at the town gravel pit considered by the voters. The Selectboard had several questions about the petition. Specifically, the Selectboard questioned the lack of addresses for some signers, an incorrect address given for the location of the land to be sold, whether a vote could bind future Selectboards “in perpetuity”, and how the article should be worded given that the petition didn’t include a specific question. Kerry Kurt stated that she believed the petition had enough problems to be declared invalid. She asked what the Selectboard would do if the petition was not accepted. S. Jefferies replied that the questions had been referred to the Secretary of State’s office, and that the Selectboard would have to consider its position after hearing from them.

The other article discussed was a question about whether to increase the number of Selectmen from 3 to 5. There are benefits and disadvantages to the proposal. Benefits include having more people to provide input for decisions, ability to better handle situations when a Selectman has a conflict of interest, and more people to divide up the work. Disadvantages include the fact that we sometimes have trouble finding even three people to serve on the board, we would have to hold a special meeting to elect new members, and it would take three people to have a quorum during interim period before fill the open positions. The Selectboard questioned whether we can pass an article to take effect at a future date, or can wait until November for a vote.

- **Brown Hill West** – Chris and Trixie Zeno asked that the Selectboard consider widening this road so it is easier to use in winter. C. Zeno noted that there are five sugarbushes on the road, so it gets a lot of truck traffic. He would be willing to do the work himself, and has made some improvements already. P. Marsh pointed out that it is illegal for individuals to work on town roads. There was discussion about the town’s responsibility regarding maintenance on Class 4 roads. The Selectboard said they would review it with the road foreman.

**Mail:**

- The Selectboard received a request from Starksboro’s Listers for a 30 day extension to file our final 411 (the listing of property values used for preparation of tax bills). P. Marsh moved to approve the request, M. Norris seconded. Voted and approved. The Selectboard signed the request letter.

- M. Norris moved to approve a contract with Barden Construction Services to provide services as Clerk of the Works for town garage construction. P. Marsh seconded. Voted and approved.

**Old Business:**

**Town Garage Construction Update:** Everything continues to be on schedule and on budget. There will be a conference call Wednesday morning to discuss a possible change to the roof. (The roof included in the bid doesn't install well in sub-freezing temperatures, so other options will be considered.) The siding is up and the roof decking installed.

**Land Sale Status:** P. Ryersbach discussed the petition regarding a vote on the land sale. He pointed out 17 VSA 2642, which required addresses be included for each signer. S. Jefferies said that we have asked for advice on that issue. K. Kurt mentioned again that she believes the petition should be declared invalid. P. Marsh said that the survey had not been complete so the Selectboard couldn't go to the DRB for approval. The surveyor is hired by K. Kurt so the timing is up to her.

**Budgets:** S. Jefferies reviewed the draft of the budget. The general fund budget was adopted a presented. T. Estey will provide a purchase price for a new tandem truck to be voted at town meeting.

**Ben Roberts Road:** There was discussion about the qualifications of the two bidders. T. Estey noted that both firms are approved by the State of Vermont to do work on state projects. P. Marsh said that the town had worked with Otter Creek Engineering on the town garage, and was very happy with the work they did. P. Marsh moved to accept the bid from Otter Creek Engineering for engineering and construction oversight for the repair work on Ben Roberts Road. M. Norris seconded. Voted and approved.

**New Business:** P. Marsh discussed the job of taking minutes for Selectboard meetings, noting that it takes an hour or more after the meeting to prepare the minutes. The Selectboard used to hire a clerk at a cost of \$50/meeting. S. Jefferies has been preparing the minutes for several years. P. Marsh voted that the town should purchase a \$200 gift certificate to the Black Sheep Bistro as a thank you for providing this service. M. Norris seconded. Voted and approved with S. Jefferies abstaining.

**Agenda Items for Next Meeting:**

- Garage construction update
- Update on sale of land at gravel pit
- Budgets and town report

February meetings will be on the 2nd and 16<sup>th</sup>. March meetings will be on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Jefferies