

**Town of Starksboro
Selectboard Meeting minutes
December 5, 2017
DRAFT**

Board members present: Koran Cousino, Susan Jefferies, Keegan Tierney, Peter Marsh
Rebecca Elder (SB Assistant)

Visitors present: Tom Estey, Jan McCleery, Emily Stoehr

Susan Jefferies called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Tony Porter was unable to attend. He reported that the Audy family had finished their logging and had put the road back to its regular condition.

Addition to the agenda: Jerusalem Store license application update (see below)

Minutes from 11/21/17 - Minor corrections noted.

Motion: Peter Marsh moved and Koran Cousino seconded the motion to approve the minutes of 11/21/17. **Vote:** All in favor.

Road Foreman Report – Tom Estey

- Tom is working on the speed limit signage for Jerusalem Road. Waiting for response from State office regarding enforcement of “neighborhood wide” speed limit signs.
- Tires for grader: no recaps available. If the same tires were purchased, cost is \$4000 each (Michelin). Proposed purchase is for \$2900+/- (Bridgestone).
- Another grant (source?) is available soon that is general in scope. An application will be submitted.
- Repairs were needed on Tom’s truck.
- Fire Dept. update: new tanker in Feb;
 - PTSD research shows direct effects on fire fighters and EMS—recognized as a job related injury and qualifies for workers’ comp ([H.197](#))
 - Tom Estey was made an honorary member of the Middlebury FD
 - Hugh Johnson is leaving the FD and PC; served on the DRB in past as well as many other roles in the Town. He will be missed.

Legislative Updates - Representative Fred Baser

Rep. Baser visited tonight to ask if there are any concerns about work being done (or not) in Montpelier. Seeking suggestions and here to answer questions. Some of the key items out of the legislature:

- Primary Care Bill – includes some mental health provisions; the cost of health care and its impact on businesses and individuals is extensive; there will be unknown effects on the VT programs based on decisions at the national level.
- New payment systems for accountable care organizations will utilize a set amount for each person. The medical community is asking for time to see how this plays out for Medicare/Medicaid. We will see if this approach helps control costs
 - Peter M. asked if it will help address disparity in physician costs. Mr. Baser said yes, to some extent, if doctors participate in the cost controlling program.
- Minimum wage bill – Rep. Baser supports if implemented over 10 yrs.
- Affordable housing – vacancy rates in Chittenden Co. are less than 1%; Addison Co. has very little available
- Clean Water Act – there is support for towns to do necessary work; hope for more funding beyond the 2-year mark. Assistance available to farmers for upgrades.
- Paid Family Leave Bill – 6 weeks of paid family leave proposed; Rep. Baser helped to write the bill; to be paid for with a payroll deduction; costs quite modest at a fraction of a cent. This is an economic development tool providing important support for families.

- Many financial pressures this coming year in Montpelier with holes in the budget because of loss of various federal funds. It will be hard to afford the promises that have been made. More than 30% of budget comes from federal sources.
- Property taxes to increase
- As an example of local impact, Susan Jefferies recalled the time that budget cuts resulted in state cuts to Class 2 road maintenance. Costs were shifted to the Town and quarterly payment didn't come in, which was a large impact on town.

Mail review

- Town Garage Expense received - Stormwater operating fee - \$160 to be paid to ANR (copy to Tom for Garage budget)
- Landfill report from Lincoln Applied Geology received.
- Jim Carroll's rate are increasing for coming year.

There was a clerical error on the recent second-class liquor and tobacco license application previously approved for the Jerusalem Country Store. To avoid a two-week wait for corrected application, paperwork will be submitted and board members agreed to stop by Town office to re-sign per approval made on 11/7/17.

Bills and Orders

Motion: Peter Marsh moved and Koran Cousino seconded motion to approve the bills and orders.

Vote: All in favor.

Conservation Commission - request for appointment

Jan McCleery and Emily Stoehr attended. The conservation commission has some vacant seats. Emily sought out the CC and began attending meetings over a year ago. She is an avid outdoor enthusiast who chose to live in Starksboro in part because of its rural location and forested areas.

Motion: Peter Marsh moved and Keegan Tierney seconded the motion to nominate Emily Stoehr to fill a vacancy on the Conservation Commission. **Vote:** All in favor.

- The Selectboard also encourages the Conservation Commission to share and distribute more information via FPF and the Gazette to keep town residents engaged in the conservation work in the community.
- The CC is developing some events for the coming months including a wetland exploration walk and other activities in the spring. The CC welcomes ideas for community activity.

K. Tierney noted there is an unseen barrier for folks to come into the town process. The more information is distributed, the more townspeople can become engaged. Jan said it has been easier to get volunteers than it is to get board members.

Budget Issue Note

Celine Coon noted to the SB that a member of the road crew will turn 65 soon. A new situation for the Town: employee on family plan will move to Medicare but has a dependent who still qualifies for family coverage for another 4+/- years. Town to provide individual coverage for dependent (same plan coverage).

Two of three road crew employees are nearing retirement. K. Cousino mentioned that current pay rates in Chittenden Co. are much higher for people with CDL and similar experience. The Town may find it hard to fill those positions in the future given the lower pay and numerous responsibilities.

Visitors Business

Bill Coon attended the indoor air quality maintenance discussion. He ran the test in the Lister's office, not the basement (correction to 11/7 minutes). While there were no immediate results, however something is growing now. Completed test kit and instructions were left at the Town Office.

State of Vermont's information about mold and indoor air quality measures was distributed to all Selectboard members. P. Marsh said there are no standards for what is regarded as dangerous. A dehumidifier will be placed in the Lister's office, which should help mitigate the problem. Bill has experienced allergic reaction symptoms, as have others, during meetings in the past. Tests are needed to determine what is growing (i.e. mold, mildew, etc.) Radon should also be tested. K. Cousino noted that the Starksboro Pre-school had various tests performed and ultimately installed a \$3000 air quality mediation device.

Next steps:

1. Dehumidifier to be installed.
2. Radon tests needed - \$40/each - test in Lister's office and upstairs.

- **Zoning Administrator application update**
 - Two applications in – distributed to the SB
 - Susan to speak with Town Clerk about follow up with Planning Commission/DRB
 - P. Marsh said applicants should be notified of a compensation range and benefits
- **DRB request for compensation** – T. Porter spoke with Dan Nugent. Marjorie has put in an estimated 4-6 hours to complete the DRB minutes and other tasks. T. Porter to ask Dan for a recommendation from the DRB. A gift certificate could also be offered in appreciation for help through the transition.
- **Green Lantern update** – The SB reviewed the plan for the special informational meeting next week, Tues., Dec. 12 at 6:30 p.m. at the Robinson Elementary multi-purpose room.
- **Thatcher Hurd update** – Susan from Green Mountain Power needs to return to the site to move/add stakes per conversations with Thatcher Hurd and with Susan Jefferies. The map was not precise. Location must be confirmed before final agreement. This project does not to be completed this winter but will need attention in early spring.
- BCA update – none
- Land transfer – none; Susan to send reminder to Attorney Jim Runcie. S. Jeffer

Survey of the Jerusalem Schoolhouse Lot

- Peter has a plan for septic. Boundaries are pulled from the tax map.
- Not an official survey so can't determine set backs. Plan was done 6-7 yrs ago that included the addition. Steve Harris did that work. Some assumptions may have been made about boundaries. Jeff Dunham is helping to make recommendations.
- Survey would determine back boundary, location of a septic, etc. Committee feels their hands are tied without having confirmed boundaries to know what can fit on the property and what is possible.
- Dimensions on existing plan are confusing
- Friends of Jerusalem Schoolhouse do not have funds for this work, thus may request support from the Town with a plan (e.g. desired work to be done and request for town approval)
- Jason Barnard of Barnard & Gervais offered discounted services
- Challenge with historical buildings in town – expensive repairs; (previous quotes were nearly half million)

Building and Maintenance Updates

- Exterior light – still needs ladder to reach
- Roof RFPs – Keegan
- Mold/Air quality – see above
- Animal control update – none

Computer purchase discussed for the Selectboard Assistant's use.

Motion: Susan Jefferies moved to approve the purchase of a computer for no more than \$1200. Peter Marsh seconded the motion. **Vote:** All in favor.

- Rebecca to follow up with Celine Coon regarding purchase, tax exempt receipt, etc.

A town email address for the SB assistant is still needed. Board approved by consensus.

Town Energy discussion

- Caleb Elder resigned as Energy Coordinator a couple months ago.
- Digger Faesy asked to be on the agenda to discuss establishment of an Energy committee for the Town. Peter to invite him to 12/19 meeting.

Administrative and Technology Updates

- Email addresses for town boards and officials as needed: Put in next year's budget
- Discussion to continue about cloud storage for Selectboard and town use
- Tech security assessment to be scheduled for February after town report is completed.
 - Reason for tech assessment: Identify any areas of vulnerability; inform development of technology procedures and improve security as needed
 - Determine estimated amount needed in an IT budget for future upgrades
 - Selectboard does not intend to rush any decisions but to become more informed about areas for IT improvements

Budget Development

The town budget has been done the same way for more than 15 years. Susan Jefferies has been involved for most of those years as the primary author, with John Jefferies also creating the budget with Susan's support for a few years. New board members need to become acquainted with the process. Selectboard assistant can provide administrative support.

The Selectboard discussed the possibility of using an accountant or bookkeeper to be responsible for some aspects of the Town's finances such as regular financial reports. Discussion about options to continue.

- **Selectboard Special Budget meeting: Thursday, 12/14/17 at 5 pm at the Town Office**

Motion: Koran Cousino moved and Peter Marsh seconded the motion to adjourn at 8:47 p.m.

Vote: All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca T. Elder
Selectboard Assistant