

Selectboard meeting
Minutes of July 16, 2019
Unapproved

Present: Koran Cousino, Eric Cota, Tony Porter, Keegan Tierney

Unable to attend: Nancy Boss

Others present: Rebecca Elder, Celine Coon, Jeff Keeney, Denny Casey, Jeff Dunham, Harvey Farr

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Chair Koran Cousino.

Addition to the agenda:

1. Road and bridge standards – needs adoption

Road Foreman

Tom Estey was unable to attend the meeting. He conveyed some summary financial information regarding costs from FY18-19 and the funds used/available for paving. The board reviewed the information and will follow up with Tom.

Setting the Tax Rate for 2019-20

Celine Coon was present to explain the calculations to determine the tax rate for FY19-20. The grand list went up based on the 411 report from the Listers. Per the town report, there were two items that were not included in the budget number: first, the \$10,000 for the Meeting House appropriation (because it was a first-time request it was not to be included in the budget until passed by the voters) and second, the amount raised from the floor for printing the Gazette. The Treasurer stated the proposed rate of .6011 = calculations were provided to the board for review. The tax bills will go out at the end of the month/first week of August.

MOTION: Eric Cota made a motion to raise the amount of \$1,006,149 for a tax rate of .6011 which includes the Veteran's exemption of .0012. Tony Porter 2nd.

Motion carried.

Highway equipment truck loan

This \$210,000 loan was voted at Town Meeting. The rate is 2.9%. No prepayment penalty.

MOTION: Keegan Tierney moved to authorize Koran Cousino to sign the loan agreement from Community Bank N.A. for \$210,000 at the rate of 2.9% for the truck loan as approved by the voters.

Tony Porter 2nd

Motion carried.

Professional accounting services discussion

Celine Coon recommended to the board that an accountant or accounting service be considered instead of a payroll service only. She believes it would be most beneficial to find someone who knows and uses the NEMRC system and who understand how to create the desired reports and explain them to the Board. The board has spoken with one individual who is available for some hours (non-business day). Koran will continue researching options and report back in August and communicate with Celine as needed.

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to authorize the payment of payroll and other voted obligations for FY19-20 that must be paid out of board meeting cycle to avoid penalties. Tony Porter 2nd.

Motion carried.

Use of Town Roads for Bike Event

Brown Hill resident Harvey Farr attended to discuss the board's approval of a request for access to Brown Hill Rd. for a bike event on August 4. (See previous minutes for discussion and approval.)

H. Farr stated that he and his neighbors have two primary concerns:

1. People coming from other areas/far away and not respecting the local land (e.g. trespassing, vandalism, discarding refuse, etc.)
2. That he/his family have put significant resources into the road/area; they have worked with State and NRCS on erosion work, and they do not want the road to deteriorate further.

H. Farr said that they maintain the road themselves and asked about the public input and approval process for use of the road for events such as a bike race.

The board stated that Brown Hill is a town road and a town right of way. K. Cousino explained that the board welcomes input from residents, but that the use of the roads is under the Selectboard's purview. The board has had a transparent process about reviewing requests for bike races such as this one. The agendas and minutes of all meetings are available on the website.

The board was approached by Laura and Ted King to seek permission for use of town roads. The board was presented with a proposed route, proof of insurance, and answers to questions about a variety of concerns from the board. The Rooted Vermont bike event is traveling through 11 towns, all of which approved the activity. Starksboro is the only town that required the applicants to come to a meeting and the only town to have issues with use of the roads. The initial request was to travel over Carp Cole Road. That route was changed to the possible route over Brown Hill. The final route has been altered and will use Class 3 roads including Shaker Hill. K. Cousino and K. Tierney reiterated that the board has been through a public process regarding the Class 4 roads. In 2017, there were public hearings that included public warnings, posted minutes, and follow up discussions. All requests that come through the board are placed on the agenda, which is posted publicly, and all meetings are open to the public. Minutes of the meetings are posted on the town website. The town doesn't distinguish between Class 3 and Class 4 roads when it comes to a request for an event. Anyone use the public road without approval. The board is not singling out the residents on Brown Hill or treating the Farrs or other landowners differently.

T.Porter mentioned there is another race, Green Mountain Stage Race, that has a greater impact. It is an annual event that uses Route 17 and sometimes other town roads and residents in South Starksboro have an expectation of interruption on the date(s) of the race. Another race, the Grand Fondo, also comes through Starksboro annually. The Board has invited tour coordinators to a board meeting and posted notice of races to inform town residents. The board has worked to ensure there is an opportunity for residents to ask questions and raise concerns at a regular public meeting.

K.Tierney also noted that the Selectboard tabled the conversation about status change for Class 4 roads to trails. He is a firm believer that the conversion of a class 4 road to a trail requires a commitment from an organization to maintain that trail in perpetuity. Without a steward of the trail, it will deteriorate, develop erosion problems, and more.

K.Cousino noted that the emails sent by H. Farr to the board set the tone for the conversation tonight. It is discouraging that Starksboro is the town that presents challenges for recreational events such as the Rooted Vermont bike event.

H. Farr stated that he appreciated the opportunity to understand the process more and that he will be speaking with neighbors further.

EV station grant and placement

Denny Casey and Jeff Keeney (Planning Commission) and Jeff Dunham (Energy Committee) attended.

J. Dunham came to discuss the next steps in the EV charging station process. With the grant approved, the Energy Committee is moving forward with the plans to install the station at the end of the summer. The State grant requires a summary sheet to be submitted describing how the project will comply with the permitting process. R. Elder explained that the PC has drafted proposed language for the bylaws regarding EV station placement. D. Casey and J. Keeney described some of the PC's concerns and recommendations with regard to placement in the commuter lot and the signage required. The group walked to the area, reviewed various concerns and decided on placing the station next to the commuter shed. This is slightly closer to the town clerk's office, keeps station out of the way of plow trucks and the commuter bus, and will generally be a more convenient location. J. Dunham will work with the ZA on the permit application and posting requirements. He will contact the State about the signs and what AOT requires/allows. He will also discuss the lighting requirement and the need for it to be on a motion sensor (not on 24/7). Lighting to be downshielded and as minimal as allowed.

Town appointments

The Jerusalem Community Center Committee (JCCC) asked for the board to appoint someone to fill the seat left open after Greg Cousino's resignation.

Motion: Tony Porter moved to appoint Jeff Dunham to the Jerusalem Community Center Committee. Eric Cota 2nd. **Motion carried.**

Motion: Tony Porter moved to re-appoint Phil Mosenthal for a one-year term to the Energy Committee if he accepts. Keegan Tierney 2nd. **Motion carried.**

Motion: Tony Porter moved to re-appoint Peter Ryersback for a two-year term as Town Health Officer if he accepts. Keegan Tierney 2nd. **Motion carried.**

Road Crew job advertisement:

Include "Benefit package provided as outlined in the town's personnel policy."

Road Crew position job description:

Edits to the current job description as noted:

- Delete bullets 1, 4, 5, 11
- Add "Must live or be willing to relocate to within reasonable distance of Starksboro."
- Under Ed/Training....ADD "New employees must have a Class B CDL license and be willing to obtain Class A license."

Building & Maintenance

- Library – none
- Town Clerk's office – waiting on additional quote Lister floor
- PO and other – none

Motion: Tony Porter made a motion to authorize Koran Cousino to sign the town bridge and road standards agreement with State of VT VTrans for the Town of Starksboro. Eric Cota 2nd.

Motion carried.

SB concerns:

Camping on town land – The board discussed the recent issue with illegal camping on town land. Need to review policy.

Motion: Keegan Tierney made a motion to approve the warrants for bills and orders as presented by the Treasurer. Tony Porter 2nd. **Motion carried.**

Motion to adjourn: Tony Porter, Eric Cota 2nd. 9:15 p.m.
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Selectboard Assistant

DRAFT