

Starksboro Selectboard
Minutes of 10/16/19
Unapproved

Present: Eric Cota, Koran Cousino, Nancy Boss, Keegan Tierney

Visitors present: Tom Estey, Rebecca Elder, Tony Porter, Bill Coon, Steve Frost, Sue Martin, Barbara Herrington

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

Road Foreman's Report

This is Tom Estey's last report as Road Foreman.

As promised, Tom looked at culvert on Varney Hill. The length might have been adequate if it had been installed straight across the road. Instead it was installed at an angle and should have allowed for a few feet on either end into the grass. It is currently full of silt. A gate was put up where the town turns around but that will be pulled once the hemp is harvested. There will need to be some replacement culvert and additional pipe laid in the future.

Tom thanked the Selectboard for the party. He said he felt very appreciated. He is thankful that he has always had a good selectboard to deal with and has felt supported. The road crew team appreciates the support from the town to do their job and take good care of the roads.

Tony Porter requested that Tom's name be left in the DOT testing pool so he can be available as an alternate driver in emergencies.

T. Porter has a concern about a roof leak at the town garage. There should be a warranty on the roof from Hawthorne. Tony will call for service (there is a binder at the garage with all the information about the contractors used, warranties, etc.)

Tony noted there is a drain pipe in the middle of the driveway at the garage, perhaps a curb stop for the water or curtain drain. It had been sub-grade but has now surfaced and needs to be fixed to prevent damage.

Tony started buying tools to replace those that were provided by Tom. The tools will be billed to shop supplies. He is buying mid-level quality.

There has continued to be a logging issue on Mason Hill North. The person doing the work has disappeared and there is a lot of clean up left. Tony provided pictures for the board to see the current damage. The ditches are full of debris, there is a brush pile in the ditch by edge of road, tops of trees were just clipped and dropped (some onto neighboring properties, some into the road/culverts). There is a pile of trimmings on top of an 18" culvert.

The landowner applied for a driveway permit last year. They didn't put down fabric on the driveway, the culvert has never functioned correctly, and the driveway construction doesn't meet zoning standards.

Tony requested a letter from the board to the landowner regarding the clean-up that is expected or it will be done and billed to the landowner. The ditches must be cleaned for safety and road maintenance.

- Koran will work with Rebecca on drafting a letter to be addressed to Audrey Huante, wife of Augustine Huante (deceased). Other family members wish to build a house there in the future.

Tony also reported an issue with one of the snowplows. He is talking with the manufacturer about repair options vs. replacement.

Tony plans to attend future meetings for the Road Foreman's reports. He will not be present on 11/5.

Generator/Backup power for Town Clerk's office

Since the last meeting, the board placed a request for bids in the Addison Independent. No responses were received. The board has the quoted figures from last year from Taylor Rental and from Jackman's of Bristol to purchase the appropriate sized generator and auto-switch set-up. Both were in the \$7000-8000 range for slightly different sized generators.

Resident Bill Coon was present and stated he feels it is going against the goals of the town and state to be making a choice for a propane generator vs. solar powered battery walls. He is concerned about the cost of propane. A generator could have to run for several days if there's a power outage. B. Coon also expressed concerns about grants related to the town office and asked if there any restrictions on what could be installed.

B. Coon said he thinks there should be a storage battery instead of generator. He wanted to make sure the storage batteries were carefully considered before a decision was made.

K. Cousino explained some of the learning the Board has gone through as they considered this purchase. They have heard from contractors, solar companies, and electricians. E. Cota said the batteries won't give enough power for what the town's needs may be in an extended emergency. N. Boss also expressed that she supports the purchase of a propane generator. The Town of Bristol installed a backup generator for the town office.

K. Cousino stated that the Selectboard's goal for this specific use is different from most other decisions for the Town where energy consumption and reduced energy use goals would be of primary importance. This purchase is to protect the town office for routine office functions during an extended power outage (i.e. computers, copiers, office machines, heat, etc.). If there was a guarantee from the battery providers that there could be enough stable power over several days, then the battery option would be more viable.

The board will decide at the next meeting if all quotes are received.

Starksboro Food Shelf check in

Barbara Herrington and Sue Martin attended to discuss the current work at the Food Shelf. Last year, Laurie Webber stepped down as coordinator and there has been a transition in volunteers. The Selectboard wanted to check in about process and procedures related to buying food & reimbursements.

- People can come and take a monthly allotted amount of canned goods and other items one day per month.
- When there is a food drive, there are a lot of canned goods donated to stock the shelves.
- They stock 2 meat items as well as eggs and milk.
- After watching the attendance records for several months, the volunteers determined being open once a month was most efficient and met most needs.
- Average traffic for the food shelf is 18-19/families per month. They have noticed it is not the same people or families each time, therefore a larger group is being served over time. Over 6 months, 30 different families came through. Thanksgiving boxes are made for 28-30.
- Food shelf use and need for support can vary. There's a variety of needs that can prompt someone coming to the food shelf (e.g. when people get laid off, when bills exceed monthly income, when a family member gets sick, when heating bills rise, etc.)

Purchasing and labor. There are now 4 people who have agreed to do the shopping for the Food Shelf. No one person is willing to do it all. In the past, the coordinator was willing to tie up personal funds in to get the best deals at stores.

Reimbursements. The board would like to move to a system where volunteer can check out a credit card to use to eliminate multiple reimbursements. The town is also paying a lot of tax that they don't need to pay. The group expressed concern about needing to manage shopping trips around use of one credit card. K. Tierney asked them to think about what can work for them and the accountability that the town needs.

K. Cousino asked if there a concern about the amount of money the Food Shelf has saved. Volunteers said no, they received an average of \$400/month in donations and that coupled with the town appropriation goes a long way. The group discussed how make the Food Shelf's work more known to residents as a resource and to get support. K. Tierney suggested standing up at town meeting and helping folks understand the connection.

All concerns or maintenance requests should be directed to the Selectboard via Rebecca.

Visitor Concerns:

Steve Frost, resident on Ireland Road, was present. He had thought there was an agenda item related to burning of trash and use of incinerators that he wished to address. He stated that burning of trash has continued to be an issue in his neighborhood and he wanted to know what recourse residents and the Town has. The board continues to recommend filing a complaint with the Agency of Natural Resources, which has oversight over environmental violations.

Administrative Updates

Municipal credit card. The previous credit cards are no longer valid and the account has been closed. A new credit account is being set up through Community Bank N.A. for three municipal cards: Town Administration \$3000 limit, Road Foreman \$5000 limit, Town Clerk/Committees \$1000 (for food shelf, sports program, and other committee expenses).

Snow removal. Eric Cota will speak with Scenic Valley/Paul Davis regarding their availability for early morning snow removal. Rebecca will post an inquiry on FPF. All bids must be from businesses with liability insurance.

Budget planning

Koran met with the accounting consultant. The consultant will run reports and import budget categories into Excel format for the board to use for planning purposes.

The board will hold a special budget meeting on Tuesday, November 12 at 5:30 p.m. to focus on the budget projections, timeline, and planning.

- The Selectboard will budget for an independent audit done in accordance with governmental auditing standards. This will be scheduled to begin in July 2020. The Town of Bristol completes an independent audit annually.

Town communications

Concerns were expressed by Nancy Boss about the AT&T bill for \$47.54 and confusion about the payment. There was also an Addison Independent statement included for payment that did not include invoices. The board requests invoices to be attached to all statements for processing.

Animal Control Ordinance

The board postponed its review of the new VLCT model ordinance compared to the recent draft of the town's policy. The review will resume on 11/5.

Animal Control officer should be following up with all people on the list who need to register dogs. All should be contacted to get dog licenses or should receive a ticket.

Action Items:

Minutes of October 1

Motion: Nancy Boss moved to approve the minutes of 10/1/19. Eric Cota 2nd
Motion carried.

Warrants for Orders/Bills

Motion: Eric Cota moved to approve the warrants for bills/orders as presented by the Treasurer. Nancy Boss 2nd
Motion carried.

Follow up Future agendas:

- Bristol Rec presentation on 11/19
- Jerusalem Community Center Committee presentation 11/5

Misc items:

The selectboard is curious how the conversation on Rounds Road went among neighbors regarding noise and hopes that all has been resolved.

Motion to adjourn at 9:00 p.m.: Keegan Tierney moved and Eric Cota 2nd.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder

Selectboard Assistant