

Starksboro Selectboard Meeting
Minutes of 11/5/2019
Unapproved

Board members present: Koran Cousino, Eric Cota, Keegan Tierney, Greg Hahr, Nancy Boss
Others present: Tony Porter, Rebecca Elder, Sheila Knight, Dennis Casey, Chuck Webber

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Koran Cousino.

Changes/additions to the agenda:

1. Animal control complaint
2. Vice-chair election

Visitor's business

PC Chair Dennis Casey attended regarding town communications and some recent challenges.

Welcome to the new board member Greg Hahr. The board thanked Greg for stepping forward to serve the town.

Vice-chair election: K. Cousino requested the election of a vice-chair since the vacancy was created with Tony Porter's departure.

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to nominate Keegan Tierney as the vice-chair. Eric Cota 2nd.
Motion carried.

Road Foreman's Report

Tony Porter gave a broad overview of the impacts of the recent storm event. K. Cousino took a road tour with the crew to see some of the damage. The road crew has been taking photos and documenting all of the damage.

- Brown Hill East – 2 bottomless arch culverts, one beyond repair. Parent Construction can put stone up to help stabilize and set a temporary bridge (4-5 yr fix). There is no federal \$ for Class 4 roads. About 600 ft of the road isn't there anymore. The Audy family is trying to establish access to feed 30+ rescue horses. The repair will start work tomorrow and they should be able to get the material on site from Audy's pit.
- The crew hasn't been up to Hillsboro Rd on the Class 4 section to repair yet.
- Rounds Road is patched up as of yesterday but did have extensive damage.
- Carp Cole Road – Still needs some work but is passable by car with caution.
- Upper portion of Brown Hill not yet assessed.
- Ben Roberts Road – section between Boss and Harris' house was damaged significantly. It is now passable.
- A FEMA ride along is scheduled for 11/6: Tony and Keegan will go and report back.

Overview of the worst damage: Most on Class 4 roads; Shaker Mountain Rd required a lot of material (70-80 loads of stone); Ben Roberts Rd (large hole); Mason Hill Class 4 section; Ireland Rd has small issues; Dan Sargent Rd needs more ditching and clean up.

Many of the problems occurring are due to private driveways that do not drain properly and culverts that haven't been cleaned out, are too small, etc. This is something that the town can't do anything about because the problems stem from private property. Zoning bylaws now require driveway standards to ensure problems don't continue to be created.

Near the old Brace residence by Lazy Brook MHP on Hinesburg Hollow, there is significant gravel run off and problems coming from the driveway. The owner spoke with Tony—again, this isn't something the town can solve. The source of problem starts on private property.

Mason Hill North and Rounds Rd are maintained by private landowners on the Class 4 sections. They are not plowed properly, the ditches aren't maintained as needed, and therefore more problems occur over time. The roads are getting year-round use but not year-round professional maintenance. Even on a Class 4 road, 1 ft is considered a gully wash.

Tony hired a part-time helper on an emergency bases to run the loader over the weekend to assist the crew. He will follow up with the Treasurer and the SB Assistant regarding administrative paperwork.

There will be a lot of correspondence and documents for the FEMA reporting and potential reimbursement. Tom Estey did help the crew on Friday and Saturday. Rebecca will provide administrative support for Tony for the FEMA reporting and documentation as needed.

Hillsboro Rd issues – The problems can't be prevented but the town has to deal with it when they occur. The flooding from the Lewis Creek and the build up of debris, logs, brush, etc. washes down and creates a jam. Every time it rains, there's an issue. The bridge isn't the problem.

Sheila Knight of the lower Ireland Road area attended regarding the issues going on in her immediate neighborhood related to storm events. We are seeing flooding 2-3x year. What can be addressed by the town and/or the State to mitigate flooding and damage? What needs to happen to improve the situation and the Lewis Creek flooding? She asked if there are berms being put in farther upstream and then causing issues downstream. K. Cousino suggests talking to the Lewis Creek Assoc. about consulting on what some options are. T.Porter said the debris is what is causing problem.

S. Knight said one of her concerns is that her well isn't on their property. It is behind the house, but it is in the flood zone. The Knights could do personal fixes and have a well on her property, but it is not addressing the larger issue. What can she and the other landowners in that area do to begin addressing the sources of the problem?

D. Casey shared some history of the conversations with the Lewis Creek Association and the State about the meander zone for the Lewis Creek. The Selectboard advised calling the LCA reps from Starksboro (Louis DuPont and Chris Runcie) as well as ANR/DEC. The selectboard and town office staff will also be gathering a list of resources for private landowners as more information is available from FEMA and the State. The issues are about more than the Lewis Creek but also about people and land and different approaches to land management. It is a complex problem without clear solutions.

Animal Control Issue

C. Webber attended to follow up on a pressing animal control issue at Ireland Road/Shamrock Lane. Nate Perry and Joanna Tatro continue to experience problems with the neighbor's dogs. They have a restraining order in place, but the dogs continue to run loose and onto their property. Due to verbal abuse and threats to the animal control officer, the Selectboard has instructed the ACO to enlist help from the Sheriff's office for delivery of any further violations.

The dogs are still not licensed. C. Webber will issue another ticket, this time to the owners of the property, and will have the sheriff deliver.

ACO and Selectboard will have a conversation with the sheriff and/or state police about what the liability is for the town in this situation.

Animal Control Policy Review

The board reviewed the new animal control ordinance template from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. The group compared the most recently revised draft from September with the VLCT model,

incorporated most of the model language and agreed to bring the final draft to the next meeting for formal approval.

Rebecca will compile all the edits and distribute the draft for final review and approval from the board before posting public notice for the comment and review period.

Budget planning

K. Cousino spoke with the bookkeeping consultant. She has reviewed the balance sheet and provided a list of questions for the board's consideration as they move into budgeting. Koran will forward the questions to the board members. The consultant is putting the categories into an Excel spreadsheet and will send to K. Tierney. He will be the point person for the budgeting process and will provide the board with planning materials for the budgeting special meeting on 11/12/19. Auditor Robert Turner will attend the budget meeting.

The consultant has suggested some different breakdowns and ways to account for funds for the board's consideration. The board's priority is to get to common line item understanding between the reporting from the former system in Quickbooks to the new fund accounting system from NEMRC.

Administrative Updates

- SAM code renewal - Koran and Rebecca have been working on this. The account is still under Susan Jefferies name and contact information. Two notarized letters have been submitted and kicked back requiring further documentation. Koran will follow up tomorrow and try to gain information to connect the town account to the current board and staff contacts.
- Town website – The WordPress template needs updating. The template is old and can no longer support key security updates that are recommended. Rebecca can dedicate time to switching the site to a current template. She estimates 3-5 hours of time with a consultant to ensure back-end compatibility and a smooth transition of all the archive files.

Town communications

The board discussed internal staff issues. Board members are working with staff to adjust hours to best meet the public's needs and ensure staff access to town records for research.

SB concerns

The board received information regarding a class action suit regarding opioid use/abuse in the State of Vermont. State Attorney TJ Donovan recommended that town's participate in the class action suit.

The Selectboard agreed that the town would not "opt out" and therefore will participate in the class action suit.

Town buildings

Snow removal – Pete Antos-Ketcham responded to the request for bids. He will follow up with the Town Clerk and Treasurer for the appropriate waiver and paperwork.

Minutes of 10/15/19

Review postponed until next meeting.

Back up power for Town Office

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to approve the bid from Jackman's of Bristol for a 11 kW propane generator with cold weather kit, materials, installation. Nancy Boss 2nd. The purchase is not to exceed \$8000.

[Bills/Orders](#)

Motion to approve the orders as presented by the Treasurer: Eric Cota moved, Greg Hahr 2nd
Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn at 8:43 p.m.: Keegan Tierney moved, Nancy Boss 2nd.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Selectboard Assistant

Next meetings:

11/12/19 – special meeting re: budget planning

11/19/19 – next regularly scheduled meeting

DRAFT