

**Town of Starksboro
Selectboard Meeting minutes
February 6, 2018
UNAPPROVED**

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

Unable to attend: Peter Marsh

Visitors present: Tom Estey, Brad Johnson

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

Road Foreman's report – Tom Estey

- A new laptop was purchased for the garage along with Microsoft Office 365
- Overweight permits have come in
- Tony Porter asked Tom to describe the Brown Hill project so that all Board members informed prior to the conversation with Brad Johnson. Tom recommended a berm many years ago. There are a couple points to look at regarding culvert replacement: if replacement isn't large enough, then it will still overflow. If it is huge, then the road needs to be built up. A hydraulic study was done years ago.
- Many of these drainage problems have existed for years. Lewis Creek overflow causes flooding in various parts of town as well.

Minutes of January 6, 2018

Motion: Tony Porter moved and Keegan Tierney seconded the motion to **approve the minutes of 1/6/18. Vote:** All in favor

Brown Hill Road Drainage Issues

Brad Johnson, resident of Brown Hill Road, requested to speak with the Selectboard and road crew regarding the status of draining and flooding issues at the base of the road. Recent storms have produced water backup that has flooded the Johnsons' yard and basement causing damage to the interior and appliances. (See accompanying letter submitted by Brad Johnson.)

- This recent flooding on 1/12/18 has been the third significant event on Brown Hill making the road impassable.
- Storm water comes down the hollow and water has nowhere to go and ends up in the Johnsons' basement causing damage to their property (aside from safety issues due to washout) It was more significant when it happened in January because the furnace was on (was hot and it cracked when contact with cold water occurred). Family was out of regular heat.
- After the event, Brad contacted Tyler at East Engineering based on Jason Barnard's recommendation. It will take several actions to deal with the situation on Brown Hill. Some are to be addressed by the homeowners with the culvert replacement to be the town's responsibility.
- Three main requests from the Johnsons:
 - A commitment to mediating the problem
 - Conduct a study of the size of the structure and ask VTrans to come in and do a study to establish what would be required
 - Depending on the timeline of the town's role, to replace or add to the discharge capacity (15" culvert too small) what can be put in now until the "real" fix is in

- Tom Estey's response: Tom's history of the culvert: put in in the 90s; was a hydraulic study at that time; then things were sized for 25-yr storm; now climate is changing; 1998 was the first FEMA event and since then we've had 10.
- In the past, Tom suggested to Brad putting in a berm. Tom does think the culvert can be upsized; and recommends a squash culvert (that's what the 6x9 is) which will allow a lot more water discharge flow than round culvert.
- The top of the culvert is higher than the basement. If an earth berm were installed, water would be more likely to go over the road instead of into the basement.
- Tom expects it will require a box culvert (like Ben Roberts – that one is 12x17) High costs.
- Brad says there is a natural channel that moves through when the water gets high. Flooding happens up to the apple trees/tree house – flooding doesn't affect their raised bed up there (towards Adsits)
- S. Jefferies: It seems that there are some options that are in the landowners' control--the berm, landscaping, flood doors.
- T. Porter: Town wants to be conscious of where the water will be dumped out because the area is a watershed. We need to be attentive to storm water run off in cases like this.
- K. Tierney: To summarize,
 - Yes, the town will replace the smaller culvert soon.
 - Johnsons will put in a berm and landscaping to help manage the water flow.
 - Yes, can do the study – could result in a larger construction by their house
- T. Estey hopes this will mediate the problems to a reasonable point until we know what the long-term solution is.
- The Johnsons are researching flood doors and flood protection for windows. They replaced the boiler with a wall-hung propane water heater and propane heat pump.
- T. Porter asked Tom to take photos to determine if placement is good for culvert(s) and berm.
- Circa 1984-87: installed corrugated culvert
- S. Jefferies also mentioned the various items that will be addressed by the Hazard Mitigation plan that is currently under review.
- K. Tierney said that Greg Orvis put flood doors on the Burnham Hall basement in Lincoln and they have worked very well to mitigate any flooding there. (Hall is on the river bank.)

Action steps:

1. 4ft squashed culvert to be installed (No permit needed from ANR)
2. Suggested sandbags for short term as the culvert can't be put in until spring
3. Tom will contact VTrans for new study (probably won't receive a response until the end of summer/fall) (Rebecca to put reminder on calendar for Tom to follow up)

Hazard Mitigation Plan review

The Selectboard received copies and will review in detail for the next meeting. The Planning Commission has reviewed and provided a few recommendations for the final draft.

- Review at next meeting and finalize

PACIF grant app

Gather information for possible requests from the road crew, emergency management crew, and town office.

- Bring information to the 2/20/18 meeting for discussion.
- Create plan for grant application process.

Budget and financials – Susan

After the auditors completed the review of the final proposed budget, they discovered that there is a surplus in the emergency fund. The Selectboard will offer an amendment to the budget to propose

applying a portion of funds to purchase the NEMRC accounting software and the remainder to reducing the proposed budget. The town auditors have recommended the change to this software. Susan Jefferies and Celine Coon met with an employee from the Town of Lincoln who uses this system and it is highly recommended. NEMRC is already used by the listers for tax purposes so the system would integrate well.

Conservation Commission update

The Selectboard received the resignation of Matt Witten from the Conservation Commission with regret. They expressed thanks for his years of service to the town.

Motion: Tony Porter moved and Keegan Tierney seconded the motion to accept the resignation of Matt Witten from the Conservation Commission. **Vote:** All in favor

Energy Committee discussion

Digger Faesy and Jeff Dunham attended to present the proposal for the formation of a Town Energy Committee. They met with the selectboard over a month ago and have now created a mission statement and proposed scope of work.

The group researched various models for structure and would prefer a formal relationship rather than an *ad hoc* group through another committee. The group thinks this will offer more standing in public meetings and forums. The group understands that this structure means the committee must abide by public meeting law and includes posting of agendas, minutes, and warnings. There are 5 people committed to serving on the committee. The group has already begun having an impact in the school district which has established an energy forum to look at district-wide energy issues.

S. Jefferies noted that some of the proposed areas of work will require the Energy Committee to collaborate directly with other boards to achieve outcomes. K. Cousino asked if the group anticipates any work in the areas of policy, regulations, or liability issues. S. Jefferies explained that the committee might find itself in a position where monetary expenditures would be needed, and/or a situation might have a liability issue. Group liability coverage may be needed. All grants need to be funneled through the Town and would need the Selectboard to sign grant applications and be involved in grant administration. There could be a SB member designated to sign/work with the committee on a grant. Money usually comes to the town and then disbursement of funds occurs through the Town Treasurer. The committee might consider making a request for the next budget cycle for a line item for the Energy Committee's work. (Some grants require matching funds.)

The group proposed starting with 5 members and recommended people for appointment. There should also be 1-2 alternates appointed to ensure there is always a quorum for votes and decisions. The only caveat is that if an alternate starts in a decision, s/he must continue to the completion of that discussion and/or vote.

The Selectboard recommended using a staggered term structure to ensure continuity. The committee will have: 2 – 2 yr terms, 2 – 3 yr terms; 1 – 1 yr term. The group will decide amongst themselves the terms and will notify the SB of final decision.

At town meeting, the Selectboard suggests bringing up the committee formation during “other business.” That time is designated for nonbinding business.

Motion: Keegan Tierney moved to **authorize the formation of an Energy Committee** as described in proposal with the *addition* of “financial responsibility” regarding items to be discussed with the Selectboard. Koran Cousino seconded the motion. **Vote:** All in favor

[“For any policy, regulations or liability issues we address, these will be run by the Select Board before any action is taken.”]

Motion: Tony Porter moved and Keegan Tierney seconded the motion to **appoint five individuals as members** of the Energy Committee with term length and election cycle to be determined by the committee. **Vote:** All in favor

Committee Members: Digger Faesy, Jeff Dunham, Pete Antos-Ketcham, Megan Nedzinski, and Phil Mosenthal

VT EMS ICS100 training

One person on the board must be trained and is necessary requirement to qualify for funds. Tony Porter must receive the training for the fire department anyway and it can be done online. The Incident Command System is used a lot in Addison County.

Motion: Tony Porter moved and Keegan Tierney seconded the motion **to approve the bills and orders** as presented. **Vote:** All in favor.

Old business updates:

T. Porter spoke with Robert Turner regarding the sugarbush lease in the town forest. David Allen says he has roughly 2000 or 2,100 taps. An informal count was done last year. The lease expired quite a while ago and needs to be rewritten. All money that's generated goes to a fund for the projects that occur in the town forest. The Selectboard should be consulted for any disbursement of funds.

- Need confirm federal gov't tap lease rate for comparison.
- R. Turner recommends scheduling another timber inventory and another round of harvesting.
- It would be helpful to have the next tap count completed by a licensed forester.

Motion to adjourn: Tony Porter moved, Keegan Tierney seconded. **Vote:** All in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Selectboard Assistant

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at the Town Office

Approved: _____