

Town of Royalton
Selectboard Meeting Minutes DRAFT
3/26/2024 6:30 PM
Virtual / In-person Meeting

Royalton Selectboard: Stuart Levasseur, Tim Murphy, John Dumville, Patrick Dakin, Nell Gwin

Town Staff & Committee Members: Victoria Paquin (Town Administrator), Rita Hull (Treasurer), Geo Honigford (Planning Commission), Simon Jarmy (Wastewater Operator), Brad Salzmann (Emergency management Director)

Public: Jo Levasseur, Nando Jaramillo (Moon & Stars)

Approve the Agenda: John moved to approve the agenda with the addition of discussion of congressional earmarks and the community betterment fund. Patrick seconded and the motion carried.

Public Comment: A resident who is looking to purchase a house on South Street asked why a prior request for sewer line extension was denied. It was noted that we would be speaking about the sewer in that area as an upcoming agenda item.

Jo Levasseur requested that the Trustees of Public funds produce their meeting minutes since March of 2021 which was the last date that minutes were filed with the clerk. John Dumville, who is a trustee, noted that this was the last time that the trustees met. Jo noted that this is concerning, because a request was made to Wells Fargo to transfer funds from two cemetery trusts to the town's accounts for the operation of the cemeteries. There was some discussion on the procedure for requesting transfer of funds. John said he made no such request. Stuart suggested that conversations be had with Wells Fargo & the committees to resolve the issue.

Wastewater Treatment: Simon Jarmy, wastewater operator, was introduced to the new members of the board. Discussion was had on the possibility of extending the sewer line from its current terminus on Pleasant St. up to the bottom of Oxbow Rd & South St. There was discussion on the feasibility of such an extension and the benefit to the town. Victoria expressed that the board should keep in mind that the sewer is an enterprise system and that the sewer users would need to bear the cost of such an expansion. There is a lot of discussion and time involved in such a project, and it would not be a fix for systems that are currently failed. Simon noted that Aldrich & Elliot has been the engineer for prior wastewater projects and would be the one to contact to discover if this has been previously engineered. Tim will speak with them to determine if such a plan exists.

Farmland Lease: Nando Jaramillo was present on behalf of Moon & Stars to discuss the three year lease of the farmland of the ag land at the carpenter lot. The lease terms were briefly discussed including the possibility that the recreation fields would be moved from Carpenter Field over to the Town Office property due to Carpenter Field's propensity to flood. Nando expressed concern about the feasibility of a three year lease for the program that he intended for the field. Patrick and Stuart will meet with Nando and his board to discuss the lease further.

Planning Commission: Geo requested that the board appoint Emily Simpson to the planning commission to fill a vacancy left by Nell Gwin. John moved to appoint Emily to the planning commission. Nell seconds and the motion carries.

Geo requested that the board support the draft flood hazard ordinance and allow the planning commission to schedule public meetings. John moves to support the flood hazard ordinance. Tim seconds. Discussion included enforcement of the ordinance, and the new structure of having a development review board. Victoria suggests that bulk mailing could be used to notify residents of such a meeting & that we might consider a venue bigger than the academy building. The motion carried.

Royalton Emergency Management: Brad indicated that there is concern about increased traffic volume for the solar eclipse. Reminded all to wear solar eclipse viewing glasses to observe the eclipse.

Brad has developed a draft MOU for sharing facilities, Library, a couple churches, for utilizing those spaces as shelter during an emergency. He shared a draft with the board to review.

Brad informed the board that the Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) needs to be revised and submitted to the state by May 1. This is a document that is completed every year. Brad will have the document available for the board to review ahead of the last meeting in April.

Brad reports that Emergency Management is considering developing a logo. The board was generally supportive of such a plan.

Highway Department: Tim has reviewed & approved overweight permits.

The board reviewed driveway access permit 24-01. Demi has reviewed, it is a request to replace a culvert on an existing driveway. John moved to approve, Tim seconded and the motion carried.

Victoria reports that she requested three quotes from engineers to develop the RFP for North Rd. One quote was received from Jon Harrington. Tim moved to accept the quote. Patrick seconds and the motion carries. Victoria also notes that we will need a vote for indebtedness for this project & requested permission from the board to speak with a lawyer and get started on the paperwork needed with the hope to hold the vote on August 2nd with the primaries.

Tim reports that the radiator on the grader is broken, we have ordered a replacement radiator that has not yet been delivered. This year has been particularly hard on the equipment.

Victoria reports that there is a FEMA disaster declaration for December 2023. Victoria notes that we were not expecting this to be a disaster declaration and do not have the level of documentation that we had for July. Victoria is willing to work on developing this, but it will take her time to do so. She asked the board whether they would like to proceed with putting together the project but cannot guarantee how much reimbursement would be received.

Nell notes that we have talked about a road committee and would like to make sure that we don't let that fall to the side. There was some discussion on who would comprise such a committee.

Royalton Transfer Station: Victoria notes that our recertification has been submitted to the state. Tim notes that the engineer has come by to certify the tipping building as part of that process. The rest of the items for the transfer station were tabled for a later meeting.

Buildings & Grounds: Walter reports that the sidewalk tractor needs repair. There are a number of essential components that need to be fixed. Repair cost is around \$1,500. Discussion on whether it was worthwhile to repair the tractor or considering purchasing a new piece of equipment. It was noted that a different piece of equipment will be needed to navigate the new sidewalk layout on Chelsea St when that project is complete. The Town of Sharon contracts their sidewalk work, which is something that Royalton might consider. Walter also suggested that we should consider hiring a full time buildings and grounds person to take over some of the maintenance that we currently contract out – mowing, plowing & shoveling, janitorial services. It was determined to proceed with repairing the existing tractor for the time being.

ARPA Fund Designation: Victoria reports that the treasury has clarified that ARPA funds are considered designated when there is a contract for their expenditure, not just a motion by the board to utilize them for a specific purpose. This must be done by December of this year. There was some discussion on what the town has left for available funds and what they can be used for. We will revisit this discussion at a later meeting.

Alcohol Catering Permit: John moved to approve the catering permit for the coop's event on the green. Tim seconded and the motion carried.

Approval of Warrants: The warrants were reviewed and approved.

Approval of Minutes: Tim moved to approve the minutes. Patrick seconded and the motion carried.

Other / Old Business: The board signed the loan closing paperwork for the Vermont Bond Bank loan.

It was noted that the community nurse would like to speak with the board. Stuart said they will be at the next meeting.

Patrick reports that he has spoken with the State about the Act 250 permit. An extension is not available, it will need to be a new application for a permit including flood plain, forest management, engineering etc.

John Dumville notes that the Rescue Squad has received congressionally designated spending for their building & suggests that the town apply for one for the academy building. The due date is approaching soon.

The law school has requested that we designate \$20,000 each year for the next two years to the rescue squad building. John moves to designate \$40,000 from the community betterment fund to the project. Patrick seconded. Nell asked how much was in the betterment fund – roughly \$110,000 at

present, we have been conservative with it incase extras are needed for the sidewalk project. VLGS contributes \$40,000 per year to the fund under our new agreement. The motion carried.

Patrick offers to help with the revision to the personnel policy. Stuart says he has a few additions also. A draft should be available in a few weeks.

Stuart reminds the board that they should avoid emailing around opinions as this can be a violation of open meeting law. He also noted that emails are public record, but that social media cannot be captured as part of the record since there is no way to record that. It was recommend that anything posted to social media should be limited to sharing information that is available on the town's official website. Officials should not be making public comments utilizing social media. Stuart also noted the need for officials to add a disclaimer that they are posting their personal opinion should they chose to do so, but that it is not recommended.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Paquin
Royalton Town Administrator