

Wolcott Selectboard Meeting
Minutes
May 19, 2021

Zoom meeting: 6:00 p.m.

All Minutes are draft until approved by the Selectboard
Please see future Minutes for approval of these Minutes

Present: Linda Martin, Kurt Klein, Richard Lee, Allen Carpenter,
Kurt Billings (late)
Employees: Randall Szott, Dillan Cafferky, Deb Klein
Presenter: Kate Wanner, Project Manager, The Trust for Public Land
Guests: Jack Travelstead, Northern Rivers Land Trust (NRLT); Susan Houston,
NRLT; Laurie Gullion, NRLT
Public: Matt Foster, Dolan Patrick
Reporter: Doug McClure, *Hardwick Gazette*

Martin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Amendments to the Agenda: Martin added Mailbox Issue to New Business.

Approve Minutes of May 5, 2021: Motion by Klein to approve the Minutes of May 5, 2021.
Seconded by Carpenter. Discussion: None. Voting: 3 in favor, Lee abstain. Motion carried.

Comments from the Community: None.

Highway Department

Driveway Permits: Cafferky approved three driveway permits: 1) William Pickens on Elmore Pond Road; 2) Ben Trevits on West Hill; and 3) Patricia McCuen on Cross Road. The McCuen property will actually have two driveways, as it is more like a drive through. A power line will run under the road. Cafferky is working with the contractor regarding special requirements. Motion by Klein to accept the three approved Driveway Permits for Pickens, Trevits, and McCuen.
Seconded by Lee. Voting: All 4 in favor.

Paving Bids: Cafferky reported that two paving bids were received. The bid from SD Paving was priced per job with the lowest cost at \$79.00 per ton. The bid from Pike Industries was consistently priced at \$69.85 per ton. Since the Town would be paying by the ton, Cafferky recommended the bid from Pike Industries be accepted. There are three proposed projects. The road crew will start with the top part of East Hill Road. There is a balance of \$46,000 in the paving budget from last year. Martin reminded Cafferty of the safety audit recommendation for raising the road a bit. Motion by Klein to accept the paving bid from Pike Industries at \$69.85 per ton. Seconded by Lee. Voting: All 5 in favor.

Sand bids: Sand bids had been discussed at prior Selectboard meetings. Motion by Klein to accept the sand bid from Gravel Construction for one year. Seconded by Lee. Voting: All 5 in favor. Cafferky stated the road crew has started trucking sand based on this year's budget.

Town Forest Update Presentation: Kate Wanner, Project Manager with The Trust for Public Land was introduced. Also present from Northern Rivers Land Trust were: Jack Travelstead; Susan Houston, and Laurie Gullion. To follow up from a previous presentation to the board, Wanner visited several different parcels that are walkable from the elementary school and the Town center as potential sites for a Town Forest. Two landowners have expressed interest in selling land for this purpose. A site walk was conducted May 14 with representatives from the school and the Town.

Wanner presented a slide show starting with a list of the many potential benefits a Town Forest would provide to the Wolcott Community. Because of the land's close proximity to the elementary school, another benefit would be increased educational opportunities. Wanner gave the board an overview of case studies of economic benefits of community forests around the country. One example provided was the Catamount Community Forest in Williston, and another was the Barre Town Forest. While there would be some restrictions placed on the land, there would still be a multitude of uses that would be allowed, with Selectboard approval. Wanner reviewed for the board potential costs for the project based on acreage of either 313 acres, or 423 acres. She also identified potential funding sources.

Foster stated he participated in the site walk. On behalf of the school, he stated the level of interest is very high. Some board members expressed concern about the potential cost to the Town, depending upon funding sources. The full board agreed to have Wanner move forward on the project. The board will meet with various Town Committees and the School Board to get ideas and determine the level of support. Wanner will put together a summary for that purpose. Another site walk will be scheduled so that more people may participate. A survey can be prepared for the community to gauge the level of enthusiasm for the project.

Town Administrator's Report: Szott highlighted some of the work he has been doing:

- Participated in the site visit of the possible Town Forest land.
- Attended a Downtown and Village Center webinar.
- Participated in a Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) Advocacy Chat.
- Attended VLCT COVID recovery funds webinar.
- Working on the Emergency Management Plan for Selectboard approval.

New Business

Fireworks Permit: The Town received an application seeking a fireworks permit. It was brought to the boards attention that the Vermont Supreme Court had issued an opinion stating it is illegal for a Selectboard to issue a permit for consumer fireworks. In Vermont, only public fireworks displays are permitted. Based upon the Court's clarification of State law, the public will need to be informed of this change in practice. There should be a posting on Front Porch Forum, as well as other areas for those without internet. Motion by Martin to deny the request for a fireworks permit based upon the Vermont Supreme Court's issued decision that it is illegal

for the Selectboard to issue a consumer fireworks permit. Seconded by Lee. Voting: All 5 in favor. The applicant will be notified of the board's decision.

Donation to Town: An individual who had rented chairs from Town Hall submitted to the Town a check for \$100 to cover the \$35 rental fee with the balance serving as a donation. The board agreed the full \$100 should be considered Town Hall income.

Possible Migration of Town Website to a .gov Domain: The Vermont Secretary of State's Office issued a letter indicating Town's can migrate from a .org to .gov if they choose. Following a lengthy discussion, it was determined there is no increase in security, or any other benefit.

Transfer Station Hours & Fees: Klein reported that the Transfer Station continues to operate in the red. Although receipts are steady, they are lower than they need to be. The addition of the cardboard container is a big benefit, but it does add to costs. The Department of Correction worker may start in June or early July. Klein said the board may want to consider reopening on Sundays, or increase the bag fees. Lee suggested the board start by going back to the Saturday and Sunday schedule before raising prices. Klein will put together a proposed schedule the board can consider at the next meeting.

Klein reported that the Litter Committee received a letter from Andy Duff about junk and garbage along the Lamoille River. Duff and some companions will volunteer to collect the junk but are seeking financial assistance for proper disposal. The Litter Committee suggested the board allow the junk and garbage be taken to the Transfer Station to be disposed of that way. Martin will check with organizations who may help financially. Matter tabled to the June 2 meeting.

Law Enforcement Committee: Ryan Bjerke has been speaking with the Sheriff as a member of the Committee. It was suggested there be a survey of the Selectboard, and the community at large, to determine primary concerns with contracted police services. Board members will submit their concerns to Klein, who will then work with Szott on creating a Wolcott only survey to determine issues important to the community.

In Person Meetings & Town COVID Directives: The board determined that the Town Office will remain open to the public, but only one person at a time may be at the window. The mask requirement, along with social distancing for the public, remains. Employees who have been fully vaccinated need not wear a mask when not working directly with the public. This applies to the Library as well. The Selectboard will meet in person starting with the June 2 meeting. Public access to the meetings will be restricted to Zoom or phone-in.

Unfinished Business

Rail Trail ROW Update: The Attorney General's Office is reviewing the document.

Personnel Policy Revision: The matter was tabled to a future meeting.

Asset Management Plan: As part of the board's asset management plan, the board will begin visiting Town properties. The board agreed to tour the old Schoolhouse at the beginning of the June 2 meeting. The public may also attend the tour.

Harris + Allen, Gardner, and Tallman Deeds (Brook Rd.): Being resolved.

Mailbox Issue: It was brought to the board's attention that a taxpayer did not pay their tax bill in full, stating they were deducting from their taxes the cost of two mailboxes, which they maintain the road crew hit with the plow. Cafferky has talked with the individual. The mailbox is in the right-of-way. The deduction from the tax bill is unacceptable. The Town has a mailbox policy in place. The taxpayer will be considered delinquent in their taxes.

Executive Session: Motion by Lee to enter executive session to discuss personnel issues.
Seconded by Klein. Voting: All 5 in favor. The board entered executive session at 8:05 p.m.

No action was taken. The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Klein

Next regularly scheduled meeting - June 2, 2021