SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
OF JANUARY 17, 2023

Members: Bob Beeman, Judy Bickford, Brian Kellogg, Don McDowell*, Jessica Graham

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Eric Dodge, Town Administrator; Judi Alberi, Administrator's Assistant; Kevin Barrows, Highway Superintendent; Dennis DiGregorio, Fire Chief; Scott Longe, Foreman; Matt Friedrich, Foreman; Jason Luneau, Police Chief; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Paula Beattie, Human Resources Director; Sara Haskins, Town Clerk/Treasurer; Stacey Ferriman, Assistant Finance Director

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS:Susan Sinnott, Gary Sinnott, Joanne Davis, Nancy Pritchard, Tom Cloutier, Jeff McCarthy, Lisa Hawthorne, Barry Russo, Martin Green, Paul Hertz, James Rauchman, Laura Green, Kristin Marriett, Shiela Tarbox, Tony Cote, Alan Ward, Bonita Griswold,Todd Pinkham, Laura Streets, Robert Bortree, Leeward Labier, Donna Rothammer, Julie Nepveu*, Denis Nepveu*, David Ring*, Ed Lowentown*, Cathy Chaffee*, Kerrie Lohr*, Etienne Hancock*, Steven Foster*

**participating via Zoom*

CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER
Bob Beeman called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 6PM at the Tegu Building.

AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS
None

APPROVE MINUTES

1. **Approve minutes of 1-3-23**
   Motion made by Brian Kellogg to approve the minutes of January 3, 2023 with amendments. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford . Motion carried. (4/0)

   Don McDowell requested changes to the January 3, 2023 minutes as follows:
   Under Selectboard concerns add Vermont Electric Co-Op to the thanks given to Morrisville Water & Light.

   Jess Graham arrived after the minutes were approved.

LIQUOR CONTROL
None

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Review draft Annual Town Meeting warning**

   Sara Haskins presented the Selectboard with a draft warning for the 2023 Annual Town Meeting to review. The warning cannot be finalized yet as the deadline to submit petitions is 4:00 PM on Thursday, January 19, 2023. On the draft warning, there is currently one article to elect Selectboard members by Australian Ballot and all other articles are traditional floor votes. The Board briefly discussed the articles for social service appropriations and the merging of two reserve funds. Sara also shared model language for five articles that the Board can use to put articles on the warning to move the budget, officers or public questions to Australian ballot and/or to change the date and time of annual town meeting. She informed the Board that she is aware of a petition being circulated to add an article to move the budget questions to Australian Ballot but it has not yet been submitted. Questions regarding moving to Australian Ballot can only be voted on at a floor meeting and would go into effect for the following year. There is pending legislation (H42) that has passed the House and is now in the Senate that would enable a Selectboard to vote to continue the emergency legislation moving to all Australian Ballot for one more year. The Board discussed if H42 is enacted, moving to all Australian Ballot for the 2023 Annual Town Meeting. They also discussed adding an article to move Town Meeting to the Saturday before or adding articles to moving to Australian Ballot for the budget or all articles. The Board will finalize the warning at a special meeting on Monday, January 30, 2023.

2. **Discuss mailing ballots for March 7, 2023 Annual Town Meeting**

   Sara Haskins shared that a citizen has requested that all active voters be mailed their ballots for the 2023 annual town meeting. Currently, there is only the election of Selectboard members on the Australian Ballot. If the emergency legislation is passed and the Selectboard votes to move to adopt it, then all articles will be by Australian Ballot for the 2023 Annual Town Meeting. Rough estimates for costs to mail all voters a ballot with return postage is $11,000, to mail all voters a ballot without return postage is $9,000 and to mail voters by request only based on 300 requests is $3,000.

   After much discussion, the Selectboard had various opinions regarding the mailing of ballots.

   Motion made by Don McDowell to mail out ballots to all registered voters if H42 bill passes. Motion seconded by Jess Graham. Motion carried. (3/2) Bob Beeman and Judy Bickford opposed.

3. **Accept Steven Foster's resignation from Planning Council**

   Motion made by Brian Kellogg to accept the resignation of Steven Foster from the Planning Council with thanks. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried (5/0).

4. **Accept Laura Streets resignation from the Development Review Board**

   Motion made by Brian Kellogg to accept the resignation of Laura Streets from the Development Review Board with thanks. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried (5/0).

   Laura Streets thanks everyone.

5. **Discuss moratorium on housing**

   Nancy Pritchard attended the meeting to ask if there is a formal process for a new construction moratorium? A petition would need to be filed with the town clerks office and then a special meeting would be held.

   Kerrie Lohr, Advancement & Communications Director for Lamoille Housing Partnership joined the meeting via zoom to talk about the housing needs of the county. Affordable housing is needed along

with jobs for people that live,work, and play in Morristown/Morrisville. Many properties are dual income affordable but much more difficult for single parents.

6. **Discuss Planning Council request to form a housing committee**

Town Plan year one objective (Selectboard) is creating a housing committee that is charged with promoting the creation of all forms of new housing, including new affordable housing, and suggesting what incentives might be offered to help developers secure more housing. The Chair for Planning Council, Eitenne Hancock, attended the meeting via zoom to discuss ideas for a housing committee creation. Eitenne understands that staffing could be an issue, as the town employees are already carrying a large load of work. Steven Foster added to the conversation that new housing is not necessarily the goal but identifying areas and opportunities along with making recommendations.

Folks interested in serving on a housing committee should email admin@morristownvt.org.. An ad will be placed in News & Citizen, the town website and the front porch forum.

Motion made by Jess Graham to create a housing committee with 5 members for 6 months to identify areas and opportunities for housing and make recommendations to the Selectboard. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried. (5/0)

7. **Discuss Billing for paramedic intercept**

Morristown EMS (MEMS) provides Paramedic Intercept services, which are ALS services provided by MEMS. This type of service is most often provided for emergency ambulance transport, in which a local volunteer ambulance that can provide only basic life support (BLS) level of service is dispatched to transport a patient. MEMS has 6 paramedics and is often dispatched to other towns due to the quality of MEMS personnel for paramedic intercept. The requesting agency can bill for a higher level of service when MEMS provides paramedics. Bill Mapes, EMS Chief, provided the following data: 2021 a total of 21 intercepts and in 2022 a total of 39 intercepts. Requesting to bill agencies that are requesting paramedic intercept $250 per incident.

Motion made by Judy Bickford authorizing Morristown Finance Department to bill outside communities that request Paramedic Intercept $250 per incident. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried. (5/0)

8. **Discuss Elmore EMS subscription**

Eric Dodge attended the Elmore Selectboard meeting recently requesting an increase in the cost of service coverage for Elmore ambulance service.Historically, there hasn't been an increase over the past four years. A suggested percentage increase of $9,000 which represents approximately a 35% increase. The Elmore Selectboard has offered to pay an additional sum of $4,500 for 2023/2024 year and another increase of $4,500 for 2024/2025 year totaling the requested $9,000 increase.

Motion made by Judy Bickford to accept $30,500 from the Town of Elmore for 2023/2024 and $35,000 for 2024/2025. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried. (5/0)

9. **Review highway mileage certificate**

   Motion made by Brian Kellogg to approve and sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried. (5/0)

10. **Discuss Class 4 road policy**

    There have been several requests to upgrade class 4 roads in Morristown/Morrisville. The current road policy does not address the expectations for any upgrades. After consulting the town attorney, a working draft has been developed as a starting point. A few residents that live on class 4 roads attended the meeting this evening, in person and via zoom, to weigh in on their thoughts. A few concerns such as: cost prohibitive, burdensome, restrictive were heard by the Selectboard. More work will be done to revamp the current road policy that will protect the town and citizens.

    Motion made by Don McDowell to table this item for now. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried. (5/0)

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Finalize 2023-2024 Budget**

   After careful consideration, the Selectboard will approve the budget that allows for another police officer, the full-time recreation coordinator and drop the need for a Zoning Assistant. The Selectboard would like to allocate money in the amount of $5000 for hiring someone to run zoom and help with minutes for the Planning Council and Development Review Board. The Selectboard cannot mandate Zoom to be used by other boards but monies can be allocated for assistance.

   Motion made by Jess Graham to accept the budget without a Zoning Assistant, add $5,000 for zoom operator/ minute taker, and reduce the revenue by $4,500 for the Elmore EMS Subscription. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried. (5/0)

APPROVE WARRANTS

Motion made by Brian Kellogg to approve the warrants. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried. (5/0)

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

- Construction for Phase II is going great.
- The Town office staff attended zoom training for First Amendment Audit. Public space video tapping is not illegal and folks videotaping are posting on social media.
- Victoria Hellwig of LCPC met with Eric to talk about energy efficiency grant opportunities.
- Judy Bickford recently asked Eric about warming centers in the area in the event of severe weather. Morrisville Fire Dept, Peoples Academy, National Guard Armory were all mentioned as possibilities.

SELECTBOARD CONCERNS

Judy Bickford None

Jess Graham announced she would not be running for re-election. Hope to return in the future to serve the community.

Brian Kellogg none

Don McDowell gave thanks to Sara for her work tonight regarding the upcoming town meeting and to Tina for preparing the budget with many revisions. Don departed at 9:05pm

Bob Beeman none

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

The community concerns were weaved in and out during the meeting as folks are concerned about the budget being voted on in March. Other concerns around housing and parking were mentioned.
A quote mentioned tonight captured the overwhelming concerns expressed: Vermont's biggest liability is we have not changed with the times. Vermont's biggest asset is we have not changed with the times.

Sara Haskins has canceled the tax sale for 1/19/23 as all taxes have been paid.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

ADJOURN

Motion made by Judy Bickford to adjourn. Motion seconded by Jess Graham. Motion carried. (5/0)

Meeting adjourned at 9:33pm
Submitted and filed this January 20, 2023 Amended February 10, 2023 .
Judi Alberi, Scribe

Please note all minutes are in Draft form and are subject to approval at the next Selectboard meeting.