



SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21, 2023

Members: Judy Bickford, Brian Kellogg, Don McDowell, Jessica Graham

Absent: Bob Beeman

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Eric Dodge, Town Administrator; Judi Alberi, Administrator's Assistant; Kevin Barrows, Highway Superintendent; Jason Luneau, Police Chief; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Paula Beattie*, Human Resources Director; Sara Haskins, Town Clerk/Treasurer; Stacey Ferriman*, Assistant Finance Director; Bill Mapes*, EMS Chief; Todd Thomas*, Planning/Zoning Director

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Yvonne Lory, Bob Bortree, Tom Cloutier, Martin Green, Laura Green, Barry Russo, Sheila Tarbox, Yvette Mason, Travis Sabataso, Steve Foster, Cathy Chaffee*, Tony Cote, Ed Loewenton*

**participating via Zoom*

CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

Judy Bickford called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 6:05PM at the Tegu Building.

AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

Remove under new business item 3 & 4:

Approve Summer Recreation job description

Approve Summer Camp Staff manual

Move Item 5, Review engineer's construction plan for Walton Rd. Bridge to the last item in new business.

APPROVE MINUTES

1. Approve minutes 2-6-23

Motion made by Brian Kellogg to approve the minutes of February 6, 2023 with amendments.

Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried. (4/0)

Under New Business Item 3: Add: Tim Magee shared with the Selectboard his desire to be a member of the Planning Council.

Under New Business Item 4: Add the word "they" to the last sentence "The Selectboard implied that they feel a oneway road"

Under Old Business Discuss Class 4 road policy paragraph 5 - note that Ken Grimes is not cutting down the trees.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Presentation Capstone Community Action - Yvonne Lory

Yvonne Lory, representing Capstone Community Action, discussed the need for \$900 appropriation from the Town of Morristown residents. Capstone relies on funding in order to improve the lives of Vermonters in need by providing opportunities, education, and vital assistance. In 2022 Capstone served 10,950 individuals in 6,414 Vermont households. Programs and services are accessed by 300 households in Morristown, representing 448 individuals. During the pandemic, Capstone provided hot spot assistance for the internet to families that needed to access remote learning for educational purposes and increased the amount of meals that were provided. The many different social services work in the same circles to avoid duplication yet provide services when needed. Capstone appreciates the generous support!

2. Discuss canceling March 6th SB Meeting due to elections

Due to the elections on March 7th the Selectboard has decided to cancel the March 6th meeting so that the town meeting room can be prepared for elections. Possibly reschedule the meeting to March 13th. Don McDowell indicated that he cannot be at the March 13th meeting and would like to stay on as liaison to the Police Department.

Motion made by Don McDowell to cancel the Selectboard Meeting scheduled for March 6th, 2023 and authorize the Selectboard Chair to sign the warrants. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried (4/0).

3. Approve Summer Recreation Job Description

Delete

4. Approve Summer Camp Staff Manual

Deleted

5. Gordon Lane partial road name change (to Lower Gordon Lane)

There is a request to change the one-way section of Gordon Lane to Lower Gordon Lane. The name of the two-way section of Gordon Lane will remain unchanged. This name change lets everyone easily distinguish the one-way section of road from Gordon Lane, which already exists as a two-way road. Most importantly, this change eliminates a lot of potential future confusion by having two identically named intersections of Gordon Lane and Jersey Heights within 500 feet of each other.

Motion made by Brian Kellogg to change the one way section of Gordon Lane to Lower Gordon Lane. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried (4/0).

6. Appoint members to housing committee

The Town Plan Objective letter presented by the Planning Council in December requested the formation of a housing committee. After advertising for volunteers, many folks responded to the need and expressed their interest in serving. Todd Thomas has agreed to staff the housing committee and 7 other citizens would like to be considered: Steve Foster, Laura Streets, Yvette Mason, Robert Bortree, Judy Bickford, Donna Sherlaw, and Joshua Goldstein. Steve Foster spoke to the Selectboard about his excitement over getting a housing committee formed and taking part. The

Housing Committee will help with ideas and or policies to overcome the recent imbalance between housing supply and demand, with the goal of ensuring that housing in our community remains somewhat affordable.

Motion made by Don McDowell to appoint Steve Foster, Laura Street, Yvette Mason, Robert Bortree, Judy Bickford, Donna Sherlaw, and Joshua Goldstein to the Housing Committee. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried (4/0).

- a. **Steve Foster**
Laura Streets
Yvette Mason
Robert Bortree
Judy Bickford
Donna Sherlaw
Joshua Goldstein

7. Discuss Rural Violent Crime Reduction Initiative Grant

The Morristown Police Department has been working closely with Lamoille County Mental Health to have a mental health provider working with the police department. Chief Luneau is asking permission to apply for a grant to allow this relationship to continue. If this grant is not received, Chief Luneau will continue to look for other ways of funding this position through Lamoille County Mental Health.

Motion made by Don McDowell to show support for applying for this grant. Motion seconded by Briank Kellogg. Motion carried (4/0).

8. Review draft warning for Special Town Meeting on April 18, 2023

Sara Haskins discussed the draft warning for the Special Meeting on April 18th. In addition to the petition received to move all budget articles to the Australian ballot, the Selectboard can also choose to have all articles be voted on by Australian ballot, which would include all officers and public questions. If all articles pass, this would end the in-person Annual Town Meeting.

Motion made by Don McDowell to add articles to vote for all officers and public questions by Australian ballot to the April 18th Special Town Meeting warning. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried (4/0).

9. Review engineer's construction plan for Walton Rd. Bridge

Table this item until later.

OLD BUSINESS

None

APPROVE WARRANTS

Motion made by Jess Graham to approve the warrants. Motion seconded by Jess Graham. Motion carried. (4/0)

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

During the last Selectboard Meeting of Feb 6, 2023, Eric mentioned that the reappraisal that is finishing up will not affect taxes until the following year. That is incorrect. Eric spoke with the Town Assessor, Terri Sabens, and property values will be applied this 2023 - 2024 fiscal year.

Morristown Centennial Library had some condensation creating a musty odor. Servpro inspected the smell and condensation and recommended two dehumidifiers be purchased and placed in the basement. That has been done.

Sewer backed up here at the Town office building, County Plumbing came in and replaced cast iron plumbing in the basement. The plumbing has cast iron pipes going out to the manhole and at some point that will need to be replaced.

The total approved FEMA damages was \$495,529.60 of which FEMA paid \$430,271.34 and the State paid \$33,276.47. The balance of \$31,981.79 was paid by the town.

SELECTBOARD CONCERNS

Don McDowell wrote a letter to Planning Council for the Feb 14th Planning Council meeting regarding short-term rentals (STR). Previously he had suggested that STR be expanded and after much thought and more information he rescinds his suggestion. Yvonne Lory, Capstone did an excellent presentation. More social service organizations should give a 10-min presentation if they would like appropriations. Being only one year on the board, in the past, social services have done presentations and we will hopefully start that up again now that Covid threat is under control.

Jess Graham thanks everyone for supporting and teaching her the ins and outs of serving on the Selectboard. Thanks the community members for being involved and is excited about coming back as a community member to these meetings.

Brian Kellogg thanks all the employees and board members for all they do.

Judy Bickford - When Eric interviewed, he was not Judy's first choice. Very impressed with how he has performed and continues to do his job so well. Eric has done a great job. Judy expressed she is no longer reading things on Front Porch Forum (FPF) as she finds the news to be negative, false, and appalling.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Community concerns were expressed in regards to the budget and the reappraisal. Community members find it hard to vote on the budget when they do not know their home values. Sara Haskins tried to respond to some concerns regarding the re-appraisal.

Don reminded the audience that the budget started at over 40% and is now just over 28%. The department heads all presented their budget with explanations as to what is needed and why. Community members expressed concerns due to the Selectboard and the Town Administrator not having a financial background. Tina Sweet, Finance Director, is an expert in the field, such as our Human Resources Director, Police Chief, Town Clerk, Zoning Administrator and others who work for the town and we trust, which is why the Town hires these folks. The Selectboard and Town Administrator do not need to be the experts in all these fields to do their job and do a good job, trust these folks. It will cost the town more money to retrain folks than to keep these folks. Jess Graham will be missed as she was a "beacon in the dark" according to some community members. A community member feels our town is divided right now and that is sad.

A few folks ended the evening by complimenting some interactions they had with some staff members.

OTHER BUSINESS

Sara Haskins wants to let folks know that ballots have been mailed.

Thanks for all the help in getting envelopes stuffed and mailed.

1. Possible Executive Session

Motion made by Don McDowell to go into Executive Session because I find that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg Motion carried. (4/0)

Motion made by Don McDowell to go into Executive Session to discuss the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee subject to T1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3). To include the Town Administrator, Eric Dodge and HR PB Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg Motion carried. (4/0)

Motion made by Don McDowell to go into Executive Session because I find that premature general public knowledge of pending or probable civil litigation or prosecution, to which the public body is or may be party, will clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage by disclosing its negotiation strategy. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg Motion carried. (4/0)

Motion made by Don McDowell to go into executive session to discuss the pending or probable litigation or prosecution under the provisions of Title 1 section 313 (a) (1) of the Vermont Statutes, to include Town Administrator, Eric Dodge. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried. (4/0)

Motion made by Don McDowell to come out of executive session. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried. (4/0)

ADJOURN

Motion made by Don McDowell to adjourn. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried. (4/0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm

Submitted and filed this February 25, 2023

Judi Alberi, Scribe

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