



SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 6, 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; Todd Thomas, Planning/Zoning Administrator; Kevin Barrows, Highway Superintendent; Jason Luneau, Police Chief; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Paula Beattie, Human Resources Director; Sara Haskins, Town Clerk/Treasurer; Bill Mapes*, EMS Chief; Mitzi Fleming* Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer; Jason Kelley, Firefighter; Stacey Ferriman*, Assistant Finance Director.

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Tom Cloutier, Gary Nolan, Donnie Blake, Martin Green, Kristin Marriott, Barry Russo, Tom & Christy Snipp, Sheila Tarbox, Tony Cote, Susan Sinnott, Alexis Maizel, Alex Fonseca, Dan McLaughlin, Harper Phillips, Joe & Gayle Streeter, Lee Labier, John Mudgett*, Jill Mudgett*, Bonnie Dow*, Cathy Chaffee*, Josh Goldstein*, Etienne Hancock*, Tim Magee*, Mary Ann Wilson*, Zeph Bryant*, Ruth Rogers*

**participating via Zoom ** arrived late*

CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

Bob Beeman called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 6:05PM at the Tegu Building.

AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

NONE

APPROVE MINUTES

1. Approve Minutes 1-17-23

Motion made by Don McDowell to approve the minutes of January 17, 2023. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried (4/0) with amendments.

Don McDowell attended the meeting on 1-17-23 by Zoom and left at 9:05pm

2. Approve Minutes 1-26-23

Motion made by Brian Kellogg to approve the minutes of January 25, 2023 Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried (4/0)

3. Approve Minutes 1-30-23

Motion made by Don McDowell to approve the minutes of January 30, 2023. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried (4/0) with amendments.

The administration/staff and guests of the meeting should be updated to reflect the attendance sheet.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review FY 21/22 Audit with Auditors

Mudgett, Jennett & Krogh-Wisner, P.C. Certified Public Accountants - Town's auditors. John Mudgett and Bonnie Dow joined the meeting by Zoom. The auditors found the Town of Morristown to be well situated financially. Tina Sweet was well prepared for the auditors and did an excellent job. Bonnie enjoys working with Tina and appreciates that Tina reaches out when she has questions. All in all, the auditors were very pleased with the audit and had no substantial findings.

2. Appoint either Christy Snipp or Donnie Blake to open DRB seat

Jess Graham arrived 6:18pm

Rules of procedure for jointly appointed subordinate boards detail how appointments are processed. Christy Snipp and Donnie Blake are the two alternates and one of them can be chosen to fill the vacated seat on the DRB. The Trustees for the Village chose Christy Snipp to fill the seat. Some concerns were brought forward surrounding family members serving on multiple boards and whether a conflict of interest would arise. The Selectboard felt confident that individuals would recuse themselves from a vote due to any perceived interest if necessary. Donnie Blake expressed to the Selectboard that he is happy to remain as an alternative should Christy be chosen as the member. This was a tough decision for the board.

Motion made by Don McDowell to appoint Christy Snipp to the DRB. Motion seconded by Jess Graham. Motion carried (5/0).

3. Appoint new Planning Council Member

Tim Magee was in attendance and expressed his desire to be a member of the planning council.

Motion made by Judy Bickford to appoint Tim Magee to the Planning Council. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried (5/0).

4. Discuss making Hutchins St. one-way to create new on-street parking

The parking committee met over the summer of 2022 and presented the Selectboard with a report of recommendations on an implementation plan. One of the items to be discussed is should Hutchins Street be a one-way road down the hill. There were some concerns from guests in the audience regarding sidewalks, stop signs and the bus stop. The Selectboard implied they feel a oneway road down hill sounds reasonable.

5. Discuss Brigham St parking lot as 2-hour parking

Another item from the Parking Committee implementation plan is turning Brigham Street parking lot into a 2-hr lot of parking. There are currently 12 parking slots in the middle of the parking lot and there is room for 2 more slots to be added on the side closest to Second Chance, which gives 14 slots. The parking spots on Brigham Street and on the right-hand side as you approach the parking lot area are going to remain parking all day. Some of the folks in attendance are concerned that there is no place for the employees of all of the surrounding businesses to park.

Motion made by Judy Bickford to convert the center of the parking lot into 2 hr parking spots. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried (5/0).

6. Planning Council Short-Term Housing Letter

At the conclusion of the 2022 Zoning Bylaw approval process, the Selectboard directed the Planning Council to further study the newly expanded zoning restrictions on short-term housing. There is a Planning Council meeting on February 14th and Julie Marks from Vermont's short-term Rental Alliance advocacy group will be in attendance discussing all aspects of short-term rentals in Vermont with the Planning Council. Some Selectboard members will try to attend this meeting.

7. Updated site assessment for Town-owned Noyes House Museum property

The Town of Morristown owns the Noyes House Museum and is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the property. The Historical Society has been steadily restoring the property both structurally and in terms of finish and furnishings to represent the two major 19th century times of ownership. The 2023 ballot contains an article that, if passed, would authorize raising taxes equal to 1/2 cent on the Grand List to be dedicated to the Noyes House Museum Repair and Maintenance. Currently, the repairs will cost more than funds are available. If the article does not pass, the town will have to budget for these repairs.

8. Discuss date for Special Town Meeting - petition to move all budget items to Australian ballot

The Town has received a petition asking for the budget to be voted by Australian ballot for future town meetings. The town must hold a Special Town Meeting to address this petition within 100 days of receipt of such petition. The school auditorium is available on April 18th for a 6pm meeting.

Motion made by Judy Bickford to hold the Special Town Meeting on April 18th at 6pm at the school auditorium. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried (5/0).

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discuss Class 4 road policy

Eric Dodge obtained the Stowe VT class 4 road policy for the Selectboard to review. It is a good starting point for the completion of the class 4 road policy for Morristown.

It is clear the town cannot create a road policy that will encompass all scenarios presented to the Selectboard. The Selectboard will continue to work on this document.

There were several guests in attendance this evening that live on class 4 roads and have a vested interest in how this policy is developed. The Selectboard members heard all the concerns expressed this evening by the folks in attendance.

There appears to be a dispute amongst neighbors, Rooney/Maizel regarding Bull Moose Road. The Maizel family is concerned that their home is 125 years old, and the foundation cannot handle any major vibration caused by heavy equipment used to improve Bullmoose Rd. They want to ensure someone will take responsibility in the event damage should occur. The Rooney's are concerned with the timing of cutting down trees because of seasonal farming needs. Selina Rooney said she would take responsibility for any damage caused by the tree cutting and further improvements to Bull Moose Rd.

Selina Rooney seeks permission to begin cutting trees immediately, in the right-of-way, to prepare for widening the road. Ken Grimes has been consulted by the Rooney's but will not be cutting down the trees.

Motion made by Jess Graham that the Rooney's have permission to cut trees in the right-of-way of Bull Moose Rd and Rooney's take liability for any damage caused to the Maizel property. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried (4/1). Judy Bickford opposed.

The Selectboard expressed their concern over the neighbor dispute and wishes there was another solution.

APPROVE WARRANTS

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

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Eric met with representatives from Bernie Sanders' office and brought two concerns:

1. Money for municipal structures is needed
2. Downtown transportation is needed.

Todd and Eric met with the new director of RCT. There is going to be a new microtransit system for Morristown. Rides will be free.

SELECTBOARD CONCERNS

Don McDowell reflects on how hard the staff in the town work. Transparency has been mentioned frequently and Don reminded folks that the budget process begins in the fall and all meetings are open to the public. It is worth noting that only 2 citizens were present at all the budget meetings. There is an informational meeting on February 27th at 6pm and hopefully folks will attend. All other Selectboard members agreed with Don's comments.

Sara Haskins noted all ballots would be mailed by February 15th.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Several guests in attendance continue to voice their concern over the budget for the 23-24 fiscal year.

OTHER BUSINESS

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 Judy Bickford . Motion carried. (5/0)

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. Motion seconded by Judy Bickford. Motion carried. (5/0)

Motion made by Don McDowell to come out of Executive Session. Motion seconded by Jess Graham. Motion carried. (5/0)

ADJOURN

Motion made by Don McDowell to adjourn. Motion seconded by Brian Kellogg. Motion carried. (5/0)

Meeting adjourned at 9:48PM

Submitted, Amended and filed this February 22, 2023 .

Judi Alberi, Scribe

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