



SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 20, 2023

Members: Judy Bickford, Don McDowell, Christopher Palermo, Travis Sabataso, Laura Streets

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Eric Dodge, Town Administrator; Judi Alberi, Administrator's Assistant; Dennis DiGregorio, Fire Chief; Jason Luneau, Police Chief; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Paula Beattie, Human Resources Director; Bill Mapes, EMS Chief; Tricia Follert*, Community Development Director

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Tom Cloutier, Barry Russo, Martin Green, Laura Green, Sheila Tarbox, Tony Cote, Christy Snipp, Bob Bortree, Kathy Chaffee*, Jane Campbell*

**participating via Zoom*

CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

Judy Bickford called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 5:30PM at the Tegu Building.

AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

Other Business:

Executive session Legal and Personnel

APPROVE MINUTES

1. Approve minutes of 5-15-23

Motion made by Don McDowell to approve the minutes of May 15, 2023. Motion seconded by Christopher Palermo. Motion carried. (5/0)

2. Approve minutes of 5-25-23

Motion made by Christopher Palermo to approve the minutes of May 25, 2023. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried. (5/0)

3. Approve minutes 6-1-23

Motion made by Don McDowell to approve the minutes of June 1, 2023. Motion seconded by Christopher Palermo. Motion carried. (5/0)

NEW BUSINESS

1. Selectboard Training

Judy Bickford would like to see some formalized training for how to build trust and work together as a board. Judy polled other members about their interest in receiving some free training in developing set of agreements amongst the members, how to function as a board, building trust and general training as we have 3 new members to the Selectboard. The idea was well received. Judy Bickford will get some more information and times/dates that this might happen.

2. Approve Fireworks Permit

1. LACiNg Up for Cancer Walk

2. 4th of July Town of Morristown

Motion made by Laura Streets to approve fireworks permit for LACiNg Up for Cancer on June 24th and 4th of July for the Town of Morristown and authorize Chair Judy Bickford to sign permits. Motion seconded by Travis Sabataso. Motion carried (5/0).

3. Approve EMS FY 21/22 Ambulance call write-offs

Industry standard to write-off calls at the end of the fiscal year which is typically 10-15%. Tina Sweet does the billing for ambulance calls and last year we wrote off 7% this year it is up to 11%, but worthy to note that ambulance calls were up as well. There is no sliding fee schedule but Tina has a practice of attempting to set up a repayment plan with folks unable to pay in full. Tina ask for a letter from folks that cannot pay their bill due to financial hardships. Chief Bill Mapes talked about mutual aid for other towns and how important this is industry wide for the care of all folks.

Motion made by Christopher Palermo to approve the write-off of \$39,390.28 for uncollectible ambulance calls for FY 21-22 . Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried (5/0).

4. Accept Resignation of Highway Tech 3 Employee

Paula Beattie, Human Resources Director, and Christopher Palermo both had opportunities to speak with Jeffrey Baker and unfortunately the toxic environment within the community members of Morristown has made it an unpleasant experiencing in working for the town.

Motion made by Don McDowell, with regrets, to accept resignation of Jeffrey Baker effective June 8th, 2023. Motion seconded by Christopher Palermo. Motion carried. (5/0)

5. Approve New Hire for Highway/Street Department

Motion made by Don McDowell to hire Damien Hutchens as a Tech 1 for the highway department at a rate of pay \$19.46 . Motion seconded by Christopher Palermo. Motion carried (5/0).

Paula Beattie, HR Director, explained the procedure of hiring as requested by a citizen. Vacancy arises, creates ad and advertises, applications come in, HR reviews, shares opinions with the department head, Town Administrator, hiring committee, request interviews with those that are qualified and chosen, narrows down to a chosen applicant for an offer of employment which is contingent upon background check and when applicable driving record.

6. Appoint Selectboard Member to MDF

This is a 5 member board with the 5th member being a Selectboard member. Christopher Palermo and Laura Streets both showed interest in being appointed as the Selectboard member. After discussion of various backgrounds and strengths that both Chris and Laura bring to the MDF, Chris retracted his interest and supported Laura's interest in being on the MDF.

Motion made by Christopher Palermo to appoint Laura Streets as the Selectboard representative to the Morristown Development Fund. Motion seconded by Travis Sabatano. Motion carried (5/0).

7. Discuss Jointly appointed subordinate boards policy

Todd Thomas, Planning Director/Zoning Administrator reviewed the proposed edits for the Jointly Appointed Boards Policy. The Selectboard was receptive to the changes and will bring it back sometime in July.

8. Review Morristown Road Policy

Todd Thomas, Planning Director/Zoning Administrator proposed some updates to the town's current road policy. The Selectboard will review the proposed changes and bring it back to a meeting later in July.

9. Letter of Support for LFCUD 2023 Construction Grant Application

Jane Campbell, Morristown Representative for Lamoille Fibernet Communications Union District, joined the Selectboard Meeting via Zoom to ask for support in its grant application.

Motion made by Christopher Palermo to support the grant application for LFCUD and authorize Chair Judy Bickford to sign the letter . Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried (5/0).

10. Discuss closing Forest Land Funds

Motion made by Don McDowell to close the Forest Land Funds accounts and deposit the funds into the Conservation Commission Fund. The approximate amount is \$20,140.49. Motion seconded by Christopher Palermo. Motion carried (5/0).

OLD BUSINESS

1. Hiring Procedure for Town Administrator

Discussion was had with Paula Beattie, HR Director and the Selectboard creating clarity around the hiring procedure of the next Town Administrator. The Selectboard supported the hiring procedure as presented. Citizens were interested in whether we could advertise for Town Manager vs Town Administrator (TA) but that is not possible as we do not have a Town Manager (TM) position available. Moving from TA to TM is a town vote and the job the responsibilities just change for the TM. The TM may cost the town more money. We have a range of pay so that the possible applicants have an expectation of our budget constraints. Paula has not had much interest in the position which may speak to the pay scale being too low for the demands. Due to the budget failing for the 2nd time, this may be part of the reason that there is little to no interest in the TA position. The negativity felt in Morristown might be part of the low interest as well. It is hard to tell right now.

APPROVE WARRANTS

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

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Chief Bill Mapes extended his thanks for the staff at Town Office during his family crisis with his 2 year old son. All is well now and his son is on the mend. Bill expressed sincere gratitude for all the messages of support and prayer that he recieved. Thanks to Cory, Assistant Chief for holding down the fort in Bill's absense.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Eric Dodge delivered a leadership class to the 4 leaders that will be running the summer camp. Great kids!!! Village center apartments is hosting a grand opening next week.

Lots of recent vandalism at the Oxbow Bathrooms. Trish Follert, Community Dev Coordinator would like to discuss some solutions with the town staff internally and see what can be done to keep the bathrooms opened.

SELECTBOARD COMMENTS

Travis Sabatase - passed on thoughts to Bill for his family.

Laura Streets - sorry to have lost the Yoga studio but very happy to see Moss moving in. Happy to see Lost Nation still surviving.

Christopher Palermo - recognizes the town staff and other departments that rallied behind Bill's recent emergency. Village highway garage is costing the town too much money. Need to consider future goals for the highway location.

Don McDowell - echo's what Bill has said about the quality of work by the staff. It has been a rough ride the last few months and thanks the employees for sticking it out. Agrees with Chris regarding the garage situations and needing more space for Police. Please hold off on the Town Manager petition until a budget is passed.

Judy Bickford - expressed similar concerns to others and echoed Don's concern over the timing of the petition for the Town Manager. Glad to hear Bill's son is on the mend.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Comments surrounding the garage, contracting snow plowers for the winter, and the jointly appointed board policy concerns.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Possible Executive Session - Legal & Personnel

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 Christopher Palermo. 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 Town Administrator, Eric Dodge, Police Chief, Jason Luneau and Human Resources Director, Paula Beattie. Motion seconded by Christopher Palermo. Motion carried. (5/0)

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 Christopher Palermo. Motion carried. (5/0)

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 Christopher Palermo. Motion carried. (5/0)

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

ADJOURN

Motion made by Don McDowell to adjourn. Motion seconded by Christopher Palermo. Motion carried. (5/0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm
Submitted and filed this June 23, 2023
Judi Alberi, Scribe

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