



**SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

Members: Don McDowell, Chris Palermo, Laura Streets, Richard Craig

Absent: Judy Bickford

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Chief Jason Luneau, Interim Town Administrator; Judi Alberi, Administrator's Assistant; Kevin Barrows, Highway Superintendent; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Jason Kelley, MFD;

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Paula Beattie, Savannah Clark, Kassondra Bengston, Yon Perras, Uwanna Perras, Jared Jaret, Alexander Cyr, Melissa Jordan, Laura Green, Mary Lou Nichols, Peter Danforth, Evelyn & Jerry Throne, Sheila Tarbox, Tony Cote, Christy Snipp, Charles Burnham

**participating via Zoom*

CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

Don McDowell called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 5:30PM at the Tegu Building.

Judy Bickford is traveling and will be back on 9-18-23

Before starting the meeting, Don McDowell welcomed Richard Craig to the Selectboard. Afterwards, Don suggested we take a moment of silence in remembrance of 9-11-2001.

AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

Under New Business:

Add Richard Craig to be Liaison for MPD

Add Approve ROW permit for 17 Demars Road

Add Contracts to Possible Executive Session

APPROVE MINUTES

1. Approve Minutes 08-21-23

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the minutes of September 21, 2023. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried. (4/0)

2. Approve Minutes 08-24-23

Motion made by Laura Streets to approve the minutes of September 24, 2023 with amendments. Motion seconded by Chris Palermo . Motion carried. (4/0)

Don McDowell asked to have the following added to the Call the meeting to order: This is an informational meeting only. The Selectboard did not have a quorum present.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Welcome Richard Craig as new member and liaison to Morristown Police Department.

Don McDowell welcomed Richard Craig to the Selectboard and asked if he would be willing to be the liaison for the Morrisville Police Department. Richard happily accepted.

2. Approve Right of Way permit for 17 Demars Road

Kevin Barrows spoke to the right of way permit received and had no issues with the request. The request is to install a water line across Demars Road for the property.

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the Right of Way permit for 17 Demars Road and authorize Co-Chair Don McDowell to sign on behalf of the Selectboard. Motion seconded by Laura Streets Motion carried (4/0).

3. Discuss and choose bid for Road Erosion Inventory

The Town is seeking to enter into a contract with a consultant to complete a Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) Road Stormwater Plan. The Town received two qualifying bids from qualified consultants to complete this work on all hydrologically connected municipal roads. The MRGP Plan represents the initiation of a road improvement process that will play out over the coming years.

The bids received were from Watershed Consulting and Fitzgerald Environmental. Watershed Consulting was almost \$2,000 cheaper but both bids were very similar and both very reputable companies.

The Town has a grant in the amount of \$8,000 to help with the project, but Phase 1 of the project must be completed by end of year in order to receive the grant money. Chris Palermo felt that Fitzgerald was a more thorough presentation. Jason Luneau spoke to LCPC and could not be swayed to go with one consultant over the other. Both bids are good options.

Motion made by Laura Streets to accept the bid from Watershed Consulting in the amount of \$29,430. Motion seconded by Chris Palermo. Motion carried (4/0).

4. Presentation for Trees for Streams at Oxbow Park by Peter Danforth

Peter Danforth, Director of Natural Resource Conservation District for Lamoille County, presented information on Trees for Streams program that may be a good project for Oxbow Park considering the recent flood damage. The program is funded through multiple partners, so the Town of Morristown would not need to use funds for this project only time and resources, such as SB Volunteer, Recreation Coordinator etc.

This would be a community volunteer event. Peter had worked with school systems in the past and would connect with People's Academy to see if the students there would be interested in working with him. Laura Streets asked if FEMA would need to be consulted for this project and would hope that FEMA would endorse this project.

Motion made by Chris Palermo to move forward with the concept Trees for Streams for the Oxbow Park project. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (4/0).

5. Approve Errors and Omissions Certificate

Charlie Burnham, Lister for Town of Morristown, explained to the Selectboard that there were errors discovered and that incorrect square footage was found and needs to be corrected. Many errors were due to double sketching the first floor square footage.

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the Errors and Omissions certificate as presented. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried (4/0).

6. Approve Job Descriptions:

A. Town Manager

B. Finance Director

C. Assistant Finance Director

The Town Manager job description was drafted using the one approved for Town of Stowe Manager. This was presented to the Selectboard as a starting place for discussion. Laura Streets would like to see specific software programs used by the Town to be listed on the job description and maybe remove or word differently the mathematical aptitude section. Chris Palermo feels software evolves and that is why it may not be mentioned. Tina Sweet spoke regarding the software systems the town uses and how antiquated these systems are and she is looking into new software systems. The Selectboard will think about what has been presented and bring comments back.

Finance Director and Assistant Finance Director job descriptions are being cleaned up to remove the Human Resources job components now that we have a HR Director position. The verbiage that speaks to Town Administrator should be amended to read Town Administrator/Town Manager. We need to remove the mention of Morristown Centennial Library accounting maintenance from the Assistant Finance Director job description.

Motion made by Laura Streets to approve the job description of Finance Director with amendment Town Administrator/Town Manager. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (4/0).

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the job description of Assistant Finance Director with amendment of Town Administrator/Town Manager and remove the Morristown Centennial Library maintaining accounting records. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (4/0).

7. Approve adding two volunteer firefighters to the MFD roster

A. Savannah Clark

B. Kassondra Bengston

Jason Kelley, Assistant Fire Chief, would like the Selectboard to approve adding Savannah Clark and Kassondra Bengston to the Fire Department roster. Savannah and Kassondra were present to introduce themselves.

Motion made by Chris Palermo to add Savannah Clark and Kassondra Bengston to the Fire Department roster Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried (4/0).

8. Approve hiring full time Patrol Officer Derek Fadden

Chief Luneau has requested the Selectboard approve hiring Derek Fadden as a full-time patrol officer. Derek comes with no experience and will complete level two training over the next two weeks and will attend level three training for 16 weeks in February 2024. Derek will do some field training during Oct/Nov/Dec/Jan. Derek was officially hired prior to Selectboard approval due to training starting on September 8th, 2023.

Motion made by Chris Palermo to hire Derek Fadden as a fulltime Police Officer at a rate of \$28.95 per hour with a start date of September 8, 2023. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (4/0).

9. Accept resignation of EMS provider Derek Choate

Bill Mapes spoke to the fact that Derek Choate was unable to fulfill his employment with Morristown EMS due to a change in his spouse's work. Please remove Derek from the roster.

Motion made by Chris Palermo to accept the resignation of Derek Choate. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried (4/0).

OLD BUSINESS

None

APPROVE WARRANTS

There are no warrants this week.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Kevin Barrows was happy to inform the Selectboard that paving and line stripping are complete on the park and ride on Bridge Street. Center Road has been paved and the Municipal Parking lot is started and due to be finished this week.

Duhamel Pit is almost complete for the season and the highway crew will be removing the gravel from the pit and expect to use it for town projects. The town garage crew has been busy grading roads.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Judi Alberi will begin working on the Annual Town Report pretty soon.
HR Director position is still posted.
Paving is going well.

SELECTBOARD COMMENTS

Richard Craig - No comments tonight but is happy to be here

Laura Streets - Nice to be back to a full board and welcome Richard to the board. Would like to see a level of professionalism and civility as we move forward with a \$9M budget.

Chris Palermo - has done some research on Local Option Tax and ways to increase revenue. The State Tax department website has information on food and alcohol sales which shows a steady increase in business. Due to the way the State collects information, room tax is unavailable. Towns with a local option tax get about 70% of the tax collected, which could be \$150-\$160K in revenue. Tricia will get more information. Chris is talking with Charlie Burnham and is interested in the process of a RFP for the town garage as the lease is going to end in September 2025. Does the town expand Cochran Road or look into a new public works location?

Don McDowell - concerned about burglaries and crime and supports the Police Department for all they do to keep the community safe.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Community members would like an update on the Town Manager search and process. There is a report of a potential zoning violation on Cote Hill Road. Could the budget be easier for folks to follow along this year.

Congrats to Chris Palermo for being elected to the Selectboard.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Possible Executive Session - Labor Relations, Personnel, Contracts

Chris Palermo moves to enter Executive Session because I find that premature general public knowledge of labor relationships with employees to the body will clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. (4/0)

Chris Palermo moves to enter Executive Session to discuss labor relations agreements with employees under the provisions of Title 1 section 313 (a) (1)(b) of the Vermont Statutes, to include Interim Town administrator Jason Luneau; Former Human Resources Director, Paula Beattie; Interim Human Resources Director, Tina Sweet; and Highway Superintendent, Kevin Barrows. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. (4/0)

Chris Palermo moves 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 Richard Craig. (4/0)

Chris Palermo moves 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 Interim Town Administrator, Jason Luneau and Interim Human Resources Director, Tina Sweet. Motion seconded

by Richard Craig. (4/0)

Chris Palermo moves to go into Executive session because I find that premature general public knowledge of the pending contract negotiations will clearly place the Town at a disadvantage by disclosing its negotiation strategy. Motion seconded by Laura Streets (4/0)

Chris Palermo moves to go into Executive session to discuss pending contract negotiations under provisions of Title 1, Section #13(a)(1) of the Vermont Statutes and to include Interim Town Administrator, Jason Luneau. Motion seconded by Laura Streets (4/0)

Motion made by Chris Palermo to come out of executive session at 8:51PM. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (4/0)

Motion made by Chris Palermo to pay Finance Director a \$3 stipend as the Interim HR Director. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried. (4/0)

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the parking agreement between the Town of Morristown and Village Center Apartments Limited Partnership and to allow Interim Town Administrator Jason Luneau to sign the parking agreement. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (4/0)

ADJOURN

Motion made by Chris Palermo to adjourn. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (4/0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:55pm

Submitted and filed this September 16, 2023

Judi Alberi, Scribe

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