



**SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
OF SEPTEMBER 18, 2023**

Members: Judy Bickford, Don McDowell, Laura Streets, Richard Craig

Absent: Chris Palermo

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Chief Jason Luneau, Interim Town Administrator; Judi Alberi, Administrator's Assistant; Kevin Barrows, Highway Superintendent; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Sara Haskins, Town Clerk/Treasurer;

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Ronald Stancliff, Tom Cloutier, Kristin Marriott, Evelyn & Jerry Throne, Tony Cote, Sheila Tarbox, Guy Fournier, Jed Lipsky, Christy Snipp, Laura Green, Harper Phillips, Hank Glowiak, Kathy Chaffee*

**participating via Zoom*

CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

Judy Bickford called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 5:37PM at the Tegu Building.

AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

None

APPROVE MINUTES

1. Approve minutes of 9-11-23

Motion made by Don McDowell to approve the minutes of September 11, 2023. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (4/0)

NEW BUSINESS

1. Remove Angela Cote from the Morrystown Conservation Commission

Motion made by Don McDowell to accept the resignation of Angela Cote. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried (4/0).

2. Approve appointing Jerry Throne to the Morrystown Conservation Commission

Jerry Throne expressed his desire to be involved in the conservation commission. He has attended many meetings and has assisted with various tasks over the years. Degree in the engineering field and worked in the construction business most of his adult life.

Motion made by Don McDowell to appoint Jerry Throne to the Morrystown Conservation Commission. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried (4/0).

3. Approve improvements to Beaver Meadow Road to allow passage for logging equipment

Jason Luneau, Don McDowell, and Kevin Barrows met Harper Philips and his loggers, Jed & Karl Lipsky. The work to be completed consists of removing overhanging trees, brush etc to open the canopy enough to allow a log truck and equipment to pass without damage, removing/ covering small rocks/boulders in the road, opening existing water bars to mitigate water running down and pooling in the road, adding minimal material to the road, clean up drainage ditch and add material to prevent culvert damage, add boulders/stone/gravel to outside of turn on both sides of snowmobile bridge to straighten approach.

They will leave the road better than it is now. Fran Sladyk has been overseeing the forest plan and it has been approved.

Motion made by Don McDowell to approve the improvements to Beaver Meadow Rd to allow access for logging equipment to Harper Philips property. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried (4/0).

4. Review Delinquent Property Tax Accounts

Sara Haskins discussed the process of communication with delinquent property tax accounts. It cost the town \$75 per demand letter to be sent from our attorney. The board discussed continuing with this process unless the delinquent taxes are below \$75.00. Sara mentioned we had only one delinquent tax account below \$75.

Motion made by Don McDowell to authorize Attorney Jim Barlow to send demand letters to delinquent property tax accounts, except for the one account listed at \$35.76. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (4/0).

5. Discuss Community Informational Meeting

Sara Haskins shared with the board that the Town of Duxbury does an annual "citizens have their say day" the first Saturday in January. Pie for breakfast, socialize with your fellow neighbors and discuss where the budget preparation is at that point, discuss any special town meeting articles and invite all social service agencies requesting appropriations. The Annual Town Meeting floor vote is being discontinued and the community is feeling this void of community discussions with fellow neighbors. All Selectboard members felt this was a good idea. The only concern was "Is there a space big enough?"

Sara also discussed logistics for the upcoming 2024 elections and how each will be unique. The presidential primary in March is a federal election. Voters will have to request their absentee ballot as voters will have to declare which party ballot they want for that election. She does not know yet if the school is thinking about automatically mailing all active voters their ballots. She asked the board to think about whether they want to automatically mail all active voters their town meeting ballots or if they will be mailed by request only and requested that the board make a decision in early November. She further explained that current state statutes do not allow towns to automatically mail everyone their ballots for the State primary in August. On the other hand, all active voters will be automatically mailed their General Election ballot in November 2024.

6. Review Morristown Social Service Appropriations Policy now that we do not have an annual floor meeting

The Social Service Appropriations policy needs to be updated due to the change from the Annual Town Meeting floor vote to Australian ballot. The Selectboard discussed ideas and gave some guidance to Judi Alberi and Sara Haskins. Ideas discussed included:

- Voting on individual items or grouping them under one article.
- Capping appropriation amounts.
- A community gathering on the first Saturday in January to set up information booths and answer questions.
- Presentations to the community/Selectboard every year by 1/3 of the organizations over a 3 year period.
- Petitions every three years
- New organizations need a petition, if you were voted down needing a new one, or if you ask for an increase.

Selectboard members will email Judi with more specific ideas and a draft policy will be presented and discussed Oct 2nd at the regularly scheduled Selectboard Meeting.

7. Review and award propane and fuel bids

Tina Sweet, Finance Director, requested fuel bid proposal from Fred's Energy, Bourne's Energy, Brosseau Fuels, and Suburban Propane. Bourne's declined the request for proposal and Suburban Propane did not submit a bid. Fred's Energy came in the lowest for #2 and propane.

Motion made by Laura Streets to accept Fred's Energy #2 Fuel bid at \$3.699 per gallon. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (4/0).

Motion made by Don McDowell to accept Fred's Energy propane bid for \$1.590 per gallon. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried. (4/0)

8. Discuss ending the suspension of parking waivers

Todd Thomas has received a building permit for 82 Portland Street. This permit will require a parking waiver. The Selectboard previously suspended the ability to issue parking waivers until the Municipal Parking lot was paved and striped. That project is done so the board can end the parking waiver suspension if they choose. After much discussion from the Selectboard members, discussing such things as winter parking availability in town, first come first serve, parking permits, and what the consequences are for the town if the suspension is lifted.

Motion made by Don McDowell to make a motion to end the suspension of parking waivers. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (3/1). Don McDowell nay

9. Discuss discontinuing Stub Towne Road and Lanphear Road

At a previous Selectboard meeting, Kevin Barrows, Highway Superintendent, discussed 15-20 Class 3 roads that the town should consider discontinuing due to the lack of 3 or more homes on the roads or by request of the property owner. The Selectboard members have had several emails and phone calls with citizens regarding concern over this decision this late in the season. Property owners will not have enough time to set up plowing, which is a common concern. The interim Town Administrator, Jason Luneau, also brought up the concern that the administration department is doing double duty due to the lack of a Town Administrator/Town Manager. The Selectboard agreed with these concerns and will discuss whether the roads should be discontinued in the spring.

10. Approve Travel Policy

Former Human Resources Director, Paula Beattie, completed a new travel policy for the Selectboard to review, but did not have time to present it, so Interim HR Director, Tina Sweet brought this policy

forward for approval. The Selectboard discussed the policy and wanted to add language that if a traveler is prepaid for travel and they cancel or the event is canceled, the town can have the money returned to the town.

Motion made by Richard Craig to accept the travel policy with suggested changes. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried (4/0).

OLD BUSINESS

none

APPROVE WARRANTS

Motion made by Don McDowell to approve the warrants. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried. (4/0)

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Sara Haskins mentioned that she, Elizabeth, and Mitzi attended the Vermont Clerk and Treasurer annual conference. They attended various workshops and learned valuable information that they hope will assist in their office. Sara was awarded her Vermont Advanced Level 1 Clerk certificate and her Vermont Advanced Level 1 Treasurer certificate from the Vermont Municipal Clerks & Treasurers Association.

Pending no petition for reconsideration, Morristown property tax bills will be mailed out the 2nd week of October and are due November 15, 2023 and May 15, 2024.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Town Manager will be able to be advertised as of Friday September 29th

New Union formed EMS/General Government

Looking to hire someone to help with zoom/minutes

The annual audit has begun. This will last for 2 weeks and then a single audit will be done

Last Thursday met with FEMA and toured our area.

SELECTBOARD COMMENTS

Richard Craig is still getting his feet wet, still learning.

Laura Streets is concerned with the communication amongst Selectboard members. She would like to remind Selectboard members that they cannot take initiative without direction from the chair/board. As far as Oxbow Park goes, she would like to see a mutually agreed upon direction to head in and would like to see a town employee wage analysis done.

Don McDowell is happy to say the work at the Oxbow is done and the bill was 1/2 of what we were quoted! That is a significant savings. We have gotten our load out of the pit and is happy to see that progress. Don also acknowledges the workers that are doing double duty in the building; Jason Luneau, Judi Alberi and Tina Sweet. Thanks to the clerk's office for working so hard on all the elections.

Judy Bickford mentioned that the municipal parking lot looks great. Judy is also going to try and schedule Selectboard training for the board.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Community concerns by the citizens were mostly around the union negotiating and the parking lot. As soon as union negotiations are completed the information becomes public. The municipal parking lot is now completed and there was some discussion about overnight parking permits as an avenue for revenue.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Possible Executive Session - Personnel, Labor Relations

Motion made by Don McDowell - I move 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. Motion carried. (4/0)

Motion made by Don McDowell - I move 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; Interim Human Resources Director, Tina Sweet; Administrative Assistant, Judi Alberi, and St Albans City Manager, Dominc Cloud. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (4/0)

Motion made by Don McDowell - I move 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. Motion carried. (4/0)

Motion made by Don McDowell - I move 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 and Interim Human Resources Director, Tina Sweet. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion Carried. (4/0)

Motion made by Don McDowell to exit Executive Session at 9:30PM. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (4/)

ADJOURN

Motion made by Don McDowell to adjourn. Motion seconded by Laura Streets. Motion carried. (4/0)

Meeting adjourned at 9:30pm

Submitted and filed this September 22, 2023 .

Judi Alberi, Scribe

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