



SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 6, 2023

Members: Judy Bickford, Don McDowell, Christopher Palermo, Laura Streets*, Richard Craig

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Chief Jason Luneau, Interim Town Administrator; Kevin Barrows, Highway Superintendent; Dennis DiGregorio, Fire Chief; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Sara Haskins, Town Clerk/Treasurer; Tricia Follert*, Community Development Coordinator, Todd Thomas, Planning Director, Brian Yeaton, Lister; Charles Burnham, Lister

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Jamie Jared, Sheila Tarbox, Tony Cote, Etienne Hancock, Alexander Cyr, Jerry & Evelyn Throne, Uwanna Perras, Yon Perras, Kathy Chaffee*, Nancy Dunavan*, Harriett Merrill, Peter Merrill, Julia Compagna, Kevin Petrochko, Joanne Godfrey, Tad Lamell, Charlie King, Cynthia Lamell, Julie Parker, Prudy Newton, Melissa Rose, Barry Russo, Mark Sutton, Carrie Johnson, Joyce & George Cormier, Maria Ward, Judy O'Neill, Bob Heanue, David Early, Tyler Mumley, Donald Compagna, Cindy Hood, Barbara Kiely, Wallace Reeve, Travis Knapp

**participating via Zoom*

CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

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

AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

Delete #12 Discuss Meals/Refreshments at Joint Selectboard/Trustees Meeting

APPROVE MINUTES

1. **Approve minutes of 10-16-23 Public Hearing**
Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the minutes of October 16, 2023 public hearing. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (5/0)
2. **Approve minutes of 10-16-23**
Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the minutes of October 16, 2023. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (5/0)
3. **Approve minutes of 10-23-23**
Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the minutes of October 23, 2023. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (5/0)
4. **Approve minutes of 10-25-23**

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the minutes of October 25, 2023. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approve Errors & Omissions Certificate

Motion made by Don McDowell to approve the Errors & Omissions Certificate as submitted by the Board of Listers of the Town of Morristown. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (5/0)

2. Discuss taking over Dr. Tinker Street as a town road

Copley Hospital representatives requested the Town of Morristown take over the upkeep of Dr. Tinker Street as a town road. Tyler Mumley, the engineer, gave updates on the project. There was concern from patrons of the Copley Country Club over the ramifications of the road being extended and thus interfering with the current status of the golf course.

Motion made by Don McDowell for The Town of Morristown to accept Dr. Tinker Street as a town road. Motion seconded by Chris Palermo. Motion failed (0/5).

Judy Bickford recognized members of Boy Scout Troop 876 who were present working on a civics merit badge.

3. Approve buyout of 2284 Vermont Route 15 East due to flood

The property owners of 2284 VT Rte 15E are working with FEMA and Vermont Emergency Management for a buyout of the property as the land and structures are essentially inhabitable due to the flooding in July. Discussion ensued regarding the actions that need to be taken by the property owners to meet the town's concerns regarding their liability.

Motion made by Don McDowell for the town to approve the buyout of Parcel 09-017 located at 2284 Vermont Route 15 East due to the substantial damage caused by the flood of July 2023. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

4. Decision on Zoning Bylaws 2023

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the 2023 Morrisville/Morristown Zoning Bylaws. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried. (5/0)

5. Discuss Town Charter with Carrie Johnson

Carrie Johnson outlined the planning needed for the public outreach campaign, and requested the vote on the Town Charter be in November 2024. One of the tasks is to appoint a Charter Committee to organize these efforts. A discussion followed on the charter and the local option tax.

6. Approve a 3 year contract for Kofax software

Tina Sweet, Finance Director, presented a proposal for the purchase of Kofax software. It features the ability to scan electronic invoices, decreasing staff labor and requiring less retrieval time of these documents and data. The cost is already budgeted in the financial software budget line item.

Motion made by Don McDowell to approve a three-year contract with Kofax software at a price of \$15,563 for year one and year 2, the third year would be \$4,813 and authorize Jason Luneau, Interim TA to sign the contract. Motion seconded by Chris Palermo. Motion carried. (5/0)

7. Discuss Town Informational Meeting January 6, 2024

Town Clerk, Sara Haskins reported that she had contacted the high school to use the gym on the morning of January 6, 2024 as a meeting place for the community to meet with the town officials and review the draft budget and draft warning, as there will no longer be an in-person annual town meeting discussion. The social service organization representatives will be invited and food available.

The gym is only available until noon that day. As it is the first time the town will be hosting this event, Sara asked the Board for any specific requests they have for the setup and/or audio-visual requirements so that she can plan. Sara was thanked by the Board for her efforts in coordinating this event.

8. Discuss Annual Meeting mailing ballots

Sara Haskins, Town Clerk, inquired if the Board wished to mail all active voters their ballot for annual town meeting. She recommended for the consistency of voters that the Town and School Boards work together to proceed in the same direction. This March is also the presidential primary and voters will have to request their federal ballot. The statistics have shown over the past elections that mail-in ballots result in a greater number of people voting. Discussion continued on the cost/benefit ratio of this action.

Motion made by Don McDowell to approve the mailing of ballots. Motion seconded by Chris Palermo. Motion carried (3/2) Don McDowell (Y), Judy Bickford (N), Chris Palermo (Y), Laura Streets (Y), Richard Craig (N).

9. Delinquent Tax Sale

Sara Haskins, Delinquent Tax Collector, presented a list of delinquent taxes. The list she had presented in September had 23 properties on it and this list has 8. Sara shared that she had a conversation with Jim Barlow, Delinquent Tax Sale Attorney regarding if he thought the Town should change their delinquent tax sale policy or procedures. The attorney's advice was that he would not recommend making changes to Morristown's policy as Morristown has had one of the most successful collection rates and holds one of the least number of delinquencies in the state that he is aware of.

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve a Delinquent Tax Sale for the 3 parcels over \$1,000 and to engage Attorney Jim Barlow to conduct the sale. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (5/0)

10. Adopt VT-Alert as a public safety notification system

Jason Luneau, Chief of Police, requested that the Town of Morristown adopt the VT-Alert as a free public safety notification. Once it is setup there will be a link on the Town website for community members to signup to receive alerts.

Motion made by Chris Palermo that the Town of Morristown adopt VT-Alert as a public safety notification. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried. (5/0)

11. Approve hiring full time Patrol Officer Jackson Caide Alberi-Schroeder

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the hiring of full time Patrol Officer Jackson Caide Alberi-Schroeder at the salary of \$29.38 to start on 11.20.2023. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (5/0)

12. Discuss Meals/Refreshments at Joint Selectboard/Trustees Meeting

Deleted

OLD BUSINESS

none

APPROVE WARRANTS

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the warrants. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried. (4/0/1) Laura Streets obtained as she was on zoom.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS

Kevin Barrows, Highway Superintendant, notified the Selectboard that he sent out a mailer to residents of

Moren Loop that the town would be closing the steep part of Moren Loop for the winter.

Todd Thomas, Planning Director, shared that Copley Hospital had begun the process for the Town to take over the road before the road policy was amended and they might be grandfathered into the old rules. He suggested that the Board should get legal counsel to look into it.

Sara Haskins, Treasurer, shared that property taxes are due November 15.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Jason Luneau, Interim Town Administrator, expressed his appreciation to Carrie Johnson for her municipal knowledge and stated that she is a great asset. She is working on four assignments for the town. He expressed thanks to the Highway Department for their work on Halloween. He also noted that budget meetings would begin next week.

SELECTBOARD COMMENTS

Laura Streets thanked the Fire Department and the Police Department for their efforts during their recent activity. She stated that she was researching ARPA & MDF investments and there will be a meeting soon with Edwards Jones. Laura stated that the VLTC is offering selectboard training and ethics workshops.

Richard Craig expressed thanks to Sara Haskins for her collaborations with the Morristown schools.

Chris Palermo had no comment.

Don McDowell commented on the Town Plan amendment, the plan to invite the legislators to attend a selectboard and trustees' meeting, and the need for a meeting with Peter Danforth about the flooding of the Oxbow.

Judy Bickford had no comment.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

Various questions, opinions and suggestions were made. It was stated that the hiring of the HR Director should be held until after the Town Manager was hired, which would allow that person to be involved. There was a suggestion that an audit of the town's employees should be conducted. A question was asked about the significance of a "downtown designation", which was referred to Tricia Follert, Community Development Coordinator.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Possible Executive Session - Labor, Legal, Personnel

Motion made by Chris Palmero to go to 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 Don McDowell. Motion carried. (5/0)

Motion made by Chris Palmero to go to 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; Interim Human Resources Director, Tina Sweet; and Highway Superintendent, Kevin Barrows. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried. (5/0)

Motion made by Chris Palmero 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 Don McDowell. Motion carried. (5/0)

Motion made by Chris Palmero 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. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried. (5/0)

Motion made by Chris Palmero 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 Don McDowell. Motion carried. (5/0)

Motion made by Chris Palmero 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 Interim Town Administrator, Jason Luneau and Attorney James Barlow. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried. (5/0)

Motion made by Chris Palmero to come out of Executive Session at 8:27 PM. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (5/0)

Motion made by Chris Palmero to ratify contract agreements with the highway union. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried. (5/0)

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve increasing Kevin Barrows, Highway Superintendent to step 8 at \$37.55 per hour effective with the November 22nd payroll. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve increasing Matt Friedrich, Highway Foreman to step 17 at \$33.50 per hour effective with the November 22nd payroll. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve increasing Derek Small, Highway Foreman to step 16 at \$32.97 per hour effective with the November 22nd payroll. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried (5/0).

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve hiring Michel Renaud as a temporary highway worker at \$23.00 per hour with no benefits starting December 3, 2023. Motion seconded by Don McDowell. Motion carried (5/0).

ADJOURN

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm

Submitted and filed this November 8, 2023.

Bonnie McDermott, Scribe

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