

SELECTBOARD MEETING
July 14, 2016

Present: Dave Adams Brent Meacham
 Casey Mathieu Nanette Rogers
 Dave Tilton

Guests: See List

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

CHANGES TO AGENDA

The following change was made to the agenda: none.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Gauthier suggested moving up the timeframe for when the roadsides are mowed because the tall vegetation affects site distance at intersections.

Dave and Lynn Gauthier stated that 6:00am is too early to put out trash and recycling. Dave G. advised that he knows that Myers undercuts bids to be awarded contracts. Lynn advised that the trucks drive up one side of the road and then back down the other side. If they were to zig zag and pick up both sides while traveling down the road, it would be more efficient and maybe folks could put their trash and recycling out later. They also spoke to the inefficiencies of splitting the town wide pick up into two days.

Dave A. advised that he hopes the 6:00am timeframe can be pushed back once Myers becomes familiar with the town and routes.

MINUTES

Dave Tilton made a motion to approve the June 23, 2016 minutes as written, seconded by Dave Adams. Motion passed: 2-0; Casey abstained.

Dave Tilton made a motion to approve the July 5, 2016 minutes as written, seconded by Dave Adams. Motion passed: 2-0; Casey abstained.

JACKSON FARM & FOREST PROJECT

Members of the coordinating committee for the Jackson Farm & Forest Project (JFFP) met with the Board to ascertain the Board's support and to discuss draft language for the article to be voted on in November.

The Board reviewed the proposed language for the article. Two versions were available – one with funding the purchase of the property in one year and the other for amortizing the purchase of the property over a five-year period at a fixed interest rate. Both articles identify conservation of the 172 acres, of which the town will own 130 acres as a town forest subject to a conservation easement and the remainder 42 acres being conserved as farmland. The Town's portion for funding the project is \$185,000.

Dave Gauthier pointed out that the article does not mention the possibility of a community wastewater system. He feels this should be included for transparency. Dave Adams advised that the property will serve multiple purposes and feels that identifying each one in the ballot language will be too much. The wastewater potential along with other attributes can be identified through public outreach and meetings. After some discussion it was agreed that the Town Plan should be referenced in the article because this project meets many criteria stated within the Plan. It was also

suggested that "and community land" be added after town forest to encompass all uses, including the wastewater system.

Alex Weinhagen advised that the committee proposes the Selectboard put forth the article amortizing the funds over five years. This would make it easier for taxpayers to swallow. The Board agreed. Alex suggested the Board have the town attorney vet the language before placing on the ballot. Nanette advised that language is needed before August 19th if the Town would like to include it on the ballots being printed by the State.

Casey Mathieu made a motion to put forth the article amortizing \$185,000 over a five-year period at a fixed interest rate pending review of the Town's attorney, seconded by Dave Tilton. Motion passed: 3-0.

Dave Tilton made a motion that the Board express their support of the Jackson Farm & Forest Project as generally outlined in the ballot language, seconded by Casey Mathieu. Motion passed: 3-0

AMEND 2016 PROPERTY TAX RATE

Nanette provided an explanation for why the tax rate set by Dave A. and Dave T. on July 5th needed to be amended. She reminded the Board that during the FY'15 audit, the Town was advised that it was not collecting enough taxes through the local agreement rate to compensate for the Veterans' exemption and the Farm Stabilization exemption. These exemptions must be made up through the local agreement tax in order to raise enough taxes to support the budgets approved by voters at Town Meeting.

After discussing the error with the bookkeeper, treasurer and Dave A., it was determined that the local agreement rate needed to be raised from .0038 to .0066 to raise enough taxes. The town and highway tax rates set on July 5th do not need to be changed. Due to timing constraints for releasing the tax bills, Nanette sought permission to use the new local agreement rate to print and mail the bills with the Board to ratify the new rate at its next meeting. The Treasurer and Dave A. agreed.

Dave Adams made a motion to amend the local agreement tax rate set on July 5th from \$0.0038 to \$0.0066, seconded by Casey Mathieu. Motion passed: 3-0.

REQUEST TO WAIVE SUBDIVISION AND ACCESS PERMIT APPLICATION FEES

Dave Adams explained this topic was discussed at the last meeting however he felt the whole board should be present to vote on the request.

Dave and Lynn Gauthier have requested that the fees for their subdivision and access permit applications for the Jackson Farm and Forest Project (JFFP) be waived if the Development Review Board and voters approve the project. The Gauthiers feel they have been more than generous with regard to the JFFP and feel waiver of the fees would be a good gesture. It is estimated that the fees will total less than \$1,000.

Dave T. expressed support of waiving the fees because they are related to the entire project. Casey asked if it has always been the intention of the Gauthiers to sell the two lots that are being subdivided from the parcel. Dave and Lynn Gauthier replied in the affirmative. Dave A. expressed concern with setting a precedent. He feels that the subdivision is separate from the JFFP because the two lots being subdivided from the entire property will not part of the project. Dave Gauthier disagreed pointing out that if he was not subdividing the property there would be no project for the Town. He added that if the Town does not approve the waiver then no more tests can be done on

the property until it is owned by the Town. Wendy Doane expressed strong opposition to the requirement by the owners to waive the subdivision fees.

Dave T. feels this subdivision benefits the Town and the amount being requested seems small in comparison. Dave A. feels the JFFP is a fantastic project and what the Gauthiers are doing is wonderful. However, he doesn't support waiving the fees when the Gauthiers have a personal gain from selling the two lots, which he sees independent of the project. Casey stated that there are two different ways to look at the project because they are connected.

Dave Tilton made a motion to refund the Development Review Board (DRB) application fees and access fee paid by the Gauthiers if the project is approved by the voters and the DRB, seconded by Casey Mathieu. Motion passed: Dave T. and Casey in favor; Dave A. opposed.

UPDATE ON TRANSITION OF NEW TRASH & RECYCLING HAULER

Dave provide a brief update on the transition of switching haulers for trash and recycling services. Myers has done two weeks of pick up. The Town's contract is a new, large account for Myers. There have been some issues. Residents are not pleased with the 6:00am timeframe for having their trash and recycling out for pick up. As discussed earlier, this time was set by Myers so they can get used to the routes, etc. Potentially this timeframe can be moved to a later time. There have been a lot of calls to the Town Office for missed pickups. Hopefully the volume of calls will decrease as time goes on.

One thing overlooked during the transition were dumpsters for town businesses. The Town did not do a good job in taking the businesses into consideration when drafting the contract and switching haulers. Dave met with Myers to discuss pickup for the six businesses. The meeting went well. Myers has found that most businesses won't separate their trash and recycling if they have dumpsters, therefore Myers has found it more successful to provide large totes in lieu of dumpsters. Businesses will be contacted to determine what type of service they need.

LIBRARY SEPTIC TANK REPLACEMENT

Nanette advised the design to relocate the septic tank has been completed by Green Mountain Engineering. The application needs to be signed by a representative of the Town. She felt Dave A. should sign the application after review of the design and application. The engineer advised that the application requires the book and page number of the deed for the property. The Town's attorney conducted a title search recently and was not able to find the deed. The State may be willing to accept the attorney's findings in lieu of a deed. The findings submitted by the Town's attorney was a legal opinion. Nanette asked if the Selectboard wanted to release the legal opinion or ask the attorney to summarize his findings to accompany the application. The Board would like the attorney to provide a summary.

Casey Mathieu made a motion to authorize Dave Adams to execute the wastewater system permit application, seconded by Dave Tilton. Motion passed: 3-0.

SPILLER & WHITE CHURCH PROPERTIES SEPTIC SYSTEM COSTS

Green Mountain Engineering submitted estimates to connect the town office and library to the septic system on the Spiller lot and the White Church. The estimated cost to connect to the Spiller lot is \$72,000. The estimated cost to construct and connect to a new mound system on the White Church property is \$134,000. It was pointed out the system for the White Church property would be new whereas the system on the Spiller property is old and questionable. The Board would like to know why a mound system is being proposed for the White Church when the soils found were favorable. The Board discussed briefly that it should consider selling the Spiller lot if the Town no longer plans to connect to the existing wastewater system or construct an annex for the town office.

FY'16 BUDGET UPDATE

There was no update.

DISBURSING HRA FUNDS REFUNDED TO THE TOWN

Currently the Town contributes funds to a Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) or a Health Savings Account (HSA) for eligible employee's. Last fall the Selectboard decided to let employees roll over any unused funds in their HRA to the next calendar year. The Town worked with Health Equity (provider for HRAs) to roll over any funds remaining in an employee's account from the prior calendar year. There was a misunderstanding of what "rolling over" meant. The Town thought the funds would automatically roll over to the next year, when actually the contribution level is adjusted by the Town to reflect the remaining funds. When Health Equity refunds the remaining funds to the Town, the Town then needs to disburse the funds back to Health Equity for the designated employees.

There are three employees who had balances in their HRA accounts from 2015. Two are still employed with the Town, one of which opted to have an HSA for 2016, the other still has their HRA. The third employee is no longer employed by the Town, therefore the Town keeps this refund. Nanette advised that the auditors suggested this benefit be added to the Personnel Policy. They advised that if the Town decides to contribute funds remaining from an HRA account to an HSA account, the policy be clear that the contribution level cannot exceed IRS regulations. The amount refunded for the employee who has an HSA will not exceed the maximum amount of contribution allowed by the IRS.

Dave A. made a motion to disburse the refunded 2015 HRA funds to the eligible employees' current HRA or HSA accounts, seconded by Casey Mathieu. Motion passed: 3-0.

ANNUAL INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROLS CHECKLIST

The Board acknowledged receipt of the financial controls checklist completed by the Bookkeeper and Treasurer.

ACT 250 MUNICIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ROPE'S END PROJECT

Peter Miller is converting the barn on his property to a school. The conversion triggered Act 250 approval. As part of the application process, the Town needs to complete the Municipal Impact Questionnaire with regard to fire, police, rescue, solid waste disposal services and road maintenance. This project does not impact the Town regarding any of these services. The Chair completed and signed the form.

INTERNET AND PHONE SERVICES AT TOWN GARAGE

John Quinn sent an email to follow up on connecting the town garage to the Internet and phone services provided to the fire department by Comcast. John believes the current service level for the Internet is sufficient to support the security camera cloud link and other devices used by the town garage and fire department. He is seeking approval to move forward, which involves a setup fee, purchasing infrastructure and selecting which monthly plan for phone services. Brent said he would prefer the full service line for phone services, which includes unlimited long distance calls and voicemail.

Casey Mathieu made a motion to approve moving forward with connecting the town garage to the fire department's phone and Internet services, including expending funds for the setup fee, purchase of materials needed for John to install or contracting with Final Connection to install, and selection of the full phone service line with voicemail, seconded by Dave Tilton. Motion passed: 3-0.

ROAD SCHEDULE

Casey Mathieu made a motion to approve the July 14, 2016 through July 27, 2016 Road Schedule, seconded by Dave Adams. Motion passed: 3-0.

Brent advised that Karen Munson is requesting the town to replace the culvert that crosses Old Stage Road onto her property. She claims the existing culvert is not functioning causing water to pool on her property. Brent stated he took a look the culvert, which appears to be working and is not clear why the water is pooling. Dave Tilton offered to conduct a site visit and will advise of his findings.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dave T. received an email from Becky Roy seeking information on how the Road Foreman is compensated – hourly or salary – because she has seen him working evenings, weekends and holidays. She expressed concern with the hours he's working and how it may affect tax payers' pockets. Dave T. advised Becky via email that Brent worked a total of 26.5 hours of overtime in the last six weeks. Becky replied expressing concern why overtime is needed, particularly because there has not been any damage caused by storms, as well as her concern of him possibly being paid overtime on holidays or the liability of him working unpaid hours. Dave A. advised Becky via email that the road crew overtime for FY'16 was 809 hours, which was below the 1,000 hours budgeted. Dave A. called Becky in response to a follow up email from her. He talked through her questions and feels the conversation went well. Becky said she appreciated him following up by phone.

The Board received a follow up email from Dick Lavalley with regard to his public records request for viewing footage of the surveillance cameras and vehicle pre-trip inspection reports. As mentioned at a previous meeting, Dick was unable to view the footage. Dave A. was able to convert the footage for viewing and Dick was notified. As of the meeting he had not been in to view it. As for the pre-trip inspection reports, the Selectboard and Brent had discussed using a new form that would be simpler for the drivers. Brent is still working on getting the form.

Brent advised that NEMRC (New England Municipal Resource Center) has been successful in setting up the new version of the MDMS software Brent uses for tracking road projects. NEMRC did this a no charge to the Town because it plans to offer the program to other Towns once it can be released. Brent has a lot of data entry that needs to be done to bring the program up to date. He may need someone to help with the entries.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL WARRANTS

The Board approved the accounts payable and payroll warrants.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

David E. Adams, Chair
Selectboard

Nanette Rogers
Town Administrator

TOWN OF WESTFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
GUEST LIST

Date: July 14, 2016

Name (please print)

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