

SELECTBOARD MEETING
April 11, 2019

Present: Allison Hope
 Julia Andrews
 Bill Cleary
 Greg Barrows

John Roberts
Nanette Rogers
Callie Hamdy

Guests: See attached list

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

INTRODUCTION TO NEW SELECTBOARD MEMBER

New selectboard member Bill Cleary was introduced to the rest of the board. Bill thanked the people that voted for him.

MINUTES

Julia moves to approve the March 28, 2019 minutes as amended, Allison seconds, motion passed 3-0.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

John Roberts, Road Foreman, reviewed the road schedule for March 29 through April 11, 2019 (attached).

John also mentioned that the road crew hopes to cut down trees on Rogers Road and Rubaud Road in preparation for grant work.

Julia Andrews moved to accept the road schedule from March 15-March 28. Bill Cleary seconded, motion passed 3-0.

CLOTHING POLICY

Allison Hope explained that Nanette Rogers had talked to other towns in regards to their clothing reimbursement policies for road crew members. Westford has a policy that reimburses road crew members for their work attire and we need a procedure of what to do when the invoices for these purchases come in.

Allison asked John Roberts what would work for him and the rest of the road crew, she suggested Lenny's. John mentioned that Lenny's is a bit expensive and said that he and other members have used Tractor Supply as well as the St. Albans Co-Op in the past. He also mentioned that Sean Cushing is holding his clothing receipts for reimbursement.

Allison wonders about road crew members in the future that might not be able to afford work attire outright. We currently reimburse up to \$300.

Nanette Rogers brought up that there are OSHA requirements that need to be met for work attire. Allison brought up that we need a solid procedure in place and wants to have an internal procedure ready in a few weeks. She will work with Julia Andrews on this.

EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

The Chair signed Excess Weight Permits for WRS Investment Inc, Driscoll Brothers Excavating LLC, Rox Asphalt, Barrett Trucking Co Inc, Justin King, Masterson & Son Excavation LLC, Gauthier Trucking Co Inc, G. W. Tatro Construction Inc, Wells Trucking,

Queen City Iron & Metal, R3 Smith Transportation LLC, Dana H Sweet Trucking Inc, Duffy's Waste & Recycling Inc, and Richmond Home Supply.

TOWN COMMON COMMITTEE

Lori Johnson, a representative of the Town Common Committee was present. She mentioned other members of the committee were Caroline Brown and Suzie Kearns. This year is the 200th anniversary of the Westford Common. In conjunction with Melissa Manka, Planning Coordinator, they are wanting to spruce up the common to honor this anniversary.

Lori goes on to mention that they have already trimmed back some trees on the common with volunteer work earlier this year which was free of cost. The Town Common Committee wants permission to spend money from the Common Fund to do additional small projects. The Common Fund is a fund of donated money from Henrik Kruse and is to be used exclusively for repairs and improvements for the Common. It is not taxpayer money and the Town Common Committee needs permission to access this fund.

Some of the projects the committee wants to do include repairs to wooden structures on the Common such as picnic tables and benches. Many of the benches are in need of repair or replacement, the Committee is also hoping to reduce the number of benches on the common from 8 to 4 or 5 due to lack of use.

Lori mentions that there are some cracks in the concrete on one corner of the pavilion/gazebo. The committee hopes to patch this crack and add a skirt of stone on the ground around the pavilion to decrease any potential damage done by mowers (which the crack is suspected to come from). This skirt will also increase drainage.

Some of the benches on the common are sinking into the ground. The committee would like to identify more permanent positions for each bench and provide gravel pads for the benches to sit on to increase support and reduce sinking.

Last year the committee filled many sinkholes on the common, but this year the holes have returned. The committee hopes to use some of the Common Fund to buy good topsoil to fill and fix these holes in a more permanent way. Lori hopes to use volunteer labor to complete many of these projects to help get the community involved and help save on costs. She mentions there is currently \$47,000 in the Common Fund.

Allison Hope asked for a cost estimate for the projects suggested. Lori said that all receipts and accounting will be done properly for the project and that the Committee thinks around \$3,000 will be needed, but does not know exact cost of everything at the moment. John Roberts said that based on the projects they want to do that \$3,000 would be plenty.

Julia Andrews moved to authorize the Committee to use \$3,000 for Westford Common maintenance. Bill Cleary seconded as long as receipts are provided. Motion passed 3-0.

RULES OF PROCEDURE

The selectboard looked over the Selectboard Rules of Procedure. These rules were established last year as best practices and expectations of board members. The board did not make any changes to the procedure. Bill Cleary moved to approve, Julia Andrews seconded, motion passed 3-0.

ELIMINATING THE OFFICES OF TOWN AGENT AND TOWN GRAND JUROR

The offices of Town Agent and Town Grand Juror are antiquated positions. The Legislature Council contacted Nanette because they are working on a law that would eliminate the Town Agent position. The law would include a provision for towns that have Charters. Last year, the Legislature approved a bill that eliminated the Town Grand Juror position. Unfortunately, the law did not include a provision for towns that have Charters. Nanette asked the Selectboard if they agree with the new law being written and if they would like the Legislature to amend last year's law to include towns with Charters. Both Allison Hope and Julia Andrews voiced their support for elimination.

DOG COMPLAINT

Dave Tilton, Dog Warden, was present to help with a dog complaint in town. Allison Hope brought up the original complaint, an email regarding the barking of Dennis Collins' beagles. Dave mentioned that the complaint also included an audio recording, but that the audio recording was short and not very helpful in the overall scope of the complaint.

Dennis Collins, whose dogs were complained about, mentions that his dogs aren't a problem. He is retired and home all day with his dogs. He says that the dogs are not outside for more than 10 minutes at a time and that the dog ordinance says a nuisance dog is one that barks for 15 minutes or more. He also brings up that he has not had complaints in the past or from other residents nearby.

Allison Hope asks Dennis if he has spoken with the neighbors making the complaint. Dennis mentioned that he had talked to one of the family members, but not directly to the resident that made the complaint. Allison mentioned that talking to the resident that had made the complaint would maybe be more helpful and that she would like it if when neighbors had problems, they would talk with each other first before going to the town office or selectboard.

Julia Andrews brings up that the resident that made the complain could also approach their neighbors in this instance.

Dennis mentions that out of his two dogs one is 15 years old and does not bark often and that the other dog is taken out on leash and therefore is supervised outside. He suggests that there have been a lot of coyotes in the area and thinks that might be what his neighbor is hearing.

Gary Collins, Dennis Collins' brother, mentions that he hears the neighbor's dogs all the time along with their pet peacocks. Dave Tilton suggest this seems like a "he said, she said" situation. Allison thought this seemed bigger than a dog issue.

Nanette Rogers said that she and Dave Tilton had spoken and agreed that dog complaints required documentation and that it is hard for Dave to enforce the dog ordinance without proof of an issue. Dave brought up that he only left Dennis a note giving notice of the complaint. Gary said that they just want to remedy the situation. Dennis suggested that it does sound like they need to talk with their neighbor.

Bill Cleary brought up a line in the complaint email where the resident who complained mentioned that Dennis had threatened their mother's birds (peacocks). He says this indicates that Dennis has spoken with his neighbors. Dennis clarifies and says that he has only spoken to the mother and that her birds had wandered on to his property. Bill wants to keep this situation from becoming a feud.

TASK LIST

Allison Hope updated the task list and will share the document with Bill Cleary as he is a new selectboard member. Julia Andrews suggested that due to selectboard member absences in the months of July and August that several meetings might have to be canceled.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL

The board approved the accounts payable and payroll warrants.

CORRESPONDENCE

Nanette Rogers mentioned that the VT Human Resources Association is holding a Human Resource conference in May. She is hoping to attend but does not currently have money in the budget for the \$99 attendance fee. The Board felt they could find \$99 for Nanette to attend the conference.

Allison Hope brought up that she spoke in person with the Fairfax Town Manager about Westford's relationship with Myers. Both Fairfax and Westford have trash contracts that expire in 2020. Allison would like a bid from a company that is just Westford as well as a bid for both Westford and Fairfax combined. She brings up the fact that both towns split trash days within the town and that syncing up those days within one company could be cost effective for both the towns and the trash company. Fairfax uses Casella. Casella is more expensive but handles the Fairfax roads very well. Allison wonders if this would be a good option for us as well because our roads are similar. Allison brought up that the fact Myers was unwilling to make changes such as chains on their trucks to accommodate our roads better and that it was a new issue for the town.

Bill Cleary says he had spoken with Myers in a separate correspondence in regards to the confusion about how the split trash trucks works on Front Porch Forum. He said Myers was very accommodating in showing him how the truck worked and suggested any residents that have questions about how the trucks work ask Myers workers when they see them and it should clear up any confusion.

Julia Andrews is sitting on a Quality Youth Development steering committee for Essex & Westford. The committee is trying to make communities more engaging for youth residents by meeting ten benchmarks. One of the benchmarks would be the ability to engage youth in town government. A subcommittee will be formed to do this for both towns by having youth residents in town sit on some of the town boards and experience town government. She thinks the recreation committee and the library committee would be great starting points. Nanette Rogers suggested that with the upcoming projects on the Common that the Town Common Committee would also be a great option. Julia believes that even though youth residents are not voters or taxpayers we still work for them as they are part of the town. She will keep the Selectboard up to date on how things progress.

Nanette Rogers also wanted to bring up that there is a petition about the new Fire Ordinance going around and wanted to make selectboard members aware as a special meeting might need to be called.

Allison Hope asked what was in the petition, she is confused why residents are now concerned about this information as the selectboard had many meetings about the ordinance. She mentions that the selectboard took out almost all new changes to the ordinance and that it was stripped back to what was almost the previous ordinance in town. During the times the ordinance was being discussed nobody came forward with concerns or suggestions. She

recalls that over a year ago when the new fire ordinance was originally discussed that the size of the fire ring was an issue, but stands by the fact that all these conversations have already been had multiple times. Allison thinks that the selectboard could maybe have gotten out in front of this issue earlier.

Julia Andrews notes that she is cautious about Front Porch Forum as it can be very negative and inflammatory in tone. Nanette Rogers suggest that perhaps a note about the draft on Front Porch Forum could have prevented residents only now being aware what was in the ordinance. Bill Cleary thinks that the ordinance is not as clear as it could be and is confusing overall.

Allison says that she would love for residents who have complaints and questions to contact the selectboard about such issues instead of going to Front Porch Forum and expecting that FPF is a way to reach out to the town and selectboard. FPF is not an official email or contact for selectboard members and things can go unseen, unlike if an email is sent to the selectboard where board members can see the email directly.

Bill wonders if we are trying to solve a fire issue that doesn't exist and Allison suggests that this is still the same conversation they've been having for the past year. She brings up that the Fire Warden wants education information in the ordinance where it is not needed and that they are working towards a solution. Nanette Rogers says that having an ordinance the way we do makes it enforceable through the judicial branch of government where before it wasn't.

Lori Johnson wanted to mention and thank Seth Jensen who provided clear information about the fire ordinance and diffused the tone on FPF quickly.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison Hope, Chair
Westford Selectboard

Callie Hamdy
Assistant Town Clerk

TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.
ROAD SCHEDULE
March 29, 2019 – April 11, 2019

Work to be done

- Pothole repair when we can.
- Grade roads.
- Change the truck tires over to summers.
- Tree and brush cutting on Rogers and Rubaud Rd. to start grant work.

Work completed

- Work on the state grant to replace the Rogers Road culvert.
- Filled potholes on most roads.
- Graded sections of Woods Hollow, Old Stage, Osgood Hill Rd. and Brookside Rd.
- Graded Cambridge Rd.
- Removed the wing plows from the plow trucks.
- Serviced the Grader and Excavator.
- Road and ditch repair on Manley Rd.
- Hauled gravel to the shop.
- Removed a beaver dam on Cambridge Rd.
- Piled the remaining sand that was frozen.
- Turned the cutting edge on the loader.
- Fixed some signs.
- Put cold patch in the holes at the bridge on Cambridge Rd.
- Cut down some trees on Plains Rd.
- Chipped the branches from tree pruning on the common.

Approved at the 4/11/18 Selectboard Meeting.

TOWN OF WESTFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
GUEST LIST

Date: April 11, 2019

Name (please print)

Address

Lori Johnson

22 White Church Ln

Dave Langille

138 Old # 11

DAVE TILTON

1542 OLD STAGE

GARY COLLINS

1784 Route 128

Venny Collins

77 Manley RD