

**SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
**September 12, 2019**

Present: Allison Hope  
          Julia Andrews  
          Bill Cleary  
          Callie Hamdy  
          Greg Barrows  
          John Roberts

Guests: See attached list

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

**CHANGES TO AGENDA**

Recreation Committee appointment and discussion on the new John Deere Loader added.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment

**MINUTES**

Bill made a motion to approve the August 22, 2019 minutes as amended. Julia 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 3-0.

**HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

The Road Foreman, John Roberts, went over the Road Schedule (see attached).

Bill Cleary motioned to approve the Road Schedule for August 23 – September 12. Julia 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 3-0.

Julia asked if any thought goes into when to grade the roads before winter since last year winter arrived early and the roads had not been graded. The resulting winter of freeze and thaw cycles produced poor road conditions. John said that the plan is to grade on schedule as long as the weather will allow and to maintain the road in the best shape they can as long as they can.

**FIRE & HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT SITE PLAN**

Allison had signed off on the site plan going to DRB with anticipation that it would be talked about here. It needed to be on the agenda since the agenda was posted.

John began by explaining some of the issues with the current salt shed. It is in rough shape and is a primitive structure that only fits one load of salt. This makes it difficult to plan ahead when to order loads of salt since they have to be conscious of how much is currently in the shed. It doesn't allow for a good stock of salt for potential winter storms. The front of the shed is open which also allows snow to blow in. John decided that a new salt shed is needed. If we were to do it the way other towns have been doing new salt sheds it would be very expensive and the Town Garage is in need of a more immediate solutions. John's solution was to construct a temporary salt shed that is more protected on the current dumpster pad.

The fact that anybody can enter and back up into piles of salt and gravel when no Highway Department members are present is also an issue. The solution would be to add a gate that can be closed when the crew is not there and to move the metal dumpster outside of the gate so residents still had access.

With the loss of the Spiller Lot, the Highway Department has a lack of overall storage. There are plans to put an 18 x 20 addition on the current building on the Fire Department side. Lighting on the

garage also needs to be upgraded. The overall Site Plan includes lots of landscaping to help make the appearance of the Town Garage more appealing from the road.

Allison asked for clarification regarding the addition. She wanted to know if by addition John meant a shed roof. John explained that it would be an open bay addition, but that it would be built rugged enough that rooftop solar could eventually be installed. The goal is to have the garage produce its own energy. This addition will have a dirt floor.

In the plan a current asphalt pad is going to be replaced with concrete due to damage from water accumulation.

The Site Plan was put together by the Planning Coordinator and Zoning Administrator which pleased the board since they both know the planning and zoning laws and regulations extremely well. This brought comfort that the plan was done correctly. John clarified that this is a three-year plan.

Bill asked what John saw as the biggest priority of the items listed on the Site Plan. John replied that the salt shed and the addition on the end of the current building are most needed. The salt shed should hopefully be done some time in October. The town had also budgeted this year for the addition by putting \$30,000 into building improvements. Currently the salt shed is the biggest concern since water flows through the current shed area and dissolves the salt.

#### **NEW JOHN DEERE LOADER**

Greg Barrows, Treasurer, brought up that we had budgeted to replace the old excavator by trading it in. Ultimately this didn't happen because the old excavator was still usable. The town needs to find a way to pay for the new excavator. The net cost of the new one is \$91,350 and we had a down payment around \$30,000 plus trade in. Greg asked if the board wanted to pay this out of the general fund and be done with it or finance the remaining \$61,300.

Allison was concerned that if the excavator was paid out of the general fund it would contribute to the deficit that the board has been working so hard to pay off within 5 years. Greg agreed that yes, paying off the excavator from the general fund could do that, but we already have the equipment in our yard and it needs to be paid for in some way.

Allison's first instinct is to finance the excavator and then pay it off as soon as they can. Julia agreed and did not think adding to the deficit in any way would bode well for the board.

The board was in agreement on financing the excavator and Greg will be giving John the check.

#### **WESTFORD TOWN LANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The board was ready to vote on the Westford Town Lands Management Plan. Allison was clear in that the board had seen this version of the revised Plan for some time. It was not voted on in August because the incorrect version of the Plan was put on the website. Julia explained that the plan had gone through at least four different iterations.

Allison mentioned that the Westford Town Lands Management Plan is a plan that doesn't have all the answers yet, but it offers a framework on how to manage the Westford Town Lands. She asked the board if they had any additional thoughts. Pat Haller was present with his children, Finn and Penny. He thinks it is a great plan that is well written, in his opinion it's time to execute it.

Bill Cleary commented that it seems like hunting has been addressed really well in the Plan but he was disappointed that in all the board's discussions on the plan that they never talked about exactly what the hunting access might look like and how it would be paid for. Bill wondered who would be

responsible for developing the access. Julia replied that the Conservation Commission is responsible for achieving the goals outlined in the Management Plan and that includes building a hunting access. As far as payment is concerned, that is not yet something the board had imagined. Julia mentioned that the access could be anything from laying down gravel to purchasing land specific for access. The town will need to budget specifically to get the access done since it is a goal in the plan.

Bill was curious what a reasonable time frame for access construction would be. Allison explained that once the Conservation Commission receives this final plan they can better execute and explain what the timeframe would be. It would behoove the board to ask what a reasonable amount of time will be for the different goals outlined in the Management Plan. It would be good to know how those different goals will affect the budget going forward. In Allison's opinion, having the plan approved prior to giving staff and committee members items to work on would be ideal. She reminded the board that the Management Plan is not yet approved.

Julia motioned to approve the Management Plan as presented, Bill 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3-0.

### **REVIEW AND CONSIDER TRANSFER OF CHAIR & VICE CHAIR ROLES**

Allison wanted to discuss a potential transfer of the Chair and Vice Chair roles. While it is not the norm right now, she feels it warrants a conversation. Julia replied that she currently feels overwhelmed by all of the current things on her plate, but that is always going to be the case and she is willing to take on the responsibilities of Chair if that is something she needs to do.

Allison asked Bill, since he was a new board member, how he's feeling now that he's been on the board for about six months. Bill admitted he still has plenty to learn and would personally not want to step into either role at this time and is fine with either Allison or Julia being the Chair.

Julia offered that she could take on all Chair responsibilities except when it came to dealing with legal matters, she would want Allison to deal with the town lawyer. In Allison's opinion, if everybody on the board was currently comfortable where they were it was fine to leave the organization alone. She mentioned that it is important for the role of Chair to be rotated.

### **RECREATION COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT – PAT CRIBB**

Allison personally vouched for the Recreation Committee's Appointment of Pat Cribb. Bill motioned to approve, Julia 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 3-0.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Julia sent a note to Terry at the school to send a reminder to parents regarding speeding on Brookside Road. The speed limit on Brookside is 25 mph.

John mentioned that the horse crossing signs have not yet gone up, but they are working on it.

Charlie Baker from CCRPC is going to be attending the September 26<sup>th</sup> meeting to continue discussions on traffic calming. Bill discussed a traffic calming method that was applied in Williston. A large plastic speed bump installed in town created a lot of drama, created a three car pile up and had a lot of complaints. To Bill this indicates that Westford is not the only town having issues with traffic speeds and it also creates the concern that many traffic calming ideas do not actually work.

Julia brought up the correspondence with Joe Franz, who has been in contact with the board frequently regarding speeding on Woods Hollow Road. Joe noticed increased speeds yet again and had been counting cars going fast by his house. Julia invited Joe to come to the September 26<sup>th</sup>

meeting to discuss further traffic calming ideas with Charlie Baker, but Joe declined since he thought the board could handle it.

Linda Will had contacted the board regarding her interactions with John Roberts and the issues with her driveway. Part of her driveway is a Class 3 road. Allison asked John if he wanted to clarify the town's side of the communication. John explained that two years ago, when he first started as Road Foreman, Scott was plowing that side of town. John would ask if Scott had plowed that road, but it often got forgotten, that certainly was part of the problem. Also, the snowplows push snow to the right side. The road crew was plowing the road all the way up and pushing it to the right on the resident's property. In the spring she called regarding water running across her driveway which had not happened before. The crew went to her property, which we don't normally do, and asked if there was a culvert, she said there was. The "culvert" was a four-inch pipe that was not adequate for the area. John asked where they would prefer the crew push the snow, which the resident indicated.

In April the Wills explained they still had issues. Their driveway was lower than it had been before and there was a lot of gravel where the snow pile had been. The snow pile last year was very large and melted and refroze many times due to the weather. At the time, their sap truck was going up and down several times. John concluded that their sap truck was causing their issues and said that the crew couldn't do much with snow since it was currently frozen and unmovable.

In summer John visited the Wills twice. He was surprised at this communication since he and Sean had, what he thought, was a good conversation with the residents. John brought photos of the location over the years from google earth to explain how the area had changed. The Class 3 Road ends before you get to the Wills' house. The Town has been plowing the road, all the way up the Wills' driveway and into that property for around 35 years which was confirmed by Dick Stygles. John explained that the road is from the 1800's and not built for increased traffic. As buildings are built, snow can become an issue for those homeowners. Some of the issues are from increased activity from a sap collection tank (began in 2016). Overall there is more traffic on the road now when it was not built for it.

Allison explained that the resident had asked if the road needs to be a Class 3 Road as well as what the town's responsibility is. John explained that part of the issue is that the previous Road Foreman, Brent, had been going up to the Wills residence with a 1 ton and plowing and smoothing the resident's property so that it was perfect. He had also done this to several other properties, the town does not need to do this smoothing.

Bill thinks this opens a can of worms. The town can't just increase so many resources to service a resident's property and not town roads. He went up to the property with John today and it does not look bad in his opinion. Part of John's concern is that it's a closed small class 3 road. There's a no trespassing sign at bottom of hill that the town did not install where it is not their driveway. In John's opinion it's almost as if they are treating the entire road like their driveway when that is not the case.

Bill explained that he and John went to Rubaud Lane and Kilburn Lane as comparison. There are several little areas like this where they think Brent might have been servicing over the years on the side that the crew is not servicing now since it is private property and not town property. Bill thinks that taxpayers in town shouldn't be paying for another resident's plowing when they don't get that service themselves. He wonders how contentious it could become with the Wills if we change our policy regarding roads.

Allison agrees that we should not change road policy but thinks that a reminder about the typical conditions of Vermont winters and the actual responsibilities of the road crew would be helpful. John went on to explain that more heavily traveled roads like woods hollow and Cambridge are going to

be serviced first in a storm. A road that has one house on it is not a priority. Bill commented that many residents that live on private roads or long driveways pay for their plowing including himself. It's just a part of life.

Allison wanted to address the attack on John's character in the correspondence. She doesn't think that it is accurate. John mentioned that he always stands and listens to residents when they have something to say or tell him before replying. Bill thinks that the feelings of the Wills' must've been brewing for quite some time. They had approached the board during the meeting regarding the Fire Ordinance. At the time Julia had suggested that they put everything in writing, but that was months ago. Bill volunteered to contact the resident regarding their correspondence.

John had been in contact with Chris Dubin at CCRPC. There is a new dashboard available for viewing in which Westford was the guinea pig. Westford was chosen since previously the town had many roads that did not comply with state standards. John explained the graph on the dashboard and was happy to say that now a majority of Westford's roads meet standards. This is a big change from the beginning of the project where a majority of roads did not.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Julia had communicated with Marge McIntosh regarding the Westford Town Lands.

Allison had gotten back to Lori Johnson regarding her request for Parking on the Westford Common to be put on a future agenda.

John received an email regarding gravel on Route 128. He wanted to communicate that the town does not take care of Route 128, which is a state road and thus their responsibility.

#### **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL WARRANTS**

The Board approved the accounts payable and payroll warrants.

#### **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison Hope, Chair  
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy  
Assistant Town Clerk.

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.**

**ROAD SCHEDULE**

**Aug. 23, 2019 – Sept. 12, 2019**

Work to be done

- Grade roads when needed.
- Procure bids for the Rogers Rd. culvert replacement.
- Continue to haul in winter sand.
- Roadside brush cutting.
- Start Rogers Rd. "Better roads grant" work.
- Replace a culvert on the top of Old # 11 Rd.

Work completed

- Graded and put chloride on Brookside Rd., Old Stage Rd., Woods Hollow Rd., Osgood Hill Rd., Covey Rd., Old # 11 Rd., Kilburn Ln., Bill Wood Rd., and Stoney Ridge Rd.
- Hauled in winter sand.
- Replaced a rear wheel seal on 2014 Western Star.
- Replace the windows in the shop.
- Picked up the new 2020 Tandem.
- Had the wrist installed on the new excavator.
- Finished the ditching on lower Covey Rd.
- Hydroseeded lower Covey Rd.

Approved at the 9/12/19 Selectboard Meeting.

TOWN OF WESTFORD  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
GUEST LIST

Date: September 12, 2019

Name (please print)

Address

Dave Lavoie

# 11 Rd

PAT HALLER

123 Brookside Road

Finn Haller ✓

123 Brookside Road

Penny Haller

123 Brookside Road