

**SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
**March 12, 2020**  
**Draft Minutes**

Present:        Julia Andrews  
                 Allison Hope  
                 Callie Hamdy

                 John Roberts  
                 Nanette Rogers  
                 Greg Barrows

Guests: Dave Gauthier

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

**CHANGES TO AGENDA**

Addition of Front Door Quote, Pandemic Discussion

**REORGANIZATION**

Allison Hope nominated Julia Andrew for Selectboard chair, Julia 2<sup>nd</sup> and accepted, motion passed 2-0. Julia nominated Bill Cleary for vice chair, Allison 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed 2-0. Julia had no reason to want to change the current meeting schedule, there was no opposition to continuing the current schedule. Allison motioned to keep the regular meeting schedule as the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> weeks of every month, Julia 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 2-0. Allison motioned to use 7Days for legal notices with Burlington Free Press as backup.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dave Gauthier wanted to know why the roadcrew was doing brush cutting. John explained that it has not been done in some time so it's time to do it, it's a long process so they are trying to get a start on it now. Dave explained that he came into the town office to complain about the debris. Dave asked how many hours per year the new chipper was used, John explained that 100 or more hours and continued to explain that it's very time consuming to cut back brush from the road and that they will have to go through the ditches and pull all the debris up by hand to chip it. Dave wondered if a chainsaw was more time effective. John explained that the state has said to let the winter sand build up on the ditch and then reseed them, John explained with three road crew members that they don't have weeks to spend specifically cutting brush. They need to use their time effectively. John blew the debris from the road into the ditches and then the ditches will be cleaned up. They will also be removing a lot of dead trees that are potential hazards, these issues have been neglected for years and they are not going to mitigate the issue by doing it by hand.

**MINUTES**

Allison made a motion to approve the February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 minutes as amended, seconded by Julia Andrews. Motion passed: 2-0.

**ROAD SCHEDULE**

John Roberts, Road Foreman, went over the road schedule for February 14<sup>th</sup> – March 12<sup>th</sup>. Allison Hope motioned to approve the road schedule, Julia 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 2-0.

Julia would love John to reach out to other towns regarding COVID-19 and what they are going to do if all road crew members get sick and the potential for mutual aid between town crews.

**EXCESS WEIGHT PERMIT**

Julia signed excess weight permits for Dale E. Percy Inc., Richmond Home Supply Inc., DTF Inc., N.A. Manosh Inc., Demag Riggers & Crane Service Inc., All Metals Recycling, Ormond Bushey & Sons Inc., Justin King, Chevalier Drilling Co. Inc., Queen City Iron & Metal, OnSite Septic Solutions LLC, John G. French & Sons Trucking Inc., Weston Pulpwood Sales Inc., Moe DuBois Excavating, diStefano Landscaping, Working Dog Septic Service Inc., Waynes Construction, Rice Lumber Co. Inc., RJ Smith Transportation LLC, Structural Wood Corporation, Camp Precast Concrete Products Inc., ABC Supply, J. Hutchins Inc., Jack F Corse Inc., Arthur G. Davis Jr., Scott Brown Trucking, and Beacon Sales Acquisition.

**APPOINTMENT OF REAL ESTATE AGENT FOR 1705 VT ROUTE 128 PROJECT**

Heather Armata was present to discuss the buyer broker contract for the 1705 VT Route 128 project. Heather explained that it was a contract to hire Cornerstone Real Estate for this specific project known as the Pigeon Property. Heather typically does a higher commission when there is no agent on the other side, however she is waiving this fee for the project so the town can save money.

Julia wondered what happens if the deal doesn't go through and there is no purchase. Heather explained that there would be no payment in that situation. If the deal does go through, she would be paid at closing. Nanette wondered if there is a process for the Selectboard to go through if the purchase doesn't happen. Heather explained the only thing would be the termination of the agreement. Cornerstone Real Estate would just need a person appointed to sign; everything is done electronically. Heather suggests having a meeting after a person is appointed as there is quite a few things to discuss regarding the project.

All parties involved would ideally see all the Selectboard at this meeting, however Bill Cleary is still out of the state until April. Heather suggests that waiting a month until Bill returns would not be ideal. There is a tight timeline on this project. Julia wonders if Thursday April 2<sup>nd</sup> would be okay. Heather confirmed this timing is okay.

Allison made a motion to appoint Julia as the point person, Julia 2<sup>nd</sup> motion passed 2-0. Allison made a motion that they enter a buyer/broker contract with Cornerstone Realty, Julia 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 2-0.

**ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS OF VARIOUS TOWN OFFICES WITH TERMS THAT EXPIRED**

The board went over the appointments of various town offices that had expired in the last year. Nanette pointed out that the Zoning Administrator is supposed to be appointed every 3 years, she also talked to Maureen Carpenter and Mark Letorney and they are both interested in being reappointed. The list of potential appointees was read.

Allison motioned that the board approve the appointments, Julia 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 2-0.

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF NAME FOR NEW PRIVATE ROAD**

Several road names were presented for approval to the board for a new development off Milton-Westford Road. The Planning Coordinator and Town Administrator/Town Clerk were both concerned about the 9-1-1 usability of the names since one option sounds like an existing road and the other option is difficult to pronounce. Nannette contacted 9-1-1 and they also had the same concerns.

Allison is also cautious about the road names; however she believes diversity in name types is a good thing too. How do you respect the diversity while also being concerned about the viability of 9-1-1? She suggests potentially some education on the correct pronunciation would be helpful. Julia doesn't think they are difficult to pronounce. Allison thinks Setkic Road sounds like the best option due to the similarity of the option Rabya to the existing Rubau Road.

Allison made a motion to approve the name Setkic Road for the new development off Westford Milton Road, Julia 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed 2-0.

### **REQUEST TO PARTIALLY CLOSE WHITE CHURCH LANE ON MAY 2**

There was a request to close White Church Lane for the May Day Festival on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Julia's recollection was that they wanted to partially close the Lane to through traffic to help promote the May Day Festival, it is her understanding that the existing residents are okay with this plan so she doesn't really have any issue with it.

Allison made a motion to approve the request, Julia 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion passed 2-0.

### **DRAFT RFP FOR TRASH COLLECTION SERVICES**

Nanette did some work and put a draft version of the RFP out for the Selectboard to look at as a starting point. Allison brought up that the board needs to have the continued discussion on private roads and trash pickups and that the board also got some questions during town meeting about the new rules regarding food scraps beginning on July 1st. Nanette explains that CSWD does not require a trash hauler pick up compost, the town can also require residents to compost on their own property. Allison would like to see the bid with and without a compost haul service to see how it would affect the cost of the service.

Currently we allow residents up to 64 gallons per household per week. Additional waste is charged a fee. Allison doesn't think that Myers has been particularly good with sending out those bills in the first place unless residents are putting out particularly large items. Myers had explained that there is no way to compel residents to pay because they are contractually obligated to pick up their trash regardless of overage unless it's an item that is already described as not allowed for pick up. Julia wonders if this should be changed. Do we tell people to stop putting out those items?

Allison thinks it's a lot of burden on a hauler to be responsible for large items like furniture, toilets etc. Nanette had also separated the resident trash/recycling out from commercial properties because this had been an issue in the last year. Allison thinks that this part of the contract should be very specific and would like to grandfather in the existing businesses, however it would need to be very specific for new businesses so issues like Rovers vs. Myers does not occur again. Allison volunteers to contact Myers to get a list of current dumpsters in town.

Allison would also like potential haulers to tell us what vehicles they will be using and how they are equipped so that we can see if they will be fit for service since Haulers using chains and snow tires will be of interest. Allison also suggested new language for new pickups and houses getting rid of their pickups such as abandoned properties or foreclosures, she would like to know the process of the hauler for these instances.

Nanette wondered about any fees that increase during a contractual period. Allison thinks they should spell that out in the contract.

Greg noticed a discrepancy between two recent month bills in the current Myers invoice, so he is going to contact them.

Julia opened the discussion on private roads. The board needs to decide if the hauler would go down private roads or pick them up at the end of private roads. Some private roads currently get roadside pickup and others must bring their trash down to the end of their road. In Fairfax, for example, they exclude all private roads. In Westford this would exclude most of the population. Dave Gauthier brings up that the town doesn't maintain private roads so if a hauler goes down a road that is not maintained by the town and is in unknown condition this would be a liability for the hauler.

Allison brings up that some private roads have differing topography and that from the dawn of some developments they have had roadside pickup, it's either in her opinion, all or nothing regarding private roads. Julia points out that if you live five miles up a private road, for example, that is very different if you live 500 yards from a town road. Some people don't have the physical capability to bring their trash down.

John wonders if a dumpster down at the end of private roads, Julia thinks that residents would be very opposed to this. It would not be pleasing to look at and would potentially increase junk on the side of the road. Allison wanted to be clear that the King's Hill Development solutions didn't work last year. As a resident, driving on those roads is already difficult so she understands why they wouldn't want to drive a trash truck, even with chains. She doesn't have a solution currently, but she doesn't think it's worth it to spend all the time just to take care of Kings Hill only to set the other private roads aside.

Nanette listed the private roads that do not get pickup. Dave Gauthier knows you can't tell the companies what to use for equipment, but he suggests that a smaller non trash hauler with a dumpster in the back could be used for pickup to dump into a larger trash vehicle. Allison thinks that in some instances like described it works, but Westford needs to decide flat out if they are going to service private roads or not. She wouldn't ask a hauler to go up Duffy Hill Road. She doesn't know how to get around that there are many private roads that are flat and easy to drive on and others are very much not. Westford is not responsible for the roads, however most trash complaints come from those roads.

Julia wonders other than last year were there other years were this was a problem? Dave Gauthier stated that the problem only came up after the town switched from Gauthier to Myers, Dave clarified that he is saying this not just because he is related to the owners of that company and Julia agrees that it aligns with what she has heard and observed. Allison just wants to set reasonable expectation for service. What we offer to some we have to offer to all. We need to set parameters if we serve some and not others. John stated that it would be difficult to class what type of road a private road is because we don't own those roads, unlike the town roads.

Dave Gauthier thinks that the homeowners may need to realize that if the hauler can't get to them on certain days then their trash isn't going to be picked up. Allison stated that she's not leaning one way or the other, she just doesn't want to be exclusionary. Julia thins that taking away roadside pickup for existing current pickups would be a very unpopular decision. Allison would be curious of the number of pickups in town private vs. town roads.

John's question would be if a trash hauler goes on a private road and gets damaged who has the liability there. Nanette explained that often these contracts hold the town harmless. Nanette suggests a release of liability from homeowner's associations to the town and showed an example contract that did this from another town.

### **OPTION TO IMPROVE WIRELESS CONNECTION AT TOWN OFFICE**

An option to improve the wireless connection at the Town Office was brought up because the Planning Commission has been having issues accessing documents and the internet at a decent speed during meetings which makes productivity difficult. It is thought to be the wireless connection. Several years ago, VT Connections had quoted us to set up wireless connectors in both the upstairs and downstairs of the building. Nanette would like to do a test. Next time the Planning Commission meets they will be working with VT Connections to see the potential issues.

Julia brought up the Business Committee and their chair, Mark Drapa. They are working on an interconnected Westford Common that extends wireless all around the town center. Greg would be wary of making the municipal wireless public. Allison explains that it currently is public with a guest account and non-guest account.

Nanette explained that even though the Town Office building is not big, there is a lot of concrete in the construction that potentially keeps connectivity poor. Allison is concerned because it is an expensive quote, around \$ 2,000. She is wondering to save potential cost if the PC could download documents prior to coming to the meeting, or if they want to work collaboratively to solve the problem in other ways such as having one person designated to do the document changes they want to do.

Allison would still want the test going forward so the problem can be pinpointed, but if it is the problem, perhaps there is other solutions that are more cost effective.

### **FRONT DOOR QUOTE**

Nanette had gotten a quote for a new door for the Town Office. The current door is in VERY poor condition. The company is looking to take out the current door and tightening the space to put in the new door. There are some unknowns like potential rot etc. that might drive the quote up.

Julia asked what they had in the budget for the project. They had budgeted \$5,000 and the quote is under that which does leave room for potential issue remediation. But at the same time the problem does need to be resolved.

In John's opinion the quote is high, and he recommended the same person that did the windows at the town garage. Allison does like the current quote but thinks having a second quote is ideal.

### **COVID-19 DISCUSSION**

Julia was asked specifically if the Selectboard is going to create a plan of how the town is going to continue to be run if it is impacted. Julia is very concerned about the road crew since they are most difficult to replace; at the town office it is easier for others to step in. The other thing she was thinking about was extending access to public meetings in a non-physical way such as digital meetings.

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Allison was concerned about the town office employees since the office is small and casual so interaction with the public is common for them. She asked about what protocols the employees were taking to prevent potential issue. Nanette contacted VTLC and they stated that somebody does still need to be present in the office for a meeting, but board members CAN phone in and so can the public. Julia had found a free conference call line which could be helpful in this situation. Nanette also wondered what the recreation committee was doing to plan for large gatherings.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Andre Roy asked about whether it makes sense to go to a five person Selectboard and in Julia's opinion it would be great, she does sometimes worry that two people as a sign off is challenging but ultimately she doesn't see evidence they could populate a five person board at this time.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Julia wanted to put out an informational post on Front Porch Forum regarding road conditions and expectations from residents.

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

Accounts payable and payroll warrants were approved.

### **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julia Andrews, Chair  
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy  
Assistant Town Clerk

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.  
ROAD SCHEDULE  
Feb. 14, 2020 – March 12, 2020**

Work to be done

- Fix bad areas in the roads.
- Grade roads.
- Work on the break room remodel.
- Brush cutting.

Work completed

- Plowed, sanded and salted roads several times.
- Work on the trucks. (service, oil change)
- Worked on break room remodel.
- Hauled in more winter sand and road gravel.
- Posted the roads.
- Moved the radar sign.
- Graded many roads.
- Fixed mud spots, added gravel.
- Inspection on 2020 International.
- Brush cutting.

Approved at the 3/12/20 Selectboard Meeting.