

SELECTBOARD MEETING
March 12, 2020

Present:	Julia Andrews Allison Hope Callie Hamdy	John Roberts Nanette Rogers Greg Barrows
Guests:	Dave Gauthier	Heather Armata

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

CHANGES TO AGENDA

Addition of front door quote and pandemic discussion.

REORGANIZATION

Allison Hope nominated Julia Andrews for Selectboard chair, Julia seconded and accepted. Motion passed 2-0.

Julia nominated Bill Cleary for vice chair, Allison seconded. 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 second and fourth Thursday of each month, Julia seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

Allison motioned to use Seven Days for legal notices with the Burlington Free Press as backup, Julia seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Gauthier wanted to know why the roadcrew was doing brush cutting. John explained that it has not been done in quite some time so it's time to do it, explaining 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 with three road crew members they don't have weeks to spend specifically on cutting brush. They need to use their time effectively. The debris is blown 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, 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 through March 12. Allison Hope motioned to approve the Road Schedule, Julia seconded. 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 PERMITS

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, On-Site Septic Solutions, John G. French & Sons Trucking, Inc., Weston Pulpwood Sales, Inc., Moe DuBois Excavating, DiStefano Landscaping, Working Dog Septic Service, Inc., Wayne's Construction, Rice Lumber, RJ Smith Transportation, 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 property. 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 needs 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 is not ideal. There is a tight timeline on this project. Julia wonders if Thursday April 2 would be okay. Heather confirmed this timing is okay.

Allison made a motion to appoint Julia as the point person. Julia seconded. Motion passed: 2-0.

Allison made a motion that they enter a buyer/broker contract with Cornerstone Realty. Julia seconded. 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 expired with the timing of Town Meeting. Nanette pointed out that the Zoning Administrator is supposed to be appointed every three years. She also talked to Maureen Carpenter and Mark Letorney and they are both interested in being reappointed.

Zoning Administrator	3 year term	Kate Lalley
Inspector of Wood & Lumber & Weigher of Coal	1 year term	Kyle Hobart
Fence Viewers	1 year term	Bruce Root, Scot Phillips
Tree Warden	1 year term	Ned Meehan

Land Agent	1 year term	Benjamin Stark
Development Review Board	3 year term	Bill Cleary, Jesse Lebrecque, Andrew Collier
DRB Alternate Representatives	1 year term	Seth Jensen, Francois Ross
Planning Commission	4 year term	George Lamphere, Mark Letorney
Conservation Commission	4 year term	Kirsten Tyler
Recreation Committee	3 year term	Maureen Carpenter, Lori Miller, Patrick Cribb
Town Agent	1 year term	Willis Breen
Town Grand Juror	1 year term	Ronald Perry

Allison motioned to approve the appointments. Julia seconded. 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 Westford-Milton 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. Nanette 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 Rubaud Road.

Allison made a motion to approve the name Setkic Road for the new development off Westford-Milton Road. Julia seconded. Motion passed: 2-0.

REQUEST TO PARTIALLY CLOSE WHITE CHURCH LANE ON MAY 2

There was a request to partially close White Church Lane for the May Day Festival on May 2nd. Julia's recollection was that they wanted to partially close the road 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 have any issue with it.

Allison made a motion to approve the request. Julia seconded. Motion passed: 2-0.

DRAFT RFP FOR TRASH COLLECTION SERVICES

Nanette drafted an RFP and circulated to 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 was asked questions during Town Meeting about the new rules regarding food scraps beginning on July 1, 2020. 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 or bring to a facility. Allison would like to see the bid with and without a compost collection service to see how it would affect the cost of the service.

Currently we allow residents up to 64 gallons of household trash per household per week. Additional waste, such as bulky items, is charged a fee. Allison doesn't think that Myers has been particularly good with sending out those bills 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 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 will 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 the Selectboard can see if they will be fit for Westford roads. 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 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 will go down private roads or pick them up where the private road intersects with a Town road. Some private roads currently get curbside 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. In her opinion, it's 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 than 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 would work. 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, on those roads. 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 some of 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 that 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 private roads, however most trash complaints come from those roads.

Julia wonders if other than last year were there other years where 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. 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 thinks that taking away roadside pickup for existing current pickups would be a very unpopular decision. Allison would be curious of the number of pickups on private roads vs. town roads.

John's question would be if a trash hauler goes on a private road and the road 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 during their meetings. This is making productivity difficult. It is thought to be the wireless connection. Several years ago, VT Connections submitted a quote to set up wireless connectors in both the upstairs and downstairs of the building. Nanette would like to do a test. The 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 still wants 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 obtained a quote for a new door for the Town Office. The current door is in very poor condition. The contractor is looking to take out the current door and replacing it with a smaller door that will still be ADA compliant. 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 operate if it is impacted. Julia is very concerned about the road crew since they are most difficult to replace; noting that 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. Nanette contacted VLCT 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.

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 what protocols the employees were taking to prevent potential issue. Nanette advised the office is being disinfected daily, more if a person who comes in appears to be sick.

CORRESPONDENCE

Andre Roy asked about whether it makes sense to go to a five-person Selectboard. 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.

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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 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.