

SELECTBOARD MEETING
April 23, 2020

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

Guests: See attached list

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. This was a Zoom meeting; all attendees attended remotely.

CHANGES TO AGENDA

Added application to bury utility lines to Highway Department and added repairs to Pleasant View Cemetery driveway and Cemetery trees in right of way to discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

MINUTES

Allison made a motion to approve the April 9, 2020 minutes as amended, seconded by Bill Cleary. Motion passed: 3-0.

ROGERS ROAD CULVERT REPLACEMENT BIDS

There were many bids for the Rogers Road contract, the lowest three were all within \$4,000 of each other. Some John had not heard of, but others were familiar. John is most comfortable with Jeff Hutchins since he was employed by Jeff for a long time so knows what the company is capable of. Bill also had a favorable opinion of Hutchins as his projects are seen everywhere around state. Allison made a motion to award the bid for the Rogers Road Culvert Replacement to J. Hutchins. Bill called upon Michele from G & N Excavation as she was present to see if she wanted to explain her company and bid, which Michele did. John asked about the equipment that she had available. There was no more discussion. Bill seconded the motion to award the bid to J. Hutchins. Motion passed: 3-0.

ROAD SCHEDULE

The Road Foreman, John Roberts, discussed the Road Schedule from April 10, 2020 through April 23, 2020. Bill Cleary motioned to approve the Road Schedule. Allison Hope seconded. Motion passed: 3-0.

ROADSIDE MOWING BIDS

There was one bid for the roadside mowing, Summit Contracting whom the Town has not previously worked with. Julia asked if the bid is aligned with John's expectations which John confirmed that it was. Ashley Buoniconti from Summit Contracting was present to discuss and was confident they could accomplish the work requested. Allison motioned to award the contract for the 2020 Roadside Mowing to Summit Contracting, Bill seconded. Motion passed: 3-0.

ANNUAL HIGHWAY FINANCIAL PLAN FY'21

Nanette explained this is an annual form that needs to be filed with AOT. John calculates the amounts for Class 2 and Class 3 roads as well as winter and non-winter maintenance and confirms the total equals the budget approved by the voters. All three members of the Selectboard need to sign this. They will come to the Town Office to do so.

APPLICATION TO BURY UTILITY LINE IN TOWN RIGHT OF WAY

A person contacted John about running a Comcast line to 285 Huntley Road. They are hoping to bore under the road, not dig up so that will potentially prevent some common issues. Allison asked why they need to go under the road, she thought they just attached to the utility pole. John said the utility pole is on the opposite side of the road and the utility line needs to get to the property. Bill brought up that in the planning language, the Town promotes underground utilities. If approved this would need to be signed by all Selectboard members and John. Bill motioned to approve the burial a utility line under Huntley Road as requested. Allison seconded. Motion passed: 3-0.

MOWING BIDS FOR TOWN PROPERTIES

There were two bids for the mowing of town properties. Robert & Sons Lawncare, who has done the care for us for three years, and Derrick Sloan. Nanette was unfamiliar with him, but his bid was double the Robert & Sons bid. Robert & Sons did it last year. John was happy with their service but said there was a little lack of service at the beginning of the mowing season. This issue was mitigated when it was brought up to them. John also noted that they did very little in terms of spring clean-up. Julia asked if there was a way to better direct their work. Nanette stated that she would discuss these shortcomings with them. Bill made a motion to award Robert & Sons Lawncare for the town properties mowing contract. Allison asked what the town budgeted for town mowing. Greg Barrows, Treasurer, confirmed that it was \$3,400 which included all the town properties. The Robert & Sons bid was \$3,800, \$800 of which is for the Highway Department and will come from their budget. Allison seconded. Motion passed: 3-0.

PLEASANT VIEW CEMETERY DRIVEWAY & TREES IN ROW AT PLAINS CEMETERY

Lynn Gauthier was present from the Cemetery Commission. The 2019 Halloween Storm did some damage to the Pleasant View Cemetery driveway which John fixed in a timely manner, but now that the ground has thawed, there are some sinkholes that need further repair. Because the cemetery is opening and will host a funeral soon, she would like repairs to these issues. The big issue is an old stone culvert. John asked if she wanted to repair the existing culvert or replace it with a plastic culvert. Lynn said more immediately she would want the sinkholes fixed as that's a bigger liability. John and Lynn further discussed the specifications of the project. Lynn also wanted to continue the discussion regarding the trees at Plains Cemetery at a future meeting.

OWNERSHIP STATUS OF PROPERTY BETWEEN LIBRARY & TOWN OFFICE BUILDING

The Highway Department repositioned the curbs in the library parking lot where they had been plowed over from the winter. They also made sure that new material put down near the Library building slopes away from the building. Material pushed up by the plow often creates blockage where water can accumulate. The feeling is that a catch basin if installed could help mitigate this problem.

From the Highway Department's point of view, putting in a catch basin would take 3 to 4 days, cost unknown but somewhere between \$1,500 and \$2,000. Julia asked if the Highway

Department completing the work was not contingent with the ownership issue. John confirmed it was not, but regardless should help with the washout that happens between the Town Office and Library.

The 2017 opinion from the Town Attorney on the ownership of the land between the Library and Town Office was revisited. The attorney was not really of the opinion that it belonged to anybody strongly. This means that John can do the stormwater work without the ownership issue being resolved. Julia hopes the next step would be a deeper dive into the ownership issue so it can be resolved. It would be her opinion that right now given the economic situation of the state and country that maybe the Town holds off on spending the legal fees and sees how the tax revenue is before we dive into one of these stickier legal situations.

Allison thinks that they will have to negotiate with the landowner, finalize it and put it to bed. The way that entire section of land is configured will need to be resolved if further development is to happen. Bill is also in favor of putting off the issue for a short time. Bill also noted that John's budget for the stormwater work was much lower than what was budgeted and thinks it is a great option. Julia was happy with the discussion; she'd like to keep this item reoccurring and maybe revisit it in the fall.

DRAFT RFP FOR TRASH & COLLECTION SERVICES

Allison thinks the new draft RFP looks good, she thanked Nanette. She did not have any changes. Allison emailed Jeff Hutchins and asked him what he will need regarding dumpsters for the new Westford Country Store & Café so that the Town can get an accurate count for the RFP. She is curious what companies will make bids and what the bids will be for. John felt that the discussion lacked specifications on appropriate tires for winter season. Allison pointed out that this is covered in #9 on the RFP. It is not specific about appropriate tires but does prompt the bidder to say what they are using which gives the Town the opportunity to get a truthful response instead of feeding bidders the response we want.

Nanette had put in that the Board would like to review the bids on May 28th, which the Board agreed was a good amount of time, with finalization by June 12th. Bill wanted to clear up that he was not against food scrap collection as he participates in this himself. He is just trying to think how a private business is going to build the food scrap collection into the cost. Allison is also curious as this is a fairly new concept to most trash haulers. She reiterated this is why they asked for quotes with and without collection for food scrapes. However, residents really cannot be putting the food scraps in the trash so they will need to be composting if pickup is not provided. In a rural town the need for food scrap collection is much different than an area more urban where a majority of the population lives in apartments. In Westford, more people are likely to own property where they can do their own composting. For Allison it is more of an exploratory bid. The Town can decide to include it or not, but it will be educational to know the differences so we might as well ask. She does agree with Bill it will likely be too expensive.

Nanette will mail out the RFP beginning of next week.

COVID-19 UPDATES & LOGISTICS

Governor Scott had recently put out an order to steadily but slowly reopen the state. One of the businesses in Phase 1 is the reopening of municipal offices if the municipality can be compliant with CDC orders. In Julia's opinion there should be no rush to fling open the doors. It is more important to do things more thoughtfully and carefully rather than fast. The Town has not been open to the public since the Stay at Home Order was issued. A few employees

are working from home and due to their family dynamics will not be able to return to work until the order is lifted. There are also several high-risk family members of employees that would needlessly be potentially affected if the office reopened right away.

Bill is ambivalent on the subject; he is not affected by the offices reopening. Allison is in the same boat as Julia and agrees that we should take our time. She is looking to Nanette to proceed depending on how comfortable employees are. Nanette is on the fence; she would like to stay closed until the Stay at Home Order is lifted. However, there are some research projects that can not be done electronically as staff has been able to do for other researchers. So, she would like to limit who comes into the office and only schedule these special appointments with very strict limitations. She is open to a situation like that, but she admits she is nervous about opening that flood gate. This would be strictly for attorneys, but she would also encourage them to do as much as they can electronically to minimize the amount of time in the office. The office will not be open to realtors or appraisers as these documents are easily transmitted electronically. In order to balance employees being at the office to do work that cannot be done from home and allowing researchers access, Nanette thinks that opening by appointment only for a total of four hours a week would ensure that the office can stay clean and sanitary. Nanette has only had two requests in the five weeks the Stay at Home Order has been in force where they could not do the research electronically so she does not think this will affect the office too much.

Julia would be inclined to take the go-slow route in support of the Town employees who have been flexible in this situation, but she also knows that this situation makes Nanette nervous. But for those special research needs we should accommodate those requests with the strict limitations Nanette listed. Nanette asked permission to order disposable masks and gloves in case researchers coming in under these special situations do not have them. Allison would be shocked if people did not come in with masks since the Governor's order was very specific with mask and glove wearing protocol for doing business. Allison thinks that if they come without a mask, they will be denied access to the office.

DISCUSS POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF DEADLINES FOR VARIOUS FEES

Nanette discussed how COVID Act 92 has allowed municipalities to extend fees and fines for certain items. For example, the fine for late dog licenses has already been extended to May 1st, but Nanette suggests extending it to June 1st since so many people are struggling to get to the veterinarian. Julia would be inclined to go to June 1st. Bill is not opposed either since that is not a huge financial burden for the Town. Allison motioned to extend the deadline for the late fee for Dog Licenses to June 1st. Bill seconded. Motion passed: 3-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

John corresponded with a resident about beaver dam issues on Woods Hollow Road.

Bill wanted to bring up Bob Scudero, who is the president of Underhill Rod & Gun Club, regarding an issue they were having with Act 250 approval. Act 250 asked if they had a permit from the Town for the clubhouse and that is where the story gets cloudy. Zoning went into effect in Westford in 1972 and the clubhouse was built in early 1973. Based on his conversation with Bob Scudero, the end result of the public hearing was that the Town didn't schedule the hearing within the timeframe and the Town had to grant the Club a permit. However, the Club never drew the permit. Now in 2020 the issue is resurfacing. He asked Nanette to do a record search of the minutes where the Town said by default, they had the permit. Nanette was unable to find anything in the records about that meeting. Minutes for the

DRB started somewhere in the 1980's so she could not find minutes regarding the meeting held in 1973. She added that the only file she could find was the zoning file and the earliest document in the file was from 1985. In a second conversation Bill had with Bob, Bob had said that Act 250 has been hanging him up from the Town's perspective. His contention is, if it comes down to it, if Act 250 wants to see something from the Town that the Town should write something up because we have no records that said they did have a permit. Allison cautioned we would have to talk to the attorney about that because there was not a permit in the records.

COMMUNICATION

Julia wondered if it would be prudent to put something on Front Porch Forum regarding the fact that the office will remain closed to the public until the Stay at Home order is lifted on May 15th.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL WARRANTS

Allison will go to the Town Office tomorrow to sign the accounts payable and payroll warrants. Greg also expressed concern with payments to the first tax installment of the fiscal year since people are out of work due to Covid19. He explained there is a lot of financial unknowns, but the Town would have to look at that situation as it arises.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Allison made a motion to discuss personal in executive session at 8:24 p.m. Seconded by Bill Cleary. Motion passed: 3-0. People in attendance were Julia Andrews, Allison Hope and Bill Cleary. The Board exited Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julia Andrews, Chair
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy
Assistant Town Clerk

TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.
ROAD SCHEDULE
April 10, 2020 – April 23, 2020

Work to be done

- Grade roads.
- Start replacing culverts.
- Brush cutting.
- Haul in road gravel.
- Repairs to the Cat excavator.

Work completed

- Hauled in road gravel.
- Graded Cambridge Rd., most of Woods Hollow Rd., Manley Rd., Rollin Irish Rd., Seymour Rd., North end of Old Stage Rd., Bill Cook Rd., Pettingill Rd., Lower Covey Rd., Sections of Old # 11 Rd.,
- Brush cutting on Old Stage Rd.
- Washed the trucks.
- Put the summer tires on the trucks.
- Cleaned the shop floor.
- Repaired a hydraulic line on the grader.

Approved at the 4/23/20 Selectboard Meeting.

**TOWN OF WESTFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
GUEST LIST**

Date: April 23, 2020

The following people attended the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Dave Lavallee
Buddy Meilleur (LCATV)
Lynn Gauthier
Glenn Rogers
Michele Gaboriau
Ashley Buoniconti