

**SELECTBOARD MEETING  
September 24, 2020  
Minutes**

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

Guests:        See attached

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom. All attendees attended remotely.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA**

RFP for Grant Writer and Request to Use Gazebo on Oct. 4 were added to Discussion.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**MINUTES**

Bill Cleary made a motion to approve the September 10, 2020 minutes as amended., seconded by Allison Hope. Motion passed: 3-0.

**ROAD SCHEDULE**

The Road Foreman, John Roberts, discussed the September 11 - September 24 Road Schedule. Bill Cleary made a motion to approve the Road Schedule, seconded by Allison Hope. Motion passed: 3-0.

**ROADSIDE MOWING CONTRACT OPTION**

Roadside mowing was done two times this year, first week of June and second week of September. The contractor would like a contract to do the same thing for the next three years for the same price. John had no complaints about the job they did, just that the first mowing could be done a week earlier for wild parsnip control. He discussed this with the contractor who agreed if the Town signs a three-year contract.

Julia is fine with the three -year contract if the Town is happy with their service and they are giving us a good price, however she feels the contract should include an out just in case anything happens. It was noted that they were the only bid for the current year. Allison thinks we could look at updating our current contract with them. Julia would also like a clause that the Town should hear from them so feedback could be given. They don't need to check in with the Board, but a check in with John would be appropriate. Bill Cleary made a motion to work on approving a three-year contract with the current roadside mowing contractors, seconded by Allison Hope. Motion passed: 3-0.

**CCRPC ANNUAL REPORT**

Charlie Baker from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) was present to discuss the CCRPC's Annual Report. In FY'20, the CCRPC provided assistance to Westford on several projects including Municipal Plan Development Assistance, Chittenden

County Brownfields Program, Emergency Management, Water Quality Planning Assistance, Geographic Information Systems and Technical Assistance. They also assisted Westford in the Vermont Route 15 Paving. The Board updated Charlie's list of representatives in town that were pertinent to the CCRPC. Julia suggested Andy Fulton and Pat Haller for future potential representatives as they have shown interest in related subjects. The Westford Planning Commission has really appreciated the CCRPCs continued support in their projects over the past year. Charlie suggested he might be able to help with the grant writer position that had been budgeted for.

The Selectboard had been talking with the CCRPC about doing a traffic study and then COVID happened so it didn't seem the most important thing. Now that people are getting out and about the concerns about speeds have started up again. Westford had a fatal crash where residents had to behave as first responders so understandably there's a need to keep the topic alive and continue to push to have a traffic study. Charlie will follow up and the Town will hear back around next week.

### **SUMMER CONCERTS ON THE COMMON**

Michael Kirick was present. He is requesting direct funding of summer concerts by the Town rather than the cumbersome process of cobbling together funding from various other town organizations like the Library and Rec Department. It all comes from the town budget regardless. This would also give the summer concerts a dependable funding source as Michael has noticed that the Recreation Department is trying to cut his concert budget after he has already committed funds to hire bands.

Michael detailed all the work he has done to expand upon the summer concerts, such as offering more concerts overall and bringing in food and drink vendors. This has increased turnout and the concerts have continued to be successful during COVID and restrictions on gatherings. Having a block of continuous Sundays in the summer is ideal because people know exactly when concerts are happening. That's what he's looking to have for the 2021 summer concert season. Michael figures \$75 - \$100 per hour pay for musicians would be appropriate based on the musicians he has talked to. If his budget is smaller, he'd have smaller bands, but if the budget is larger, he can hire larger bands. He wants the process to be simplified.

Bill thanked Michael for his hard work. The Town Common Celebration last year was incredible, and Bill agreed with Michael's numbers, clearly the concerts are popular. He is fully in support of funding the concerts more directly; his only concern is that the crowds are often older. It would be great if he could get a younger crowd out there. Michael has tried to pick many different genres and styles and is open to suggestions. Julia was appreciative that Michael does this at all and thinks it's a huge service to the Town and she also really appreciates how far in advance Michael has brought this to the Selectboard because they will be able to budget for things appropriately. Julia suggests Michael amend his request to ask for a specific dollar amount so the Board can consider it in the budget building process.

### **SOLUTIONS & EXPENDITURES FOR STORMWATER MITIGATION – LIBRARY**

Vicky Ross and Pat Hechmer, Library Trustees were present. To Pat this was more of a Q&A conversation. To Julia, clearly the Library stormwater drainage is an issue that needs to be addressed. The Trustees have been doing things piece by piece, the sump pumps were just done, funding was drawn from the library reserves. The current part of the stormwater project

is too expensive for the Library to cover on its own, which is why it was taken in front of the Selectboard.

Bree, Librarian, was present. They put out the 1A work out to bid. Dave Whitney of Eco Solutions is doing the catch basin work and his bid came in under the budgeted \$5,000. Does the Library give the remaining funds back to the Town or use it for stormwater down the line or ask Dave what they can get in the realm of stormwater mitigation while he already has things dug up for that price. Dave advised the Library that they could extend the drainage which would reduce the icing on the concrete pad which would reduce liability. They would like to take remainder of the \$5,000 and make the project a little bit bigger. They are talking under \$500 - \$800 but wanted to get the okay to use the money to benefit drainage from the Selectboard. Dave is ready to start tomorrow for the already approved work and it would be ideal for the additional work to be done at the same time because his equipment is already there.

Julia thinks it's wise to use the money and Dave's expertise to the fullest extent possible. The money has already been budgeted. Bill had two questions: if Dave did the work that he bid on to this point and got to the conclusion of that portion and didn't have to dip into the contingency he thinks it would be great to do the extra work, but if he dipped into the contingency we'd have to dip into extra funds, is that correct? Bree explains that the additional work could be done without any additional permits, but you are right in the sense that contingency would need to be clarified. Bree explained that Dave knows that the \$5,000 is limited to just that and is aware he will need to work regarding the contingency. The second question Bill had was that the Board gave the Library the ability to go out to bid and choose, how many people submitted a bid? Three people expressed interest and two bids came in. The two bids were very close in cost, but Dave Whitney's was the lower bid. Dave did some of the preexisting work and had consulted on the storm water study the Town had done in the Fitzgerald engineering study.

#### **LIBRARY TRUSTEE APPOINTMENT**

The Library Trustees recommended appointing Patty Pittala as a Library Trustee to fill a vacancy created by a resignation. Allison Hope made a motion to appoint Patty as Library Trustee, seconded by Bill Cleary. Motion passed: 3-0.

#### **INQUIRY TO PURCHASE TOWN OWNED LAND ON WESTFORD MILTON ROAD**

Mark Drapa wrote to the Selectboard inquiring about the lot owned by the Town on Westford on the Westford Milton Road. The property was conveyed to the Town in 1973 and deeded with a contingency it only be used for recreation, so it is not a buildable lot. Julia's reading of it was for the recreation of people in the Town, so she is unsure how that would shake out in terms of a private person owning it. Her guess is that they would not be able to turn it into buildable land if the Town can even sell it, but that is her non-legal opinion. Allison explained that there was interest from two town committees, the Recreation Committee and Conservation Commission, that would like to explore uses for that property in the future. To Bill, the deed is clear on the property use. It should not be sold to a private person.

Mark Drapa was present. This parcel is adjacent to his lot. He and his family have lived there for 15 years and he's never seen another person on it. However, his family spends a lot of time cleaning up trash so he was curious if the Town had plans for it or not. He is interested but has not seen the deed language. Nanette will email Mark the deed. He was surprised that it was Town owned land. Allison explained that what the Town has done in the past when they

want to sell land is open up that opportunity to taxpayers. However, she feels the desires of the Recreation Committee and Conservation Commission would take priority if they wanted to use it. Julia would like Mark to look over the deed and then start thinking about next steps.

#### **RFP FOR GRANT WRITER**

The Selectboard budgeted \$5,000 for a grant writer this year. Koi Boyton drafted an RFP and now it is ready to be put out to bid. Koi asked how the RFP would be sent out and how are we going to set questions and interview people for that role. This is not something typically the Selectboard would do, so it would be good to think through the process.

Nanette explained that if the Board is amenable to it, FPF, the town website and the Vermont bid website are all free mediums to post RFPs. If that yields no response, the Town could pay for advertisement in a publication. Allison also asked if Nanette could reach out to other towns and see if they have experience working with anybody in a situation like this. Koi also knows somebody who writes grants professionally and could field questions. The Planning Commission wanted the Board to be in charge of the new grant writer, but as things are now, Julia does not feel that is appropriate. She thinks it should be a Planning Commission related interview, etc.

#### **REQUEST TO USE GAZEBO**

The Board appreciated that the person requested to use the common, but they feel the use is fine as others have been. Bill has noticed the uptick of requests including requests from those who don't reside in Westford and was curious if the Town had ever thought about charging. Julia thinks that's not possible since it's a public place, but it would be interesting to explore. Bill feels charging for non-resident use would be more appropriate. Bill thinks it's interesting that people from other towns use the property and that it's popular. Julia thinks it's something to talk about during budget discussion and the season for common requests are winding down so there's time. Nanette thinks if we are to charge for use of the common an easy way for application and payment submission would be crucial. Allison also didn't want to add any administrative burden that goes along with that sort of thing. Bill Cleary made a motion to approve the request to use the gazebo on October 4, seconded by Allison Hope. Motion passed: 3-0.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

John and crew are putting up new signage regarding what can or cannot be put into the metal dumpster to make things clearer to residents in addition to the cameras.

#### **VCRD TASK FORCE FUNDS**

Melissa Manka, Planning Coordinator, had researched if it would be an acceptable practice for the Town to accept and disperse project funds for the VCRD Community Task Force committees on their behalf. Eric Ford, one of the task force chairs had estimated about \$300 would be the budget as they are actively pursuing a kiosk on the common and there are other things such as grants that will need a place to land. The auditors had no issue with the Town handling the money. Greg will work with MJ to set up a separate fund. Julia has no problem with the funds and feels Greg is on his way to making this work. Allison Hope made a motion that the Town accept and then expend the funds on behalf of the VCRD work so that bills can

be paid which will then be reimbursed by VCRD, seconded by Bill Cleary. Motion passed: 3-0.

**ROGERS ROAD GRANT PAYMENT REQUEST**

John and Greg went over the grant payment request briefly. Julia asked how slowly or quickly this may get reimbursed? Greg was not sure but thinks the State will be more responsive than FEMA. Nanette predicts the funds will be received in this fiscal year.

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL WARRANTS**

Greg went over the accounts payable and payroll warrants. The Selectboard members will come into the office to sign.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julia Andrews, Chair  
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy  
Assistant Town Clerk

**GUEST LIST**

Vicky Ross  
Bree Drapa  
Pat Hechmer  
Charlie Baker  
Buddy Meilleur, LCATV  
Mark Drapa  
Michael Kirick

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.**  
**ROAD SCHEDULE**  
**September 11, 2020 – September 24, 2020**

Work to be done

- Grade roads.
- Add gravel to Old Stage Rd.
- Continue with FEMA work.
- Ditching project on Old Stage Rd.

Work completed

- Graded sections of Cambridge Rd., Plains Rd., Covey Rd., Old # 11 Rd., Old Stage Rd., Manley Rd., Woods Hollow Rd., Machia Hill Rd.,
- Cut brush and added gravel at 711 Osgood Hill Rd.
- Hauled in gravel for road surface work.
- Hauled in the remaining winter sand.
- Added 50 loads of gravel on the North end of Old Stage Rd.

Approved at the 9/24/20 Selectboard Meeting.