

SELECTBOARD MEETING
December 3, 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

Added Purchase of 2021 Truck to Highway Department

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

MINUTES

Bill Cleary made a motion to approve the November 19, 2020 minutes as amended, seconded by Allison. Motion passed: 3-0.

ROAD SCHEDULE

The Road Foreman, John Roberts, discussed the November 20, 2020 – December 3, 2020 Road Schedule. Bill made a motion to approve the Road Schedule, seconded by Allison. Motion passed: 3-0.

NEW 2020-21 TRUCK

John discussed the new truck that is coming. Greg was naturally inclined to go with the lower rates for the loan and was curious how long the Board wanted to finance for. Allison wondered if a three-year loan would be comparable to other loans the Town has for current highway equipment? Greg responded that would put it at the \$15,000-\$16,000 range, but the Town could do a four-year loan and pay it off early. The Board agreed to four years at the lower rate. Bill made a motion to go with Union Bank for a four year note for the truck financing, seconded by Allison. Motion passed: 3-0.

DRAFT ROAD MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT – ROGERS ROAD

A site visit was done. Chapin Kaynor, Anne Brown and others walked the road and talked with the engineer, Neil Hackbarth. Neil was getting copies of the engineering drawings for both Chapin and Anne. Nanette has forwarded the draft Road Agreement to Neil. The Czapski's are going to hire counsel to review the document and to make potential changes. Most of the document makes sense to them, but they would like to amend a few things. The Board expected the Czapski's would have an attorney review the document. Neil's only time related push was that they would like to start working on the permitting process and road during the colder months as there will be weather restrictions during mud season. The Board would deal with the potential changes off meeting unless said changes were significant in which case they would bring it to the open forum.

Jonathan Czapski joined the meeting. Julia caught him up on the discussion and asked if he had any comments or questions. He did not. Once the Board hears back from the Czapski's attorney things will move forward.

PROPOSALS FOR GRANT WRITER

There were seven responses to the Request For Proposals (RFP) for a grant writer. Julia put together a spread sheet so the Board could compare. Julia thanked the responders for their interest. She wondered if Bill or Allison had any proposals that were front runners in their minds. Allison had an initial question: One proposal did not have a per hour rate listed which makes it difficult to compare. She tends to throw out anything that is severely higher than anyone else's. One was more than double the rest, you do sometimes get what you pay for but she believes this is above the budget. Bill was amenable to allowing those that were in attendance a short period of time to explain their proposals.

Liz Curry advised that she did include an hourly rate of \$100 in her proposal. She has experience with working with municipalities in Franklin and Chittenden Counties. She says planning grants, etc. would be doable under the current budget, but the wastewater proposal would be different. She thought the RFP was a bit broad in what the Town wanted so it was difficult to price and anticipate what was needed.

Julia apologized to Liz for the fact they had missed the page of her proposal with the hourly rate, it was an administrative oversight.

Ali Gray advised that she works with a Massachusetts based consulting firm. The opportunity was appealing to them because they were looking to do more work in other areas of New England and grant writing is enjoyable to them, especially in local community efforts versus state sized projects.

Diane Meyerhoff is based in Burlington. She has raised \$18 million for both government and non-profit organizations. She specializes in mostly federal funding. She thinks she could do a lot of good work for Westford and enjoys working with small towns.

Elizabeth Myer is based in Jericho and has 30 years of nonprofit experience. She is excited for the project, loves small town projects and loves Westford. She finds the prospect of revitalizing the town center and providing affordable housing exciting.

Julia reminded everybody that the money for this project was set aside in last year's budget by request of the Planning Commission. It is a town center revitalization project, the vision as it stands today is for the property to be mixed-use with affordable housing and some retail space with river access at the back of the property. When the funds were budgeted it wasn't specific because the plans are still in process. The Town just received a planning grant which is exciting. COVID has made the project, previously ready to hit the ground running, take a bit of a stumble, so they are looking to regroup and get things ready to go. The Town really needs someone who is not a volunteer to spearhead items.

Julia was glad that they clarified the error with Liz's proposal because she was quite interested in her proposal. Julia was also interested in Pear Associates because she felt they had a lot of municipal experience. She felt like those are two different approaches, but both were strong. Allison sees a lot of health and education centered work with Pear Associates which sounds great, but does that translate to what the Town is doing?

Allison liked the local aspect of Liz because she is so familiar with Westford. Allison liked Third Sector, but she feels that their cost per hour, while warranted, is more than what the Town can afford. The Town's budget is \$5,000 and those funds need to be stretched.

Bill respects the people from the quote sheet. He noted that if somebody took the time to represent themselves in the meeting that means a lot to him, so he would narrow the list down to those who attended so out of those the tossup is between Elizabeth and Liz.

Bill made a motion to accept Liz Curry's proposal for Grant Writing services, seconded by Allison. Motion passed: 3-0.

ST. ALBANS FY'22 DISPATCHING SERVICES CONTRACT

The St. Albans Dispatching Services Contract needed to be approved and signed by the Board.

CORRESPONDENCE

Allison responded to two dog incidents. One loose dog on Woods Hollow Road and another on Route 128 whom a resident had been able to catch. The second dog was reunited with its owner. Bill was concerned about the continued lack of Dog Warden. Allison expressed appreciation for the resident, Jessica, who had captured the loose dog as well as Janine Vrba, veterinarian, who had taken the dog with no notice. Julia expressed her thanks for Allison for taking the Dog Warden duties on in the interim.

Allison announced that she is not going to fulfill the last two years of her Selectboard term. She is hoping to bring forward some people that can finish her term as she will likely not be in Westford by the summer. She expressed appreciation for everybody she has worked with. Bill wished her well with her new venture. Julia expressed appreciation to Allison for the countless hours she has put towards Westford during her tenure on the Selectboard.

COMMUNICATION

Nanette is going to continue to post the opening for the Dog Warden on Front Porch Forum.

Greg spoke with George Lamphere regarding the Line of Credit for the 1705 Route 128 Project. Greg thought it would be prudent to begin looking for that now instead of several months later. Julia agreed.

FY'22 BUDGET WORKSHOP

The Board took their first look at the draft budget. Julia felt that a discussion on an asked donation needed to happen. The ask in question was submitted by the Westford Common Hall in the amount of \$10,000, which far exceeds other donations. Especially in the year 2020 which has been financially difficult.

Bill was curious why the Town needed two buildings that served almost identical purposes on the common. Greg explained that there were major differences between the two buildings that helped them serve different purposes. Julia also felt like they were set up for different types of events. If there were not a pandemic, which makes events difficult, it would be no question that the Westford Common Hall is an icon and asset to the community. She doesn't want to zero out the request, but she thinks discussion needs to occur. Sometimes she thinks that the perception of how much money the Town has to give is far above what it actually is. Allison had a larger concern. She appreciates what they are trying to do with the building, but she

feels they are ready to hand it over to the Town. The Town does not have the capacity to own and maintain another building. The Westford Common Hall also owns the Brick Meeting House. It seemed like this was a Hail Mary that was much needed. She thinks it is a much longer conversation. The Town is not set up to own and maintain lots of property as a municipality. If the Town owned the property, Julia's instinct would be how would the Town get somebody to buy it because it is not feasible to own the building. Allison thinks that the White Common Hall group likely did not expect the entire request to be filled.

Bill reminded the Board that they have collectively asked entities to either level fund or decrease their budget request in this difficult financial time. With all the hard work other groups have put towards having conservative budgets it could all be wiped out with this one lump sum. If the Board does not reduce costs, then it has failed its residents.

Julia proposed giving the Westford Common Hall the same amount as the Brick Meeting House, which is \$4,500. Bill doesn't think that the property would be a failure in the private sector like the group thinks. He doesn't know why somebody can't do something with it. Allison and Julia hear what Bill is saying, but the White Common Hall group cannot even use the building the way they intended to this year, which were for events that would have helped the building. Allison feels the \$4,500 is fair.

Bill thinks the White Common Hall preservation could be another good project for the new grant writer.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & PAYROLL WARRANTS

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

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Julia Andrews, Chair
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy
Assistant Town Clerk

GUEST LIST

Buddy, LCATV
Neil Hackbarth
Lee McClenny
Chapin Kaynor
Scott Rogers
Liz Curry
Glenn Rogers
Ali Gray
Alyssa Black
Diane Meyerhoff
Dave Lavallee
Elizabeth Meyerl

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.
ROAD SCHEDULE
November 20, 2020 – December 3, 2020**

Work to be done

- Grade roads when we can.
- Plow and sand when needed.
- Continue to cut brush.

Work completed

- Graded Brookside Rd., a section of Woods Hollow Rd., Osgood Hill Rd., sections of Old Stage Rd., Cambridge Rd., Allen Irish Rd., Bill Cook Rd.,
- Filled pot holes on Old # 11 Rd., and the North end of Woods Hollow.
- Cut brush on Allen Irish Rd., Seymour Rd., Cowie Rd., Bill Cook Rd., and started on Osgood Hill Rd.
- Sanded and salted several times.
- Picked up the new One Ton and delivered it to Iroquois to begin the upfit.

Approved at the 12/3/20 Selectboard Meeting.