

ROAD SCHEDULE

John Roberts, Road Foreman, was absent from the meeting so Bill reviewed the Road Schedule from April 9, 2021 through April 22, 2021. Dave Baczewski made a motion to approve the Road Schedule, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

REQUEST TO PLANT TREES ALONG RIVERBANK FOR EROSION CONTROL ON TOWN LAND BEHIND SCHOOL

Iris Hsiang, a student at Essex High School, is running a sustainability tree planting project and she has trees that are available to plant in the community. She wants to plant some on the town owned land located behind the school property. There is no cost to the Town. In talks with the Conservation Commission, ideal tree placement was along the Browns River in the Misty Meadows trail system as this will help with erosion short term and this is a problem for the riverbank now. Iris, along with input from the County Forester and Conservation Commission, decided on 19 dogwoods which will be more helpful with erosion than other species and provided a diagram of their planting locations.

Iris explained she was hoping to get some Essex High School students together on April 24th to plant the trees. Bill was very much in favor; dogwoods are a good wildlife species. Lee McClenny made a motion to approve the request to plant dogwood trees on town owned land as proposed, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0.

FOLLOW UP FOR REQUEST TO FLY DRONE OVER 3-5 LOCATIONS IN WESTFORD FOR AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The Vermont League of Cities & Towns provided the Town with an opinion on Roy Mercon's request to fly a drone over three to five locations in town. There are some legal requirements that a drone operator must follow, but the Town does not have the authority to regulate drones. The Board could determine that it wants to state certain preferences such as to stay on public property and allow the Town to use footage captured if credited, or the Board can decide to say no to any part of the request. It was noted that if the drone operator does not adhere to those preferences there is likely not any available enforcement.

Vermont is a Dillon's Rule state meaning that towns only have authority to regulate items if permission to do so is given by the state. Currently the state has not given towns the authority to regulate drones.

Bill suggested that even though the Town cannot formally say yes or no, it can request that Roy focus on the public lands and not private properties. Dave was hopeful that Roy could be a good collaborator and wanted to work together to choose the locations to be featured. Lee asked if there was an existing entity the Board could point the drone operator towards that would best help him, perhaps a list of specific locations to feature. The Town Common, Westford Common Hall, Red Brick Meeting House, and the Library are all public spaces that are regularly photographed so some nice ariel photography of those locations would be good. Lee will work with Nanette to respond to Roy regarding the board's wishes.

MOWING BIDS FOR TOWN PROPERTIES

The Town put out a bid for mowing of the town properties including the town garage. Five bids were received, and they are as follows:

Robert & Sons Lawn Care - \$3,800 all inclusive

Huston Property Maintenance - \$18,000 for town properties and \$4,500 for the town garage

Backyard Property Maintenance - \$4,350 for town properties and \$950 for town garage
Poirier's Cleaning Service - \$12,000 for town properties and \$3,800 for town garage
Guilmette Landworks - \$3,179.05 for town properties and \$435 for town garage.

Connor Beaupre from Backyard Property Maintenance and Dylan Guilmette from Guilmette Landworks were present. Connor gave some background on his business, which is located in Milton. He is familiar with the area.

Dave was not knowledgeable about work done in the past but was inclined to choose between the two lower bids which were Robert & Sons Lawn Care and Guilmette Landworks. Nanette and John advised that Robert & Sons has mowed the last couple of years and is responsive. Nanette suggested if the Board is to select Guilmette that the motion be contingent on a reference check and designate Robert & Sons as an alternative if the reference check is not satisfactory. Lee McClenny made a motion that they conditionally accept the Guilmette Landworks bid for mowing of the town properties and town garage contingent on a satisfactory reference check, and if references are not satisfactory, that Robert & Sons will be awarded the contract, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0.

REQUEST FOR TREE WARDEN TO LOOK AT TREES WITHIN TOWN RIGHT OF WAY ON ROGERS ROAD

Chapin Kaynor, a property owner on Rogers Road, requested Ned Meehan, Tree Warden, to look at the trees within the town right of way on Rogers Road. This was due to the Czapski's request to use and improve a portion of the Class 4 section of the road to access their land and the resulting tree removal and/or destabilization that might occur, including the frontage of Chapin's property because of those potential road improvements. Because Chapin wanted to limit the damage to the trees, he offered a utility easement on his own land for the first 250 feet or more so that the utilities could be buried further away from the trees. This offer was declined by the Czapskis and their representative.

Chapin explained that per Title 24 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, sections 2502 through 2511, trees in the town right of way can only be removed by recommendation of the Tree Warden and after a public hearing. The Selectboard can override the Tree Warden, but the Warden must make an assessment and hold a hearing first. This step was not taken when the Selectboard made their initial road agreement with the Czapskis, so Chapin wants it done now.

Ned Meehan agreed that the proper procedure should be followed. He needs to do a site visit before making any determination, which requires Selectboard permission to do so. A Town official would also have to accompany Ned to the site to show the proposed layout.

Bill thought that if John Roberts, Road Foreman, was present with Ned when he went to examine the property that would make things quite thorough. Frank Hassler, property owner on Rogers Road, was present and expressed concern with the proximity of his septic system and the proposed improvements. A three-foot-deep trench along 51 Rogers Road within the town right of way is being proposed to get power up to the Czapski's property. Frank has no interest in seeing a three-foot-deep trench cutting the roots of maple trees that are approximately 200 years old. If they did cut the roots, those trees will die even if the trees are not removed. When Ned looks at the trees, it is not just about tree removal but about root cutting. Frank has decided to not sign any easement at this point because he feels there are alternative and less destructive ways to bring power to the property.

Bill brought the conversation back to the Tree Warden. Nanette explained that there is a public process that needs to be followed such as the hearing needing to be publicly warned. Melissa strongly suggests that Colen Johnson from TCE be present as well. Nanette will work with Ned and the other parties to come up with a time and help with warning the meeting.

Lee McClenny made a motion to ask Ned Meehan, Tree Warden, to participate in a site visit on Rogers Road with John Roberts and Colen Johnson and report back to the Town with his findings and that a public hearing be scheduled after the site visit. Dave seconded but wants to make sure when the team is on the site visit that there is enough awareness about what needs to be discussed so when they go into public hearing, they can provide the proper information. Motion passed: 3-0.

Bill feels that the email chain and discussion about the tree warden needs to be shared with Colen Johnson from TCE.

VCDP MUNICIPAL POLICY AND CODES

The Selectboard needed to review and sign the VCDP Grant Agreement. The State does not approve of how duties are assigned in the Treasurer's office; they feel Greg is doing too much and some tasks need to be reassigned to get the grant. It had been pointed out that the auditors have no issue with the current division of duties. Greg will talk to the State to determine what is acceptable to them.

Upon Melissa's review of the document, there were two items that Westford does not have in its current policies. They are drug free working environment and no-texting while driving. Nanette is working with Dave to revise the Personnel Policy. They will work on including this language in the updated policy. Dave Baczewski made a motion that the Town add the drug free working environment and no texting while driving policies to the new Personnel Policy to be approved by the Selectboard in the future and to accept the VCDP Municipal Policy and Codes as presented, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

REAPPOINTMENT OF FIRE WARDEN

Fire Warden Dennis Angiono's current term expires the end of May. He expressed interest in continuing to perform his duties as Fire Warden. Dave Baczewski made a motion to reappoint Dennis Angiono as Fire Warden, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 3-0.

EMPLOYEE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEWS – SCHEDULE DISCUSSION

The Board discussed the schedule for the Employee Annual Performance Reviews. This is done on a yearly basis during May and June and during Executive Session.

CORRESPONDENCE

Pat Haller from the In-Motion Task Force wanted to update the Selectboard and do a survey with the Selectboard's approval.

Bill sat in on the Planning Commission meeting this past week. The Planning Commission will be asking for some time to meet with the Selectboard. These meetings often go long and can take attention away from other issues during regular meetings so Bill was thinking that special meetings might be best for these items. Dave and Lee agreed.

COMMUNICATION

There was no communication.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Lee McClenny made a motion to enter Executive Session at 8:25 p.m. to discuss personnel, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0. People in attendance were Bill Cleary, Lee McClenny, Dave Baczewski, John Roberts, and Nanette Rogers. The Board exited Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bill Cleary, Chair
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy
Assistant Town Clerk/Minute Clerk

GUEST LIST

Buddy Meilleur, LCATV
Iris Hsiang
Lynn Gauthier
Dave Lavallee
Connor Beaupre (Backyard Property Maintenance)
Frank Hassler
Travis Lavallee
Colen Johnson (TCE)
Chapin Kaynor
Dylan Guilmette (Guilmette Landworks)
Sarah Pinto

TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.
ROAD SCHEDULE
April 9, 2021 – April 22, 2021

Work to be done

- Grade roads when weather permits.
- Start summer projects, Old Stage Rd. ditching, and culvert replacement.
- Service on the Cat excavator and dump trucks.

Work completed

- Graded parts of Old Stage Rd., part of Rollin Irish Rd. Cambridge Rd., Part of Phelps Rd., most of Woods Hollow Rd., Brookside Rd., Common Rd., Most of Osgood Hill Rd., and Plains Rd.
- Added gravel and fixed sections of Old # 11 Rd.
- Hauled in gravel.
- Scraped the sand off the bridge on Woods Hollow Rd. And swept it.
- Finished the new chloride trailer.
- Pulled all of the "Posted" signs.

Approved at the 4/22/21 Selectboard Meeting.