



MINUTES OF THE PAWLET SELECT BOARD

September 20, 2011

7:03 PM Meeting called to order by chair Mike Beecher

Present: Mike Beecher, Sue LaPorte, Clarence Decker, Bob Jones, Joe Clark

Audience: Elizabeth Gibson, Keith Mason, Jeff Hammell

Minutes of September 6, 2011 were reviewed. *Motion by Deck, seconded by Sue, to accept the minutes with corrections, so voted.*

Audience

Jeff Hammell regarding the Town's responsibility to take care of nuisance trees

- Jeff, on the advice of Keith Mason, asked the board to address the trees on the road leaning towards his house that are in the Town right of way (ROW). The trees are on George Hollister's property.
- Keith said it's not really a highway issue, and is up to the board. They are dead ash trees in the right of way that could come down and would involve Jeff's house.
- The Board commented that these are nuisance trees. In the past, CVPS has taken care of them if their lines are involved. This doesn't involve power lines. We don't need them down for a highway project. They are on George's property across the road but are still in the ROW.
- Jeff asked if the town accepts responsibility.
- Keith said the Highway Department does not deal with nuisance trees: only trees that need to come down for a project. This has been our policy for many years.
- Bob Jones stated in the past the general consensus was that the Town is not in the tree-cutting business. It can be incredibly expensive for a Town, and town funds can't be used for this.
- Jeff said if it is in the town's right of way, it's the town's responsibility. Keith said it's only surface rights to cross and if we take a tree down in the ROW we have to offer it back to the landowner. The Select Board can authorize the trees to be moved because they are in the ROW but doesn't have to be responsible for the removal. Deck said it only becomes a problem if the trees fall across the road.
- The Board decided not to pay to have it removed. Jeff will try to work it out with his neighbor.

Keith Mason, Road Foreman, regarding highway projects

- Regarding the blacktop for the culvert crossings on the Danby Road: we haven't gotten a price from Tom Fuller yet. They need to figure out tonnage regarding blacktop. Danby is not going to pave from the bottom of Paris hill to Pawlet town line now, after flood damage. Keith thinks 40 ft of blacktop is needed at each culvert.

- Prices for other projects: No one wants to price them. They are not big enough jobs. Like the culvert project above Cole Bridge, it's too small given all the work everyone has today.
- Deck said for the Betts Bridge work we need about 15 loads of rip rap. Keith is checking sources.
- The culvert at Cole Bridge will be repaired soon. For the Rte 153 repair, we need an easement from the Rosenthal's because it is outside of the ROW.
- Regarding the storm damage at Chuck and Diane Weedon's property, Keith recommends the town not do the repair. We need to think about precedent and consistency. The Board concurs.

Correspondence

The VLCT insurance representative has visited the town to assess the storm damage. A letter from Mike Ortega, claims rep. at VLCT, acknowledges receipt of the town's claim of flood damage to town structures.

New Business

Deck said the insurance adjustor hired by VLCT, Peter Riesback, was here. He looked at the town hall pumping station. He went to the Pawlet firehouse and found lots to fix there. He found nothing at the library. The town has a blanket \$500 deductible for the event.

- Joe commented on the damage at the town hall -- the manhole cover came off and the vent pipe broke.
- Deck said we need to find out about the firehouse septic system, which was lost. The firehouse needs to be re-pressure washed inside and the side walls all repainted and floor repainted and other damage put into the claim.
- Question: Is fire department generator producing electricity? Keith said we should run it for a day, in case there is silt in there. Deck will follow up with the fire dept.
- The Board discussed how to pay for the insurance deductible of \$500 for the entire town. They agreed to wait on that decision until they've seen the insurance report.
- FEMA will pay only after insurance. VLCT only pays for building damage. For outside cleanup and damage, we need FEMA funding.
- Pawlet is not a sanctioned community but we are enrolled in the National flood Insurance Program.

Unfinished Business

There will be a home energy efficiency upgrade incentives program meeting on Oct 11 at 7 PM, at the town hall. Elizabeth Gibson said that Neighborworks will visit to explain its home energy efficiency upgrade program.

Old Business:

Wastewater treatment plant

- Bond counsel re: wastewater treatment plant per Peter Pochop, Green Mountain Engineering. Mike Beecher has talked with Paul Giuliani who handled the original bond vote for the sewer plant as bond counsel and will be sending the town information. Mike recommends that we go with J. Paul Giuliani in Montpelier. We need to schedule the bond vote and the informational meeting before the vote. Peter Pochop recommends a thirty-year bond, since the components that we are going to use will have a 30-year life expectancy. With a bond vote on Nov. 8, the informational meeting would be 10 days before the vote. The warning is published one week for three selective weeks. The informational meeting would be a town meeting, so we'd need John Thrasher.

- How is the town going to pay the bond back? Should someone in Pawlet pay for someone in West Pawlet? How much would it cost, what kind of money on the tax rate, and what would the user's fee cover? The user fee is presently \$500. Should the town increase the user fee plus raise taxes? Users pay six cents on their tax rate plus user fee and non-users pay one cent on their tax rate. Before the next meeting Mike will gather info from Peter Pochop re: yearly payment for how many years.
- There was discussion regarding a door-door inspector to check on hookups in West Pawlet. Should it be the zoning administrator? Are people under-reporting hookups? Do people have sump pumps going into the wastewater treatment plant? Should Jeff make the inspection? Maybe two people? Presently there are 132 hookups in West Pawlet.
- We would have to pay Jeff to do it. Is it part of his agreement? We need to ask Deb to check Jeff's contract for the next meeting. Mike Beecher will ask Jeff if he's interested.
- *Motion by Sue, seconded by Joe to set the Nov. 8 bond vote date and have J. Paul Giuliani represent the Town as bond counsel. So voted.*
- Mike will talk with Peter Pochop regarding the rest of the dates on the informational meeting, etc., and will talk with Deb and John Thrasher.

New Business:

Follow up on September 13 emergency management meeting

- Handouts regarding emergency management director info from various sources. Deck contacted RRPC for guidelines re: the emergency management director, and Phil Picotte from RRPC regarding emergency roles and emergency plan review. Joe and Deck will talk with Philip Picotte tomorrow.
- Joe said Pawlet's emergency management plan answers most of the questions that were raised at the meeting.
- The next step is to define the role of the emergency coordinator and solicit interested people for the position.

Other Business

The Board reviewed the log of the wastewater treatment plant during Irene. The plant's violation due to flooding was reported to state.

Sue said the town received the grant money for the ceiling stabilization from the Division for Historic Preservation.

9:00pm: *Motion by Deck to adjourn, seconded by Sue. Meeting adjourned.*

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Gibson