

Final Minutes
SELECTBOARD, TOWN OF PAWLET
January 26, 2021
7:00 pm Virtually via Zoom
Regular Meeting

Members in Attendance:

Mike Beecher
John Malcolm
Chuck Weeden
Bob Jones

Others in Attendance:

Kristin Powers
Rebecca C. Banyai
Eileen Bellavia
Frank Bellavia
Frank Nelson
Jessica Van Oort
Julie Mach
Ken Norman
Tom Collard
John Sabotka
Collin Palkovitz
Maureen Brown
Deb Hawkins
Colin Stabile
Amanda O'Connor
Jennifer Sullivan
Keith Mason

EVENT

1. Call to order at 7:04 pm by Chairman, Mike Beecher.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Addition or Deletion of Agenda Items
 - a. Additions:
 - Question re: Town Hall Auditorium rental – New Business

- Approval of Annual Report from Selectboard – Old/Unfinished Business
- Elevator – Old/Unfinished Business
- Traffic Study – Old/Unfinished Business
- b. Deletions:
 - None.
- 3. Introduction of those present by chairperson.
- 4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting.
 - Motion made to approve the minutes of January 12, 2021, with an edit to details in Item 5.
 - Mover: John Malcolm
 - 2nd: Chuck Weeden
 - Discussion: None.
 - Result: Chuck Weeden, John Malcom, Bob Jones – in favor. Approved.
- 5. Pre-Requested Appearances by local citizens and visitors:
 - None.
- 6. Announcements:
 - None.
- 7. Reports:
 - A. Zoning Administrator's Report:
 - No Report at this meeting.
 - B. Planning Commission's Report:
 - PPC Chairwoman, Jessica Van Oort, shared a report with the Board.
 - Shared that Ed Bove from the RRPC was present at the meeting to share some insights on the process from transitioning from 1-acre to 10-acre town.
 - Language will be finalized during the PPC meeting in February to proceed in next steps for this process.
 - The PPC is focusing again on the Town's Enhanced Energy Plan, which showed that the Town is making great progress towards goals pertaining to Solar.
 - Pawlet is a leader amongst towns using innovation to add solar arrays to slate piles no longer in use.

- The Town was approached to join the Otter Creek Communication Union District (CUD).
 - PPC Member, Tom Collard, presented further information shared at an RRPC meeting, which involves an opportunity to help bring high speed internet to our community, thus, improving Wi-Fi for residents. This is especially pertinent during Covid-19 times, which has highlighted the importance of reliable internet for work and school.
 - There is no fee to join and no penalty in stepping away should the Town feel they are not benefitting from this group.
 - Discussion ensued regarding other CUDs in the state. Amanda O'Connor from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission provided further insights/information on the importance of CUDs.
 - Motion made to join the Otter Creek Communication Union District.
 - Mover: Chuck Weeden
 - 2nd: John Malcolm
 - Discussion: Tom Collard is the designated representative/liaison for the Town of Pawlet.
 - Result: Chuck Weeden, John Malcolm, Bob Jones – in favor. Approved.

C. Road Foreman's Report:

- Road Foreman, Keith Mason, submitted a report to the Board, sharing updates on ongoing winter maintenance projects, and permits that are currently being worked on and applied for.
 - A Class 2 Road grant (paving grant) has been announced. Discussion ensued regarding where we'd like to apply it. There are several options of roads to be paved. Mr. Jones to sign the letter of intent to participate.

- John Malcolm shared that a letter was submitted on behalf of the Selectboard requesting a speed study to be conducted in the Pawlet village.
 - Ms. Mach posed a question of the physical boundaries of the proposed speed study. At this time the boundaries go from the Barn Restaurant to Sheldon's Store, however there is possibility/interest in that these boundaries expanding to the Mach Farm.
- The Roads crew is still anticipating the newly acquired town truck from the paint shop.
- Mr. Stabile inquired about the portion of Herrick Brook Road receiving work this year. Mr. Mason explained that the grant-eligible portion of the road will receive the crew's focus, which is the far south end, starting right around Sugar Lane down to the Rupert town line. Discussion ensued regarding logistics of anticipated work.

D. Assessor Report:

- The Selectboard discussed the tax map contract with Cartographic Associates, which needs signing. The Board requests further time to review this contract and would like to add this to the next upcoming meeting agenda.

E. Town Clerk's Memo:

- Town Clerk, Deb Hawkins, shared a report from the Town Clerk's Office.
 - The primary request was to have the Board approve the Town Meeting warning so that Mr. Jones may sign on behalf of the Board.
 - Julie Mach confirmed several figures, including Town General Fund expenses and liabilities, Town Highway expenses and liabilities, the Town Equipment Fund, as well as the building maintenance budget.
 - Deb Hawkins reminded the Board that signatures were not required this year to have items added to the ballot, as they have been in previous years, however they will be required again in future years.
 - Deb Hawkins continued to discuss a few new articles on this year's ballot.

- Article:31 induced conversation regarding Act 164, which discusses the ways in which the State of VT will allow tax-regulated sales for the legal and regulated sales of cannabis in the future.
 - Motion made to approve the Town Meeting Warning as presented.
 - Mover: John Malcolm
 - 2nd: Chuck Weeden
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Chuck Weeden, John Malcolm, Bob Jones – in favor. Approved.
 - Covid-related expenses have been covered through the use of a grant awarded to the Town.
 - There is one overweight permit that requires signature by Mr. Jones.
- F. Town Treasurer's Memo:
- Town Treasurer, Julie Mach, reviewed her report with the Board, including a summary of payroll, accounts payable and monies from the general fund, highway and wastewater.
 - Ms. Mach asked for support in plans to move forward with corresponding with Schindler regarding billing.
 - The VT elevator inspection company included a renewal contract for either two or three years, which would lock in the rate as it currently stands (\$175.00 along with a \$25.00 state certificate fee).
 - John Malcolm made the recommendation to sign a two-year contract. The Board agreed universally. Bob Jones will sign on behalf of the Board.
 - Due to Covid-19 protocols, in-person tax payments are no longer accepted unless they absolutely need to be made in cash. In this case, please make an appointment ahead of time with Ms. Mach. Otherwise, non-cash payments may be left in the secured drop box outside of the Town Hall, and a receipt will be mailed to you.
 - Motion made to approve the warrants.

- Mover: Chuck Weeden
 - 2nd: John Malcolm
 - Discussion: None.
 - Result: John Malcolm, Bob Jones, Chuck Weeden– in favor. Approved.
- G. Emergency Management Director's Report:
- No report at this meeting.
- H. Health Officer's Report:
- No report at this meeting.
- I. Waste Water Treatment Facility:
- No report at this meeting.
8. Old or unfinished business:
- The Selectboard approved of their annual report to be submitted to Town Clerk for the Town Report.
 - Ms. Powers followed up with feedback from the Town of Manchester on radar-controlled speed signs. The topic of timing and purchasing is to be continued at a future meeting, but the intention of pursuing the purchase of several speed signs in Town remains.
 - The conversation of mailbox policy is to be added under the umbrella of Road Foreman's Report for the next meeting.
 - Mr. Malcolm shared an update from Meg Campbell of VT Preservation Trust regarding the ongoing leak issue in the Town Hall. Mr. Malcolm reiterated that attention continues to be placed on this issue, however due to safety and access, the plan for repair is imminent. Discussion continued on the importance of approaching this issue with haste and safety.
9. New Business:
- The Board received a request to utilize the Town Hall Auditorium in early February for a meeting with about 25 people. Discussion ensued and the Board determined that at this time, the Town is not equipped to safely accommodate this request due to the myriad of Covid-19 related safety requirements.
10. Public Comment:
- Jessica Van Oort and Maureen Brown announced they are running a parallel campaign for two of the Selectboard positions (one year and three year) on the upcoming Town Meeting ballot.

11. Motion made to Adjourn at 8:52pm

- Mover: Chuck Weeden
- Second: John Malcolm
- Discussion: None.
- Result: Chuck Weeden, John Malcolm, Bob Jones - in favor.
Approved (Unanimous)