

Draft Minutes

SELECTBOARD, TOWN OF PAWLET

May 4, 2021

7:00 pm Virtually via Zoom

Regular Meeting

Members in Attendance:

Mike Beecher

John Malcolm

Bob Jones

Jessica Van Oort

Rich Hulett

Others in Attendance:

Kristin Powers

Paul & Michelle Tilander

Ray Duquette

Beth Mosher Duquette

Sarah Post

Doreen and Mark Frost

Frank Nelson

Rhonda Schlangen

Maureen Brown

Dan Brooks

Joy Proft

Jennifer Sullivan

Nancy Morlino

Keith Mason

Mara Hearst

Olivia McChesney

John Sabotka

Julie Mach

Ruth Lampi

Mandy Hulett

Tom Collard

Colin Stabile

Fred Stone

## **EVENT**

1. Call to order at 7:02 pm by Chairman, Mike Beecher.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Introduction of those present by chairperson.

#### 4. Addition or Deletion of Agenda Items

##### a. Additions:

- Julie Mach & Rhonda Schlangen – Appearances by Local Citizens and Visitors
- Town Hall Auditorium Use Inquiry – New Business
- Lack of Cell Coverage – New Business
- Operating Norms & Meeting Expectations – New Business
- Wifi in West Pawlet – Old Business
- Inclusion Conversation, continued – Old Business

##### b. Deletions: None.

#### 5. Approval of minutes from previous meeting.

- Motion made to approve the minutes of April 20, 2021, as printed.
  - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rich Hulett
  - Discussion: None.
  - Result: Bob Jones, John Malcolm, Rich Hulett, Jessica Van Oort – in favor. Approved.

#### 6. Pre-Requested Appearances by local citizens and visitors:

- Julie Mach & Rhonda Schlangen – Discussed a document, shared with the Board prior to the meeting, including a list of suggested concrete and immediate actions that they believe the Pawlet Selectboard can take in its capacity to support our diverse community to be more equitable and inclusive.

- Brief discussion ensued, resulting in Jessica Van Oort and Rich Hulett to work as liaisons to review and work through the action items from Ms. Mach and Ms. Schlangen and report back to the rest of the Board.

7. Announcements:

- Following the motion made during the regular meeting on April 20, 2021, an Equal Opportunity Employer statement, outlined by the State of Vermont, has been added to the Employment page on the Town Website.

8. Reports:

A. Zoning Administrator's Report:

- No report at this meeting.

B. Planning Commission's (PPC) Report:

- Jessica Van Oort reviewed a report from the PPC with the Board:
  - The approved updates to the Bylaws are being seen through to the final steps so that they may get to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission as well as the Natural Resources Board. This will hopefully finish the Town's transition from a 1-acre to 10-acre town for the purposes of Act 250.
  - The Commission now will be working through a larger review of the Zoning Bylaws, addressing many real-world concerns, brought forth by residents, commissioners and the Zoning Administrator, one-by-one.

C. Road Foreman's Report:

- Road Foreman, Keith Mason, shared a report with the Board:
  - Grading has been completed (at least once)

- Gravel has been applied mostly to previously upgraded roads which were shy on material when originally worked on.
- Herrick Brook Road project will begin as soon as equipment becomes available.
- Discussion ensued regarding the Town's small dump truck, and Mr. Mason to work with Ms. Powers on putting out to bid.
- Mr. Malcolm shared that the town was approved for a scoping study, which requires the appointment of a project manager for this project. Mr. Malcolm continued to express that Eric Hall of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) was recommended by Devon Neary, also of the RRPC.
  - Motion made to approve the appointment of Eric Hall as the Town's Project Manager for the speed scoping study.
    - Mover: John Malcolm
    - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Jessica Van Oort
    - Discussion: None
    - Result: John Malcolm, Jessica Van Oort, Rich Hulett and Bob Jones – in favor. Approved.
- Discussion ensued regarding the need to attend to road improvements, potentially grant-funded, in West Pawlet

D. Assessor Report:

- Karen Folger, Asst. Assessor, made a request that the Board sign the Grand List extension request letter. This letter

is requested due to Lisa Wrights schedule lodging Grand Lists in four additional towns.

- Motion made to authorize the signing of the Grand List extension request letter.
  - Mover: John Malcolm
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Jessica Van Oort
  - Discussion: Some conversation regarding a date typo and desire for some additional detail, to be obtained by Mr. Malcolm.
  - Result: John Malcolm, Jessica Van Oort, Bob Jones and Rich Hulett – in favor. Approved.

E. Town Clerk's Memo:

- Town Clerk, Deb Hawkins, shared a report with the Board:
  - Overweight permits require signature by Mr. Jones on behalf of the Board.
  - Vinnie Covino of Granville will serve as the Town's IT/Computer Technician Professional following the retirement of John Freed. The Town Clerk's office is in need of a new computer, several battery backups are outdated, and Mr. Covino will be working on a secure Wi-Fi for the Town offices.
    - Some conversation took place regarding equipment in need of attention in the Town offices, as well as the possibility of consultation for technological needs to support a future hybrid (in person/electronic) meeting model.

F. Town Treasurer's Memo:

- Town Treasurer, Julie Mach, reviewed a memo with the Board, including: an overview of payroll, accounts payable, monies

from the General Fund, Highway, Wastewater, and state payments.

- VT Agency of Natural Resources sent notice that the annual stormwater roads permit fee is due on June 1, 2021. Ms. Mach requested that the Board approve the Town's payment of this online via credit card.
  - Motion made to authorize Town Treasurer, Julie Mach, to utilize the credit card to charge the Agency of Natural Resources stormwater permit fee.
    - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
    - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rich Hulett
    - Discussion: None.
    - Result: John Malcolm, Bob Jones, Jessica Van Oort, Rich Hulett – in favor. Approved.
- Ms. Mach filled out a credit application for the Herrick Brook Road excavator rental.
- Motion made to approve the warrants.
  - Mover: John Malcolm
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Jessica Van Oort
  - Discussion: None.
  - Result: John Malcolm, Bob Jones, Rich Hulett, Jessica Van Oort – in favor. Approved.

G. Emergency Management Director's Report:

- No report from the Emergency Mgt. Director:

H. Health Officer's Report:

- No report at this meeting.

I. Waste Water Treatment Facility:

- Nothing new to report at this meeting.

8. Old or unfinished business:

- Ms. Powers requested the Board confirm their receipt of the quote from Elan City for the radar-controlled speed signs. Continued to request Mr. Jones's signature on behalf of the Board to proceed with the next steps of the purchase.
  - The Board unanimously agreed to have Mr. Jones sign the quote to move forward to the purchase of the speed signs.
- Rich Hulett provided an update on the Town-owned property in West Pawlet, including property updates completed up to this point.
- The Board spoke to the concerns from residents regarding cell phone coverage. Discussion ensued, and Ms. Powers to forward concerns to State Rep. Sally Achey.
- Jessica Van Oort confirmed that the newly installed public Wi-Fi in West Pawlet Waste Water Treatment Facility is up and working. Discussion ensued regarding notifying the public of this.
- Jessica Van Oort shared that she had contacted the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), regarding advice on municipal inclusion statements. She continued to elaborate on her findings, and shared several reasons why adopting an inclusion statement would align with Pawlet's pre-existing values.
  - Motion made for the Selectboard to adopt the following statement: "The Town of Pawlet



condemns racism and welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or disability, and will protect these classes to the fullest extent of the law. As a Town, we formally condemn discrimination of all its forms and commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community. The Town of Pawlet is and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinions.”

- Mover: Jessica Van Oort
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: None
  - Discussion: Mr. Malcolm offered the desire to review additional statements, including a draft he penned.
  - Result: Motion not carried.
- Mr. Malcolm shared a draft inclusivity statement, and spoke to recent violent events across the US, which have prompted many Vermonters to respond and join to reaffirm our state and local commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Motion made to adopt the following inclusivity statement drafted by John Malcolm: “The Town of Pawlet is proud of our long history of diversity and inclusion. We affirm our commitment to welcome people of all backgrounds, status, and identity to live, to work, and to visit our Town. We stand for kindness, understanding, neighborliness, peace, tolerance, and respect for and toward all. We stand against racism, bigotry, discrimination, prejudice, violence and hatred in all of their forms. Together we share a commitment and a responsibility for everyone in our Town to be safe, honored, and valued.”

- Mover: John Malcolm
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Jessica Van Oort
- Discussion: Conversation ensued regarding the pros and cons of utilizing more time to review and consider different statements. Mr. Beecher requested that written statements from Board members be submitted in to allow for more thorough review and for as many townspeople as possible to be able to share their opinions on a town-wide statement. Topic to be continued during the meeting on May 18, 2021.
- Result: John Malcolm, Jessica Van Oort – in favor. Bob Jones, Rich Hulett – opposed. Mr. Beecher, as Chairman, opposed. Motion not carried.

## 9. New Business:

- Brook Hughes-Muse has inquired about the possibility of Yoga in the Town Hall Auditorium this summer.
  - Following discussion, the Board unanimously agreed that Brooke's usage of the Town Hall is approved so long as she meets the guidelines set forth by the state as well as the Town (pertaining to Covid-19 regulations). Ms. Powers to edit the Town Hall Auditorium Rental Use Agreement document to reflect current Covid-19 requirements.
- Brief discussion ensued regarding proper file storage requirements and practices.

10. Public Comment:

- None

11. Motion made to Adjourn at 9:09pm

- Mover: Jessica Van Oort
- Second: Bob Jones
- Discussion: None.
- Result: John Malcolm, Bob Jones, Jessica Van Oort, Rich Hulett - in favor. Approved (Unanimous)