

Final Minutes
SELECTBOARD, TOWN OF PAWLET
March 19, 2024
7:00 pm
Pawlet Town Hall
122 School Street, Pawlet, VT
& Virtually via Zoom

Members in Attendance:

Mike Beecher
Bob Jones
Jessica Van Oort
Rich Hulett
Brian Crossman

Others in Attendance:

PEG-TV
Frank Nelson
Sue LaPorte
Elliot Freeman
Martin Kravitt
Monica Kravitt
Noreen Hennessy
Ruth Lampi
Nancy Morlino
Cori Rail
Lauren Shehadi Herbert
Harry Van Meter
Joanne's iPad (zoom)
Harley Cudney
Tom Black

EVENT

1. Call to order at 7:02pm by Chairman, Mike Beecher, with the Pledge of Allegiance and a review of the Rules of Procedure.
2. Introduction of those present, virtually and in person.
3. Addition or Deletion of Agenda Items.
 - a. Additions: None.
 - b. Deletions: None.

4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting.
 - Motion made to approve the Town Meeting minutes of March 4, 2024, Regular Meeting minutes of March 5, 2024 and Organizational Meeting minutes of March 6, 2024 as printed.
 - Mover: Rich Hulett
 - 2nd: Jessica Van Oort
 - Discussion: None.
 - Result: Approved.
5. Pre-Requested Appearances by Local Citizens and Visitors: None.
6. Announcements: None.
7. Reports:
 - A. Zoning Administrator's (ZA) Report:
 - 5 permits issued so far in 2024
 - Contacted ANR regarding a potential property compliance issue, with no answer yet.
 - Act 250 has been contacted regarding bylaw questions.
 - Contacted the state regarding optional cannabis tax, which falls under the same umbrella as sales and use tax. At this time, Pawlet has never opted to adopted this 1% local option tax (sales & use nor meals and rooms). The Board could consider this. Would not require a change to charter, just a town-wide vote.
 - B. Planning Commission's Report: No report at this meeting.
 - C. Road Foreman's Report:
 - Highway Foreman, Rick Lawrence, provided a report to the board:
 - The Highway Dept. continues to maintain roads through the continual freeze/thaw pattern we have experienced this winter. They also have been mowing brush and have begun tree removal where necessary. Several roads have received loads of gravel, and the department looks forward to beginning grading in the upcoming week (weather permitting). In addition, the team has been stockpiling materials for anticipated summer projects.
 - The damages to the Town truck discussed at a prior meeting have been reviewed by the Town's insurance, and the cost to repair the truck will be covered, less the \$1000.00 deductible.

- The 2013 International was listed for sale at auction, and the highest bid was \$15,400.00.
 - The Board discussed this, and unanimously determined to counter-offer the high bidder at \$25,000.00 and work from there.
- The Town received the Small Highway Safety Improvement Grant Agreement (#CA0792).
 - Motion made to sign this grant agreement.
 - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
 - 2nd: Rich Hulett
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved
- School Street Bridge Improvement Project Update:
 - Daniels Construction anticipates work beginning on the bridge around the beginning of May.
 - The daily project schedule is **predicted*** to work in conjunction with the school busses. The bridge will be open during the evening and until the time when the school bus passes in the morning. The bridge will be closed from the time after the school bus travels until lunch time, with a short opening during lunch, then closed again until the bus passes in the afternoon. Work will continue once the bus travels through until the evening time, when the bridge will be open again. *Please note: this is a predicted work schedule.
 - Total duration of time anticipated for work is about 3 weeks.
- The Board supported the notion of having the Highway Liaisons/Foreman completing the annual paperwork requested by the state.

D. Assessor Report:

- The Board received follow-up information from Lisa Wright pertaining to the software conversion pricing.
 - Motion made to approve the Catalis Tax/CAMA conversion with the initial cost of \$7,500.00 and annual cost of \$3,474.00
 - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
 - 2nd: Rich Hulett
 - Discussion: None

- Result: Approved
- Motion made to sign the no appeal or suit pending of the Grand List.
 - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
 - 2nd: Rich Hulett
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved

E. Town Clerk's Memo:

- Town Clerk, Deb Hawkins, shared a report with the Board:
 - 15 overweight permits require signature.
 - Bob Jones signed the permits.
 - The Clerk's Office received an application for auditorium use from the Pawlett Historical Society.
 - The Board unanimously supported this request, and Mike Beecher signed this application.
 - A certificate of votes was included as a follow-up to one already sent to the Board members.

F. Town Treasurer's Memo:

- Town Treasurer, Julie Mach, shared a memo with the Board, including: an overview of payroll, accounts payable, monies from the General Fund, Highway, Wastewater.
- Motion made to approve Payroll Warrant #24048 for \$10,531.01 and Accounts Payable Warrant #24049 for \$63,638.25.
 - Mover: Rich Hulett
 - 2nd: Brian Crossman
 - Discussion: None.
 - Result: Approved.
- Regarding the childcare tax, going into effect July 1, 2024:
 - Motion made to have employees pay .11% of the childcare tax, beginning July 1, 2024.
 - Moved: Rich Hulett
 - 2nd: Jessica Van Oort
 - Discussion: None

- Result: 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 (WWTF): No report at this meeting, however Mike Beecher shared that the new heater is in and up and running, and a piece of duct work was able to be re-connected.
- J. Facilities Report:
- An auditorium rental request made by Oasis Events at the last regular meeting has been edited slightly. The new requested date is April 24-April 28, 2024, with an event date of April 27, 2024.
 - The Board determined that there is an event on April 26, 2024 and this will be communicated with the requestor.
 - The Board unanimously decided that the rental fee for this event will be \$50.00.
- K. Mettawee School Board (MSB) Report:
- MSB Chair, Julie Mach, provided a report to the Board:
 - The Board unanimously agreed to approve the MSB's use of the Town Hall Auditorium for their meetings. Upcoming meetings are scheduled for:
 - Mr. Hulett relayed a request from Principal Debonis, requesting Constable presence at the Town-owned property by the hydrants. This is because there have been less than desirable items discovered by staff and students in this area.
8. Old or unfinished business:
- The Board acknowledged the appointments for the RRPC and RRTAC during the org meeting.
 - Jessica Van Oort shared an update on the sidewalk grant, reporting that we are to anticipate another quote soon.
 - Jessica Van Oort gathered some information regarding the structural relationship between municipalities and libraries throughout the state. Jessica's intention is to provide this information to the Selectboard, Library Board and interested members of the community as it is gathered.
9. New Business:
- Cemetery Stones

- Bob Jones, President of the West Pawlet Cemetery Association, shared that the Pawlett Historical Society has approached them and would like to work with an organization to clean some of the stones in the cemetery, following a special process to maintain headstone integrity. The Historical Society and Cemetery Association request the support of the Selectboard as they proceed with this process.
 - The consensus of the Board was to unanimously support these efforts.
 - Potential Rail Trail Trailhead Lease Agreement
 - Jessica Van Oort referenced the previously awarded grant, which funded the resurfacing of parking areas and signage around the D&H Rail Trail. Since the Town has not utilized the full funding from this grant, there is an opportunity to use the funds for a different project pertaining to the improvement of local accessibility to the trail.
 - Jessica asked the Selectboard if they would be interested in signing a lease agreement to proceed with options, or if they would like to request a presentation. Jessica shared she can obtain a copy of the agreement for the Board to review for the next meeting.

10. Public Comment:

- Sue LaPorte relayed a summary of observations and comments from the most recent Library Board meeting.
- Jessica Van Oort queried about a motion made at the Library Board pertaining to a personnel inquiry.
- Martin Kravitt inquired about the Town's legal costs thus far and/or any other matters pertaining to the Library. Mr. Beecher stated that, at this point, it is unclear but there has been assistance from the Town's insurance: PACIF.

11. Motion made to enter executive session to discuss labor relations agreements with employees (1 V.S.A. § 313) at 8:10pm.

- Mover: Bob Jones
- 2nd: Rich Hulett
- Discussion: None
- Result: Approved

12. Motion to come out of executive session with no decisions made at 8:33.

- Mover: Jessica Van Oort
- 2nd: Rich Hulett
- Discussion: None
- Result: Approved

14. Motion made to adjourn at 8:33pm

- Mover: Bob Jones
- 2nd: Jessica Van Oort
- Discussion: None
- Result: Approved