

Final Minutes
SELECTBOARD, TOWN OF PAWLET
May 28, 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
Brian Crossman
Rich Hulett

Others in Attendance:

PEG-TV
Kristin Powers
Harley Cudney
Sue LaPorte
Frank Nelson
Bill Waite
Steffanie Bourque
Deb Hawkins
Hannah Herbert
Bob & Martha Schoenemann
Damon Ferenc
Lauren Herbert
Ruth Lampi
Peter Pochop
Fred Stone
Nancy Morlino
Ashley Waite

EVENT

1. Call to order at 7:03pm 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 regular meeting minutes of May 14th, 2024, with one edit within the Road Foreman's Report section, and to approve the special meeting minutes of May 17th, 2024, as printed.
 - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
 - 2nd: Rich Hulett
 - Discussion: None.
 - Result: Approved.
5. Pre-Requested Appearances by Local Citizens and Visitors:
- Steffanie Bourque & Peter Pochop
 - Jessica Van Oort summarized the steps taken over the last several years to obtain the pedestrian accessibility grant. From there, the floor was opened for questions from the Board and Body to Steffanie & Peter.
 - A robust question and answer period ensued amongst the Board, Body, Peter & Steffanie.
 - Steffanie summarized the grant process, by sharing the status and next steps, which immediately involves the Board making a decision of whether or not the Town wishes to procure an engineering firm.
 - Motion made to accept the engineering bid from VHB for \$104,688.00.
 - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
 - 2nd: Bob Jones
 - Discussion:
 - Sue LaPorte added a comment in favor of improving pedestrian accessibility in the village.
 - Bob Jones acknowledged his concern with the high costs associated with the approach of this project, however recognizes the need to improve the current state of the Pawlet Village intersection.

- Steffanie highlighted the spending structure and Jessica acknowledged the use of ARPA funds.
- Frank Nelson spoke to the fact that the initial numbers are what led to tax-payer buy-in, and the numbers have evolved from those originally presented.
- Lauren Herbert spoke the significance of the funding match.
- Result: Jessica Van Oort, Bob Jones – in favor. Rich, Brian – opposed. Chairman Mike Beecher – in favor. Approved.

6. Announcements:

- The School Street Bridge will require complete 6-week closure to perform the necessary updates. This closure will begin once school concludes for the year, and warning will be provided.

7. Reports:

A. Zoning Administrator's (ZA) Report:

- ZA Nancy Morlino shared a report with the Board:
 - 14 permits issued year-to-date.
 - The past 20 years of zoning records have been digitally preserved and scanning will continue as time allows.
 - The final notice to obtain a permit for storage boxes was sent out with a deadline of June 1, 2024.
 - Approximately 30% of property owners are complying. There has been some challenge to this practice, and residents are encouraged to approach the Planning Commission as this is the body responsible for the bylaws.
 - ZA Morlino is attending the VLCT, "Zoning Development Review Forum" webinar, which will explain the function/status of the Environmental Court as it relates to local and zoning development.
- Jessica Van Oort commented on an act of vandalism that occurred at the Zoning Administrator's residence. Jessica and Mike spoke to this, affirming that these acts are not acceptable in our community.

B. Planning Commission's Report:

- The PPC approved the current batch of bylaw updates, which focus on increasing ease for building of homes and economic

development. The next step is to move through the process of public hearings: repeal hearing and amending hearing, both held during the next PPC meeting on 7/22/24.

C. Road Foreman's Report:

- Highway Foreman, Damon Ferenc, provided a report to the Board:
 - Throughout the last two weeks the Highway Department has:
 - Graded Tadmer, Deer Run, Andrus Drive, Beaver Brook, Robinson Hill, Towslee Hill, Cemetery Hill, Rupert Hill, Hickory Hollow, Warren Switch and Briar Hill. Calcium has been sprayed on all graded roads.
 - Continue to haul stone and perform road maintenance including: filling potholes, maintaining ditches, weed trimming.
 - Met with RRPC regarding culverts.
 - Upcoming projects to include:
 - Grading Betts Bridge, Chet Clark, Heatherington, Bauer and Sawmill Road(s).
 - Ditch work.
- The Grants In Aid letter of intent has been received. Pawlet is anticipated to receive \$12,000.00. An official grant agreement should be arriving soon.
- The Highway Department will re-locate the speed sign on Rupert Hill Road, and will re-install the sign currently not in use.
- Martha Schoenemann spoke to the 6-week permanent bridge closure, acknowledging the challenge the closure will pose to those households on the Rupert Hill Rd. side of the bridge.

D. Assessor Report:

- The Assessor's Office electronically submitted a report to the Board:
 - The Grand List Extension Request letter to Property Valuation and Review has been submitted. The extension will still allow timely issuance of tax bills.
 - The recommendations for Catalis Patriot AP 5 software has been revised and the Assessor's Office would like the Selectboard to approve cloud hosting.

- Motion made to approve cloud hosting of Catalis Patriot AP 5 software, increasing the annual fee to \$6,139.00 annually.
 - Mover: Rich Hulett
 - 2nd: Jessica Van Oort
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved

E. Town Clerk's Memo:

- Town Clerk, Deb Hawkins, provided a report to the Board:
 - Nothing to report at this meeting.

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.
- Pawlet was subjected to a Grant Desk Review by the State of Vermont. Pawlet has since received an exit letter indicating that we have complied with relevant laws, regulations and procedures under the grant agreement.
- Motion made to approve Payroll Warrant #24062 for \$10,421.88 and Accounts Payable Warrant #24063 for \$24,264.00.
 - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
 - 2nd: Bob Jones
 - Discussion: None.
 - Result: Approved.

G. Emergency Management Director's Report: none.

H. Health Officer's Report:

- Motion made to reappoint Jennifer Sullivan as Town Health Officer.
 - Mover: Rich Hulett
 - 2nd: Jessica Van Oort
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved

I. Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF): No report at this meeting

J. Facilities Report:

- Martha Schoenemann reported that, following a PHS event, it is apparent that the battery-operated shades in the Town Hall Auditorium need attention.

K. Mettawee School Board (MSB) Report: No report at this meeting.

8. Old or unfinished business: None.

9. New Business: None

10. Public comment:

- Frank Nelson spoke to the MERP program: the energy audit has been done; however inconsistencies have been found in the data.
- Lauren Herbert acknowledged a comment made at a past meeting regarding transparency at the Library. Lauren continued to acknowledge feeling compelled to reach out to the state level regarding OML.
- Bill Waite spoke to the veterans flags that other towns have installed on the power poles. The Board asked Mr. Waite to gather more information and provide it to the Board to continue discussions.
- Ashley Waite brought a question to the Board regarding a letter received regarding the permit required on shipping containers. Discussion ensued with the determination that Mr. Waite may continue conversations with the Zoning Administrator regarding pre-existing structures.

11. Motion made to adjourn at 8:33pm

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