

**Final Minutes**  
SELECTBOARD, TOWN OF PAWLET  
July 23, 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  
Frank Nelson  
Nancy Morlino  
Linda Lynton (zoom)  
Sarah  
Harry Van Meter (zoom)  
Deb Hawkins (zoom)  
Lauren Herbert  
Sue LaPorte  
Lyndsi Barnes  
Eve Schaub  
Phoebe McChesney  
Cori Rail  
Cana Williams  
Ruth Lampi  
Scott McChesney  
Hannah Herbert  
Bob Herbert  
Tom Covino  
Bob Morlino (zoom)  
Harley Cudney  
Hulett (zoom)

## EVENT

1. Call to order at 7:05pm 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:
    - New petition from voters – New Business
  - b. Deletions: None
4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting.
  - Motion made to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 9, 2024, as printed.
    - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
    - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rich Hulett
    - 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:
    - Nancy Morlino shared a report with the Board:
      - 25 permits, year-to-date. A recent permit was received for a larger new construction building, which is less common, and raised awareness of zoning fees. Nancy went on to discuss said fees, and some inconsistencies noticed.
        - Motion made to adjust zoning fees for buildings over 2000 square feet to \$200.00 plus \$0.10 per square foot.
          - Mover: Jessica
          - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rich
          - Discussion: Current fees are set at \$0.25 per square foot over 2000 square feet.
          - Result: Approved
  - B. Planning Commission's Report:
    - PPC Chairwoman Jessica VanOort, shared a report.
      - On 7/22, the PPC held their forewarned bylaw appeal hearings. The meeting was well and diversely attended.

- The PPC voted to send the bylaw report, letter of recommendation, and appeal to the Selectboard. The PPC also voted to send a slightly altered version of the bylaws to the Selectboard.
  - Drafts of items discussed at the PPC meeting will be available on the Town website.
  - Next steps include a properly warned hearing by the Selectboard to discuss and vote on the items sent from the PPC.
  - The Board determined to set the hearing for September 3, 2024 during the regularly scheduled Selectboard meeting. Proper warning to come.
- C. Road Foreman's Report:
- Highway Foreman, Damon Ferenc, provided a report to the Board:
    - Throughout the last two weeks the Highway Department has:
      - Performed truck and grader maintenance
      - Inspected a beaver dam on Brimstone
      - Prepared international for sale
      - Picked up the new truck
      - Prepped for guardrail installation by marking for dig safe on North Pawlet Rd, Rte 153 and Buttons Falls Rd. – met with crew daily as project progresses.
      - Roadside mowing in West Pawlet
      - Graded washout on Chet Clark and Betts Bridge Road(s).
      - Hauled 4 loads of crusher run to Robinson Rd. and graded upper portion.
      - Cleared limbs and trees from roadways.
    - Upcoming projects to include:
      - Continuation of roadside mowing and ditch work.
- D. Assessor Report: No report at this meeting.
- E. Town Clerk's Memo:
- Town Clerk, Deb Hawkins, shared a report with the Board:
    - Copies of the review and certification of replacement bridge deck design from R.R. Fellows Engineering along with the petition submitted by the voters on 7/22/24 were provided to the Board.

- Motion made to send a ballot to all active non-challenged voters, the local justice of the peace election. This will be on the back of the general election ballot.
  - Mover: Bob Jones
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Jessica Van Oort
  - Discussion: None
  - Result: Approved

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 #25004 for \$7,174.83 and Accounts Payable Warrant #25006 for \$37,831.00.
  - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rich Hulett
  - Discussion: None.
  - Result: Approved.
- Jessica Van Oort extended gratitude to Julie for hard work on taxes.

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):

- Jill Marsano of VTUMS participated in a meeting with the RRPC and Stone Engineering. Jill has some reservations, as Stone Engineering does not have wastewater-specific experience.
  - Discussions will continue on this subject.

J. Facilities Report:

- The Library continues to pursue Leon Corey to address the alarm.

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

8. Old or unfinished business:

- Gravel Pit – At this point, the Selectboard determined additional conversations are necessary to see if the abutting landowners may be interest in carving out some land to make for a wider right of way.
- Slag Pile Log – Jessica Van Oort put together draft slag pile log to be maintained by the Town Office staff and Highway

Department. The Board reviewed the log, and determined it may be sent to Deb, Julie and Damon.

- Open Meeting Law Updates – Some discussions ensued. Jessica Van Oort and Kristin Powers to follow up with Pawlet's Web Coordinator to understand the Town's web capabilities.
  - Frank Nelson shared a summary of some conversations with the Secretary of State's office regarding the possibility of a hardship exemption for the OML updates.

#### 9. New Business:

- Jessica Van Oort shared that a petition from the voters was received by the Town Clerk on 7/22/2024 pertaining to the unified bylaws. In essence, the petition is to shift to voting on all bylaw updates via Australian ballot. Jessica immediately reached out to VLCT for guidance on how to efficiently and properly process the petition. Jessica went on to read a reply from a lawyer of the VLCT.
  - In short, the VLCT shared that, following a law appeal from 2023, the voters may petition after a Selectboard vote, but may not do so prior. That said, this petition is unable to be acted upon while the Selectboard is still in process of a current bylaw amendment.

#### 10. Public comment:

- Frank Nelson shared an interesting finding while using the infrared cameras in the Town Hall attic.
- Lauren Herbert spoke to the Board regarding the Library Board, specifically alleged violations, and the vacancy on the Board. Ultimately, Lauren requested that the Selectboard make a motion at the present meeting to fill the vacant position.
  - Harley Cudney shared that the Pawlet Public Library Board of Trustees has advertised the vacancy, and plans to make a recommendation to the Selectboard following their next regularly scheduled meeting in August.
  - Lauren Herbert spoke again to the current state of affairs at the Library.
  - Jessica Van Oort acknowledged a previous sentiment from Town Treasurer, Julie Mach, stating that she would be willing to assist the Library throughout this vacancy, but is not willing to perform the job of the Library Treasurer.
  - Cori Rail, spoke to her interest in the vacancy on the Library Board of Trustees, expressing experience, interests, and suitability for the role.

- Sue Laporte spoke to a petition with 75 voter signatures in favor of Cori Rail.
  - Cana Williams acknowledged that the vacant term expires in March, and the individual appointed to the role will need to run again in March.
  - Frank Spoke to appointment processes, and what the Selectboard has in front of them, which is solely to fill the vacant role on the Pawlet Public Library Board of Trustees.
  - Harley added again, that he has received Cori's letter of interest and resume, both of which support her strong candidacy for the vacant role.
  - Jessica Van Oort spoke to a partisanship issue, mentioned earlier in the public comment portion of the meeting.
  - Motion made to appoint Cori Rail to the vacant term on the Pawlet Public Library Board of Trustees, until the next Town Meeting election.
    - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
    - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Rich Hulett
    - Discussion: The specific language of this motion was adjusted, thank you to a correction by Town Clerk, Deb Hawkins.
    - Result: Approved
11. Motion made to adjourn at 8:06pm
- Mover: Bob Jones
  - 2<sup>nd</sup>: Jessica Van Oort
  - Discussion: None
  - Result: Approved