

Final Minutes
SELECTBOARD, TOWN OF PAWLET
October 15, 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

Others in Attendance:

PEG-TV
Kristin Powers
Sue LaPorte
Frank Nelson
Mandy Hulett
Cori Rail
Tom Covino
Harley Cudney
Ruth Lampi
Linda Lynton
Carol Schoenwetter
Hannah Herbert
Martha Schoenemann
Harry Van Meter
Bob Morlino
Nancy Morlino
Cana Williams
Deb Hawkins
Lauren Shehadi Herbert

EVENT

1. Call to order at 7:02pm by Chairman, Mike Beecher, with the Pledge of Allegiance and a summary of the Selectboard's Rules of Procedure.

2. Introduction of those present, virtually and in person.
3. Addition or Deletion of Agenda Items.
 - a. Additions:
 - Bob Morlino – Pre-Requested Appearances.
 - Road Salt – Road Foreman’s Report
 - Letter from the Constable – Old/Unfinished Business
 - Executive Session – To discuss the appointment of a public officer or employee.
 - b. Deletions:
 - Plowing Plan – Road Foreman’s Report
4. Approval of minutes from previous meeting.
 - Motion made to approve the regular meeting minutes of October 1, 2024, as printed.
 - Mover: Jessica Van Oort
 - 2nd: Bob Jones
 - Discussion: None.
 - Result: Approved.
5. Pre-Requested Appearances by Local Citizens and Visitors:
 - Bob Morlino – Updated the Board on the Town’s radio repeater system. A federal grant was received approximately 9 years ago to install a repeater system. This system boosts the signal from 50 to 100 watts, allowing for improved communication for the entities in Town that utilize the system. Evidently, the contractor did not obtain a license from the FCC for the repeater frequency and we have been asked to cease using it. The contractor has agreed to obtain a new frequency, a license and reprogram the towns radios at no cost. Mr. Morlino will advise the Board when this is completed.
6. Announcements: None.
7. Reports:
 - A. Zoning Administrator’s (ZA) Report:
 - ZA Nancy Morlino shared a report with the Board:
 - Nancy addressed the Board regarding grant information tree removal, inquiring if the Board was interested in pursuing this grant. The Board sought additional clarification regarding which properties are eligible for tree removal.

- Motion made to pursue tree removal grant.
 - Mover: Bob Jones
 - 2nd: Rich Hulett
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved
 - Nancy shared an update on short-term rentals, reiterating that a letter will be sent out reminding residents that they need to register their short-term rental properties.
- B. Planning Commission's Report: No report at this meeting.
- C. Road Foreman's Report:
 - Highway Foreman, Damon Ferenc, provided a report to the Board:
 - The Highway Dept. has:
 - Ditched Briar Hill Rd, hauled winter sand and continued to check roads to prep for colder months ahead.
 - Graded Tadmer, Kelly Hill Rd, Beaver Brook, Deer Run and Andrus.
 - Re: question at the last meeting on culvert on Andrus – the Highway Dept. is investigating a proper solution for this portion of the roadway.
 - Damon provided the Board with pricing for tires for the Grader:
 - \$1023.00 each plus \$160/hr labor (estimated 6-8 hours for changing the tires) from Pete's Tire. Mr. Ferenc believes these are the best option.
 - Motion made to purchase six tires, with associated labor, for the grader through Pete's Tire.
 - Mover: Rich Hulett
 - 2nd: Jessica Van Oort
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved
 - Upon discussion at a previous meeting, the offer made for the Town truck through auction was rejected. The Board discussed options, and determined to post the truck on Facebook marketplace via the Town Clerk's Facebook page.
 - The Board discussed road salt options – two rates were discussed.
 - Motion made to purchase rock salt from Apalachee for \$89.50 per ton delivered, at an estimated amount of 350 ton.

- Mover: Jessica Van Oort
 - 2nd: Bob Jones
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved
- Jessica Van Oort shared that the VLCT issued a Municipal Service Award to all road crews in Vermont for all their work tending to the roads throughout winter storms and events. Jessica presented the award to the Highway Department.
- D. Assessor Report: No report at this meeting.
- E. Town Clerk's Memo:
- Town Clerk, Deb Hawkins, shared a report with the Board:
 - Early ballot processing has begun as of 10/15/2024, processing 125 early voting ballots. Ballot processing will continue during the next two Tuesdays. Thank you to Julie Mach, Sue LaPorte and Nancy Morlino for the assistance in covering the Town Clerk's Office last week.
- 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 Accounts Payable Warrant #25024 for \$31,533.31 and Payroll Warrant #25023 for \$11,012.21.
 - Mover: Rich Hulett
 - 2nd: Jessica Van Oort
 - Discussion: None.
 - Result: Approved.
 - Julie Mach recommended investing the most recent Equipment and Capital Projects Investments in staggered term Treasury Bills 1/3 at 1 month, 1/3 at 3 months and 1/3 at 6 months.
 - Motion made to approve the investment plan as presented.
 - Mover: 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:

- Health Officer, Jennifer Sullivan, shared that there have been several accounts of dog bites. In addition, there are some ongoing issues in West Pawlet that have no update or resolution currently.
- I. Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF):
- Jill Marsano, VTUMS, provided test result summaries to the Board.
 - There are furnace issues in the WWTF that are currently being addressed.
 - Frank Nelson inquired if there could be a hook-up check at the State-owned building in West Pawlet to determine if they should be paying the sewer fee.
 - Julie Mach confirmed that the building is currently taxed as an unlanded structure, and a hookup status is irrelevant.
- J. Facilities Report:
- Mike Beecher shared that he has spoken with Jake Williams who plans to address the thermostat questions in the Town Hall.
 - Jessica Van Oort readdressed the need to trim the branches on the side of the Town Hall per the historical trust.
 - The Board inquired about the possibility of Haynes Tree Care to trim the branches while completing another project this fall.
 - The Board revisited the topic of a Library Board report, addressed at the last meeting.
 - Harley Cudney shared that the Library has hired a new Director, Christine Edwins. Also shared that the Library is hosting a raffle to contribute towards operating expenses. The Library is hosting an open house with food and live music on Friday 10/18/24.
- K. Mettawee School Board (MSB) Report: No report at this meeting.
8. Old or unfinished business:
- Letter from the Constable – The Board received a letter from Constable Covino at the last regularly scheduled meeting on 10/1. Mr. Covino spoke to the letter, expressing the wish for extra support in Town to assist in cases by way of appointing a Special Officer position for the Town. This appointment would also serve as an asset and support if or when there is a change

in the First Constable role following an election. This appointment would not affect the existing Constable budget.

- The Board decided to reach out to the VLCT before making any decisions.

9. New Business:

- Selectboard Vacancy – The Board received three letters of interest to fill the vacancy on the Selectboard until the next Town Meeting in March of 2025.
 - Town Clerk, Deb Hawkins, clarified that whomever is appointed to fill the vacant Selectboard seat will need to take an Oath of Office before acting at a Selectboard meeting.

10. Public comment:

- Sue LaPorte commented that the Library also utilizes grants and taxpayer money to operate and pay employees. Ms. LaPorte shared a letter written by Patty Winpenny pertaining to the Library.
- Tom Covino spoke further to the appointment of a Special Officer role in Town. He confirmed that he is working through this process with the Town of Rupert, and expressed that this would require a motion by the Board.

11. Motion made to enter executive session to discuss the appointment of a public officer at 7:52pm.

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

12. Motion made to exit executive session with no decisions made at 8:23pm.

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

13. Motion made to appoint Tom Collard to the vacant seat on the Selectboard, until Town Meeting in March 2025.

- Mover: Jessica Van Oort
- 2nd: Rich Hulett
- Discussion: Tom will need to take an oath of office prior to serving on the Selectboard.

- Result: Approved
14. Motion made to adjourn at 8:24pm
- Mover: Bob Jones
 - 2nd: Rich Hulett
 - Discussion: None
 - Result: Approved