

APPROVED MINUTES
SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF BENSON, VT
September 18th, 2023, 6:30pm

Selectboard Present:

Linda Peltier (Chair), Guy Charlton, Jerod Glover, Brad Barrett, Tom Bartholomew

Others Present:

Heidi Chandler (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Carrie LaFond (Selectboard Assistant), Darryl Kuehne (Health Officer)

Public Present:

Jack Helm, Lois Trenn, Jon Dodd, Ron Fredette

Call to Order:

Linda Peltier (Chair) called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

Approved Agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Jerod Glover, seconded by Tom Bartholomew, motion passed unanimously.

Update from Gary Freeguard: Unavailable

Public Comment:

- **Jon Dodd:**

Jon Dodd questioned why the email copies of the SB Agenda had not gone out until Monday, warned this is a violation of the open public meeting law, and questioned if the agenda posted at public points was put up on time. The Selectboard Assistant explained the email copies were stuck in the outgoing file and presumably never went out because of internet issue, there is a catch for this that was overlooked. The public copies were posted on Saturday at all three locations the G & L store, Wheel Inn and Town Office.

- **Ron Fredette:**

Ron Fredette stated, "property looks great" and as far as he is concerned "case closed."

- **Darryl Kuehne (Health Officer):**

Darryl Kuhne (Health Officer) did another inspection of the property on 22a. There were violations noted, presently there is no heat or water.

Approve Selectboard Minutes:

Motion to approve September 5th Selectboard minutes as amended by Brad Barrett seconded by Guy Charlton, motion passed unanimously.

Amendments to Minutes:

Time correction -In executive session at 8:40

Time correction- left executive session at 9:15

Time correction- adjourned meeting at 9:15

Pay Bills:

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Regular Bills in the amount of \$728,779.94 second by Jerod Glover, motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Regular Payroll in the amount of \$5,669.34 second by Jerod Glover, motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Highway Payroll in the amount of \$4,521.94, second by Jerod Glover, motion passed, Brad Barrett abstained from the vote.

Listers:

- Lois Trenn (Lister) supplied the selectboard with a proposal for a town wide reappraisal (see file), and suggested the Town have the reappraisal done before Bill #480 from the State of Vermont is passed.
- The Town will have to have the internet speed increased at the Town office for the reappraisal, speeds are not adequate for the cloud.
- Anticipate needing three Listers with an increase to the Listers budget of around \$8,000 for salaries and equipment.
- Question was asked about the requirements for a Town wide reappraisal, **Answer:** There are many inequities within the Town and 2011 building costs are being used for evaluation purposes.

Motion by Guy Charlton, second by Jerod Glover to authorize the Listers to pursue a contract with NEMRC for the purposes of a town wide reappraisal, motion passes unanimously.

Highway Department:

Road Foreman Report:

- Highway department is splitting time between excavation and grading
- Grant project has been started.
- Working on Money Hole Road
- Dean Hansen and Wayne Fletcher are helping with hauling.
- Road crew will be grading on Park Hill, Frazier Hill, and Needham Hill roads.
- Working on getting the roads cleaned up and grant projects done for October.

Motion by Guy Charlton, second by Brad Barrett to authorize the Chair to sign the grants agreement, motion passed unanimously.

- Question was asked if the roadside brush mower is still in service still? **Answer:** The Town crew is still working on roadside mowing.

Transfer Station:

- Recycling dumpster out this week and the demolition dumpster will go Thursday.
- Greg is learning to use the backhoe.
- Question was asked if the stickers could be sold at the dump? **Answer:** Discussion on the issue, **Outcome:** will focus on G & L store not running out of stickers.

Town Clerk Report:

- Auditors will be in soon.
- Dog registration fees sent into the State.
- The list needs updating for drug testing.
- Jack Helm asked how much was in the Town's coffers and stated that it was great the salt shed funds had been re-invested in treasury bonds and asked why the Town is not investing more of the Town's funds. **Answer:** Good question for the Auditors and they should be invited to the next meeting.

Old Business:

Town Garage:

- Tom Bartholomew met with Gary Freeguard, and he is having trouble making the numbers work and will look at the costs for a steel framed building.
- Tom Bartholomew met with Sherry Young on Permitting
- Tom is still working on a Sewer Policy
- Question was asked is the Town now thinking about going back to a Steel Building? **Answer:** Nothing is definite right now, still looking at the numbers.

New Business:

Sign Grants -In -Aid Agreement:

- Signed under Highway portion of the agenda

RRPC Grant Commitment

- Looking at a few different options such as a park and ride, or a pavilion on the concrete slab near the town office

Motion by Tom Bartholomew, second by Jerod Glover to participate int the Rutland Regional Planning Commission technical grants program, motion passed unanimously.

Sign Purchase Agreement – New Truck

Motion by Guy Charlton, second by Tom Bartholmew to authorize the Chair to sign the purchase agreement for the new international truck, motion passed unanimously,

Correspondence:

- John Hill Email as followed:

Orwell's broadband is being installed by Maple broadband. I believe it is being installed throughout Addison County. They will also install at border homes in Rutland County where the property has land in both counties.

Otter Creek CUD is contracting with Consolidated Communications. Our contract is 9 - 12 months behind Maple Broadband. There is a possibility that Consolidated will install in areas where they have no business (i.e., Go Net Speed has the telephone service) first then finish installing in towns they are already serving. I'm hopeful that we will begin to see Consolidated lines in Benson within a year. There was a discussion about Benson leaving Otter Creek CUD and joining Maple Broadband in early 2023. The prior Selectboard compared the proposed services from Maple Broadband and Consolidated and found that there was a significant cost savings for Benson residents in monthly fees if we stayed with Otter Creek and waited for Consolidated to run the fiber optic cable.

- Email on Technical Assistance Grant- discussion that the Town is currently paying \$466.00 for internet at the town that is not an acceptable speed, need to look at different service possibly First Light or Star link.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Brad Barrett; second by Jerod Glover at 8:17pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Carrie LaFond

Selectboard Assistant

Documents referenced in these minutes can be found at the Benson Town Office.