

Virtual Selectboard Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2020

Present: Doon Hinderyckx, Frank Severy, Pat Harvey

Guests: Carol Zeglen, Burma Cassidy-Wissner, Martha Slater, Nancy Woolley, Bruce Flewelling, Joan Allen, Rob Gardner, Nick Piccicuto & Amy Braun and Vic Ribaudo

Doon Called the meeting at 6:05 pm

Doon confirmed the new electronic open meeting law conformity.

Additions to the agenda: Doon-Town Garden Allotment system, Frank -Town Pan Warning, School Education payment relief from State, Board meeting more frequently during COVID-19, ask Vic a few questions, Voting in Fall ideas, Taxes-budget plan & delinquency, all the dept heads need to tighten up their budgets, road work and grants, Nick and Amy- chlorine in the water.

Doon moved to approve the March 23, 2020 selectboard minutes. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, voted. Doon moved to approve the Annual Town Meeting minutes. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, voted

Joan Updates: For Mount Cushman culvert replacement project, construction funding is ready. Most of which includes State Structures Grant and White River Partnership would fund the 10% match. She noted, assuming bids don't come in higher than funding on hand, Town shouldn't have to contribute any town funds for this project. Joan noted she had been working with Cricket and White River Partnership in preparing bidding packets to go out with a cover letter to explain uncertainty of the work and that applies to any State funding. Joan noted there may not be a construction season when it comes to State and Federal money. She noted they will still move forward until they hear otherwise and put the jobs out to bid. She noted contractors would bid knowing the work may not be done in this year.

She noted with uncertainty of times, would also apply to the applications she is submitting for Structures and Class 2 Roadway Grants through VTrans. She noted deadlines for the applications were pushed from April 15th to May 15th. She noted one of the applications submitted, was engineered by Cricket for the design work on Nason Brook, which will be a culvert replacement just below Terry Severy's on Bethel Mountain Road. She noted plans had been submitted for a structure grant for replacement and combined with the Rogers Brook culvert, as an application put into Better Roads back earlier in the year. The jobs would be a two-part of a single project done by one contractor.

She noted she is submitting a structure grant for just the engineering work on a culvert replacement located on Town Line Rd. She noted that the culvert was done previous as a temporary fix and currently in bad shape.

She noted she was working with Cooter on bid packets for work to be done on incomplete FEMA sites. She noted she will need to find out what their policies are for the work in the short term. She noted meanwhile they will be prepared to proceed once FEMA gives the ok to start. Joan noted she may need to apply for extension for FEMA , if need be.

Joan noted status for the FEMA and Federal reimbursements for the Bethel Mountain Road and FEMA projects are in process. She noted the Federal reimbursement looked promising for payment by June.

Joan noted of an upcoming Special Meeting to open the bids for the West Hill Bridge replacement. She noted the purpose is for engineering design work only at this time. She noted the bids will be submitted electronically. She noted this project is fully funding by the Forest Service. She noted this is just for opening the bids and there will not be any decisions made at this special meeting. She noted the decision will have to go through a technical review and will take place on Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at 4 pm. Joan noted meeting will be set up electronically through zoom. She noted currently 13 engineering firms were interested.

Joan noted an email arrived late in the afternoon and she shared with the selectboard about information coming from VLCT regarding the School education taxes. She noted there was some movement afoot in Montpelier requesting the State take out a loan to fund the Education and school district taxes that ordinarily, no towns will be able to pay coming due in May/June. She noted it was requested the State take out a loan instead to pay for some or all the payments on behalf of the Cities and Towns. She noted this is in the early stages and was initiated by an eloquent letter submitted from Town of Colchester. She noted VLCT asked we get support and reach out to our local State reps. Selectboard was in support and will reach out. Doon noted this coincides with Franks addition to the agenda and to make some noise to support their idea.

Doon spoke on behalf of the Highway department noting that we were blessed by a relatively easy mud season so far. He noted a few potholes need addressing, checking the culverts and grading the roads will be in the works.

Doon also spoke on behalf of Terry about the utilities. He invited Nic & Amy to speak about their concerns with chlorination of town water. Amy proposed if a petition to waive the addition of chlorine would that have any pull for the Town of Rochester. Doon wasn't sure but shared a letter written by Sandy Haas to the ANR presenting our case and requesting a wavier from adding the chlorine. Doon noted it had been clearly denied. Doon noted the Governor was not aware of this mandate. Doon wanted to make it clear that there was no evidence the town water was contaminated. He noted it was an over abundance of caution to minimize a chance of contamination through our water system. Amy noted she would perhaps write to Governor Scott in hopes it would rectify the decision. Doon noted there is a spring on Fiske Road, that Ben Falk connected last summer. He noted it's obvious location when you turn up Oak Lodge Road and turn onto Fiske Rd. Nancy quoted from a press release state by Brian Redmond, who is the drinking water and ground water protection person, indicated "by rules, community water systems have to have the capability to disinfect and they were instructed to disinfect. She noted when the State of Emergency is over so is the instruction."

Doon noted Frank inquired to ask Vic a couple questions. Frank asked how Home Shopping Service was proceeding. Frank asked if the service was being utilized much. Vic noted 17 deliveries were made in first two weeks. He noted there's a great team of volunteer drivers. Vic noted Sue, his wife has done a great job organizing the service. He noted it has been aided by cash advancements from the Rebuild Rochester Foundation and gets reimbursed by the people who receive the groceries. He noted Macs does not work around phone charges, so a payment process was established. He noted people are grateful and its working out great. He noted it has included the town of Hancock as well. He noted Dorothy Robson is coordinating Hancock residents and he spoke with Bruce Hyde in Granville about their needs. He noted Granville would probably do something similar and use Dan Sargeant's store. He noted Dan takes phone orders by credit cards and packages up groceries to include curb side delivery. Frank asked about the Food Shelf and if that is being utilized more currently. Vic noted he and Kathryn Schenkman met with Kevin and Ruth McLoughlin about the food shelf to see how they worked and

where they currently stand. Vic noted he called the Food Bank in Barre and they deliver food to all the food shelves in the state and are currently gearing up for a major increase in demand over the next few months because of the economic conditions and loss of employment. He noted the numbers he received from Rochester Food Shelf have doubled between January and March. Vic noted Bethany, from a food delivery service at Gifford, had doubled from 250 families in March to over 500 families in April. Vic noted indicators for demand is going to increase significantly. Vic noted in conversation with Ruth and Kevin, dealing with this demand we all may see some solicitation for more monetary donations to support the Food Shelf here in Rochester. Vic noted the next wave of activity will be around food security, not just here but everywhere in response to articles written about how food demand is up significantly for food shelf operations.

Frank thanked the emergency management task team for the newsletter they put out weekly, with all the important information. He asked when the next letter would mail out and if they could include a message about the Census and the importance for all residents to comply. Martha noted after speaking with Erica Harrington, from the school, the meal deliveries for the school children have averaged 100 children's needs for breakfast and lunch every week. She noted some are picked up and the rest are delivered by school bus. Vic noted with the food security issues, he has been in touch with Monica Colins and Bruce Hyde to go over the variety of sources for free and low-cost food for an increasing number of people who need it.

Doon noted tying into Frank asking about the Budget and the needs vs. wants, it was a good time to sit down and look at what was passed for the budget and see what the projections show and where to pinch some pennies in the next coming months.

Doon noted in terms of voting, it was good to put it on the radar. He noted to see how the mail-in voting would be and how the country will proceed with that. Pat noted it will be most likely figured out by the state.

Doon noted in New Business there is an approval for ABLE Waste recycling agreement. The board commented their strong opinion to approve based on towns needs. Doon moved to approve and execute that agreement. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, voted. Pat noted the state was entertaining the idea of moving the food composting date to January 1, 2021.

Doon noted there was also an approval for White River Alliance a Household Hazardous Waste Day set for August 15. Doon noted with the current situation, his observation from the past years it could be done safely. Doon moved to approve. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, voted.

Doon invited Carol to talk about her idea of a Walking Labyrinth Maze. She thought with the current situation, Coronavirus could go on for some time and would be nice to create a walking labyrinth maze for adults and children to walk and use for meditation. She noted it could be done in a very large circle and could be done by mowing with an entrance on one side and an exit on the other end. She noted it could be created in early spring. She noted a vision of flags, like the ones used at the harvest fair, for the entrance and exit. She noted it could be mowed over once social distancing ends. Doon asked if this would be done on the park. Carol noted she didn't think either of the parks in town were nearly large enough. Her thought was a ball field, so it could be done in a very large, flat area. Pat noted permission may have to come from the school. Pat noted the Town owns the fields down by the tennis courts. Doon noted the hay fields in between are owned by Bill Thrailkill. Frank noted some research on the property deed would need to be investigated to make sure the property deed rights would allow for the idea.

Doon noted it's an interesting idea and thought we could drum up some interests. Doon noted it was one of the topics discussed on the task force about how to instill some optimistic ideas into the town instead of managing bad news. He thought the idea could be a step in that direction.

Doon spoke about his idea of having a town garden allotment by the ball fields down by the tennis courts. He thought because of its location, it would be great to get water from the brook. He researched the idea and thought of some small contracts and fees. Positive discussion ensued. Nancy shared she had downloaded from her town in Maine, their guidelines for community gardens and she would leave at the clerk's office to share with Doon. Doon noted it would be interesting to see how much interest it would draw. He asked Martha to include it in the paper.

Doon noted the hearing on the Town plan meeting is scheduled to take place before the next selectboard meeting at 6 pm. Doon asked if the draft of the plan can be found on the website. The draft can be found on the Town website under the document's tab in the Planning Commission dropdown.

Doon noted Frank asking about the board meeting more often. Frank noted with the situation we are in, it could warrant more contact. Frank thought they should revisit that if things get worse down the road. Doon noted with all the meetings he is attending there is a lot going on. He noted its too bad that it would be nice if the whole selectboard could attend the meeting without having to post all the warnings. Doon noted the newsletters mailed out weekly do keep the public informed of decisions that have been talked about in the Emergency Management meetings. Doon noted a special meeting can be warned if needed.

Doon moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 pm

Doon moved to go into Executive Session at 7:21 pm.

Executive Session: The board has decided to bring the road crew back to perform essential tasks that can be performed under current social distancing guidelines.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Smith