

## Virtual Selectboard Meeting Minutes

December 28, 2020

Present: Doon Hinderyckx, Pat Harvey, Frank Severy

Guests: Guests: Martha Slater, Orca Media, Joan Allen, Kristen & Troy LaPell, Nancy Woolley, Burma Cassidy, Kirk White, Sheila Braun, Nick Piccicuto, and Rob Gardner

Doon called the at 6:00 pm

Doon read the State statute guidelines for holding a proper meeting electronically and confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

**Additions:** Burma Cassidy-New Business

**Prior Meeting Minutes:** Doon tabled until the next Selectboard Meeting

Kirk White introduced himself and noted he will not officially be in office until January 6, 2021 when he will be sworn in by the state. He has been through training through the state. He would like to set up with the town if he could attend our second Selectboard meeting to speak over any issues, questions or inform the town of any legislature coming down that would keep us informed. Doon noted the biggest question we have is how we conduct the annual Town Meeting. Kirk noted that one of the first thing that will be on the agenda for the legislative session is a bill authorizing town to officially switch to Australian Ballot or give towns permission to push back their town meetings if they would like to meet in person as late as June to rent a tent. Kirk noted the third provision on that bill is to empower the Secretary of States office to be creative in helping towns find solutions around challenges to have town meeting Kirk noted the importance of passing this bill early is because the candidates would have to proclaim early. Martha asked if there is an Australian Ballot, as the town has voted to do so, would there be any informational meetings? Frank noted there will be two informational meetings towards the end of February. He noted the information will be coming forth soon. He noted voting will take place on March 1<sup>st</sup> from 10-7 hopefully at the high school. He noted that the informational meetings will be held sometime after the town reports are printed and mailed. He noted the informational meeting will help to answer questions and held through Zoom possibly. Burma asked if the town will be voting on the un-merger with Stockbridge school. Doon noted there is nothing in our town for the un-merger to be put on our ballot. He noted the Town of Stockbridge has presented their selectboard with a petition to have a vote in Stockbridge. He noted, if in favor then the Town of Rochester has 90 days to respond to that vote. Martha noted in the upcoming Herald, they will have a story to talk about that.

Doon noted that they would welcome Kirk to attend the last selectboard meeting of the month to answer any questions people may have. He noted he can be reached at [kwhite@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:kwhite@leg.state.vt.us) and encouraged anyone to write.

Burma noted she was concerned about the rumor mill about COVID and the numbers of people in Rochester who have it. She noted its very upsetting and creates a lot of anxiety. She noted the spread is continuing in Vermont and in the towns. She is asking if the town could create a venue, for a way to alert the public through various mediums such as Facebook page, Front Porch

Forums or Community page for information to curb the rumors that are going around and see if perhaps the Health Officer in our town could connect with the State Department of Health. She noted she had a lengthy conversation with a woman by the name of Leslie and encourages anyone with any questions to call the following number. 1-802-863-7240 and use option 8. She noted that as of this week they are adding 4 more to their staff to make 16 to answer any COVID related questions. Burma asked if the selectboard could authorize the Health Officer to go to the Vermont Health website and keep the town apprised of the number of active cases in our town. Burma noted she is not looking for an immediate reply. She would encourage the selectmen to discuss this issue and come up with a plan to alert the town. Pat responded that there was a statement on both the Rochester Community Facebook page by a task force member and also on Front Porch Forum about this issue. Pat noted that John White the Rochester Health Officer, is included in that group. She noted the Task force group was started back in March and their job is to help get the information out in the town. She noted a letter was sent out in Stockbridge on December 22 saying there was someone in the school who had an active case. She noted that there was no information shared in Rochester and asked that there would be someone who could be officially appointed by the town to take that on to make sure that information is shared amongst various sites. Doon noted this information is shared. He noted there are two new cases in town. He noted the risk is there and we need to minimize the exposure by following the CDC guidelines of wearing a mask and staying 6feet apart. Doon noted to have a tally every time someone has a positive case in Rochester, he felt that is not realistic to do. Doon noted he wanted to share tonight on the agenda that we have positive cases in town and a few more through the valley. Doon noted it would fall to the State for contact tracing. Sheila shared with her expertise in the discussion about Research in the two data types she works with the most is medical data and education data. She shared her concerns with the contact tracing and how its not traced quickly and more thoroughly. She shared a scenario of how it can get away from us. She felt tracing it back all the way through all possible contacts is a better insurance that people are tested since COVID can be so invisible. She felt that the town could do a better job to protect their citizens than how the state is following for contact tracing. She apologized if she offended anyone. She felt compelled to speak as this is her field of expertise. Doon stressed even with the vaccine in the horizon there is no reason to relax and let our guards down. He noted we need to continue to follow the guidelines and stay the course. Discussion ensued and Doon noted that the information would come from the state as well as information given to the four-member task force to get the accurate information out to the community through the Rochester Community Face Book page or Front Porch Forum to share just cases and not personal information.

Joan Updates: She noted there are no updates at this time.

Library: Tony noted the Porch pick-up and will be operating in that manner for a while longer.

Discussion about proposal for Cyber Security for the Town Office: Julie shared the costs needed to upgrade the Towns Cyber Security is real and funds would need to be established to hire out the need for updating the town computers. Frank noted the amount needed for this year's budget is \$4,600 and next year would be \$7450. Frank noted the \$525 was for each computer and he was wondering how many years the fee would stand. Frank noted if we could find the \$4600 this year to get this service up and running, it would be an insurance for the town files. If we didn't have the funds we would need to put more in the budget for next year and set this up. Frank

noted this is important for our town. Pat felt that it would be a very comprehensive back up system. She noted if we were to be compromised similar to what happened at UVM, we would be able to restore our data. She noted this assures we have the most up to date coverage of our data as we could possibly get.

Doon noted they will be moving into executive session to discuss employee situations.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Smith