

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2022

Present: Doon Hinderyckx (absent), Frank Severy, Pat Harvey

Guests Present: Kristen LaPell, Julie Smith, Terry Severy, Orca media, Nancy Woolley, Chris Mattrick

Guests Present on Zoom: Orca, Martha Slater, Joan Allen, Jeff Gephart, Orca Media, Troy LaPell, Bruce Flewelling

Pat called the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Pat confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

Prior Meeting Minutes: Pat moved to approve the February 14, 2022, Selectboard meeting minutes. Frank seconded. All in favor. So, voted.

West Hill Update: Chris Mattrick updated the board with Green Mountain National Forest and what they were doing locally. Chris shared there are four different timber sales currently in or around Rochester. He said Souphouse is really in Chittenden but accessed through Rochester. He said they are done in there and have completed that job. There will be some cleanup work in the spring. He shared the other part of Souphouse, up by Brandon Gap near the back country ski area, has been a slow operation with two units. He has been updated that they will be done in a week and a half. Chris said there will be some remediation work to be done at the bottom of the slope where the ski lines come down. That will include GMNF, the logging outfit and Ridgeline helping. He shared there was a little impact to the Chittenden Brook Ski Trail system. He noted Swans Mill timber sale didn't operate much this summer located up on Maple Hill or even, Wing Farm Road. The Garage timber sale up off Liberty Hill Road was originally going to be accessed off State Garage Road, the purchaser had concerns about that access, so choose Liberty Hill instead. Camp 5 is the last timber sale up off Thresher Hill in Bingo. He said they are out in full swing. They are a new purchaser for GMNF. He noted they have large modern equipment and they have been running fierce out there. He said they will all be done about the same time the Garage timber sale wraps up. Frank asked if the operation would go on for another year and Chris indicated there is another 3 to 5 years. He said the timber harvester there was moving fast and felt he would only be another year. Chris shared the next timber sale that would get offered is the Monastery sale out at the end of Bingo Road past the four corners. He figured it wouldn't be available until the end of 2023. Frank said that is all coming from Hancock. Chris agreed all timber from Hancock, but the access is from Rochester Bingo Rd.

Chris shared this summer we will see more segments of the Velomont Trail from end-to-end mountain bike trail that Velomont and VT Huts striving to install. There is some funding to construct between Rochester tunnel and Hancock tunnel this past year. They also made connections on Wing Farm Road.

Frank asked if there were any plans for additional parking up at Brandon Gap. Chris shared they have a plan to reopen the old Bear Brook Picnic Ground Parking area. He said it is currently going through environmental analysis process. This would only be a winter area parking area to

get the back country ski traffic out of the VTrans pull out. He said there are some requests for funding for construction.

He noted they have given Ridgeline the ok for phased approach for construction of additional back country ski lines, that were approved as part of Robinson. These lines are up behind Chittenden brook hut, south of the campground. He shared they have a plan associated with that to expand the parking lot at the end of Chittenden Brook Road to make it look more like a parking lot with one entrance with parking on each side. Terry asked with the new roads, will there be access for rescue. Chris said the Chittenden Brook Road would never be plowed all the way but would be able to access by snowmachine or track vehicle in the winter. The road next to it, was improved to a maintenance level 1 road, with access. There are gates to access, and keys will be made available for the Fire Department.

West Hill Bridge project is under a little bit of delay due to various reasons. He shared the money is there, but their temporary bridge is tied up with another project awaiting funding from same source, Eastern Federal Lands. He said it has become a timing issue. He said he spoke with Joan about the funding going out later in the fall for next year. If the town had money that had a time limit where the funding had to be used in a fair amount of time, they suggested to put it out to bid with no construction until 2023. Joan shared with structures grant if there are extenuating circumstances, they will work with us on the funding.

Liquor License Approval for Skip Mart: Pat moved to approve the liquor license for the Skip Mart. Frank seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Selectboard recommendation for vacant Justice of the Peace: Pat thanked Joan Hubbard for her decades of service to the position. Pat shared their recommendation for the vacancy. Annette West to fill the vacancy. This vacancy will be filled until February 2023. This recommendation is sent to the Governor. Pat moved to accept Annette as their recommendation. Frank seconded. All in favor. So, voted. Nancy asked if we could include her name in the upcoming Town Report. Frank felt it would be best included with pending Governor's acceptance.

Approval for refinancing the Firehouse Loan: Pat noted this will be tabled. It will need to be written differently on the next agenda and will be on the upcoming selectboard meeting March 14th.

Joan Updates: Joan shared the design work on the replacement of the culvert on Town Line Road. She said she is submitting a Structures Grant to VTrans in April. She said Cooter has been in touch with Kricket on comments on the draft plans. She said she is helping with Frank on the bids for the backup generator. She said she is still waiting to hear from the FEMA folks. She said it's all in their hands for the past few months.

Utility Updates: Terry said there will be an operator coming to update the 3G to a 5G for the sewer monitoring. Pat asked about the class he attended on cyber security. Terry said it wasn't for the system we have since ours is in the ground. Pat shared we are getting alerts going on for security for utilities and office data and we are taking this all seriously and hopefully we get serious for no reason at all.

Energy Coordinator Updates: Jeff shared he didn't have a lot to report. He said he reached out to Green Mountain Power and advised we received a grant award for purchasing and installing an LP gas emergency generator for the Town Office. He asked if with a working resiliency zone whether that would be redundant and if not, could we serve the same functions with battery storage. He said we are looking at the estimate range or coverage time the resiliency zone could provide emergency power and coverage to the Town Clerk's Office. He said that GMP has asked a representative to look at the town office energy use to identify what size back up battery power we might need. He felt at this point in time its too early for GMP to comment on an estimated range.

He said on the fast charger, he asked where GMP responsibility is stopped, and Rochester responsibility kicked in. GMP response was they will take care of all necessary cost for interconnection including primary and secondary side of work for the installation. Jeff shared the town will only need to be on the hook for any civil site work to land the charger, for example fire station upgrades (old fire station) or parking lot upgrades at the Park and Ride. Frank has been working with Zac and both like the Park and Ride option.

Jeff said he will continue to work with Vermont Council of Rural Development. They will be looking at two things. First, helping us local manage the fast courses that were set up and secondly is looking for grants.

Pat moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Smith