

November 27, 2023

Selectboard Meeting

Present: Doon Hinderyckx, Pat Harvey, Frank Severy

Guests: Julie Smith, Kristen LaPell, Sandy Haas, Orca Media, Sarah Wraight, Nancy Woolley, Deb Matthews, Tom Paquette, Lary Straus

Guests attending via zoom: Martha Slater, Burma Cassidy, Troy LaPell, Orca Media, Dan McKinley, Robert Franks, Kevin Geiger

Doon called the November 27, 2023, Selectboard meeting to order at 6:22 pm.

Doon confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

Doon moved to approve the November 13, 2023, Selectboard meeting minutes. Pat seconded. All in favor.

Grant Discussion on Flood Resilient and Equitable Transportation Infrastructure for NH and VT: Kevin Geiger from Two Rivers spoke to the board about a letter of support. He explained they are going in on a grant with and under a partner agency in NH with the Upper Valley/ Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission to the US Department of Transportation to fund transportation that relates to climate resiliency. This would help towns get and manage transportation monies. These monies are broader than we get from Federal Highway monies they currently get. They could potentially help with zoning and how it relates to transportation as well as energy and walkable communities. There are no town grant match requirements. This grant would run over 3 years' time. Doon moved to sign the letter. Pat seconded. All in favor.

Review of October Treasurer's Report: Doon moved to approve the October Treasurer's Report. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Neighborhood Designation: Deb Matthews shared the Housing Committee was at the Harvest Fair and they had a home creators' brochure that aligned with various state incentive programs that would be available to do an ADU (Additional Dwelling Unit) or to do something with their properties to create additional housing or apartments. One of the incentives is the tax credits. One resident that lives within Rochester village limits is interested in the incentives available but wasn't sure if they qualified to be within the designated area. The tax credits available from the state require that the landowner lives within the designated village limits. The designated village created by the state is a very confining area and does not extend extremely far outside the village. The question is how to change the designated village and on the state website it indicated Rochester can change the boundaries of the designated village in 2026. She wants to see the designated village reach out to those who could take advantage of these tax incentives. She wanted to know what the map area would include. She said that one of the requirements through the ADU, when you apply is that you agree to rent it at an affordable rate for 5 years and not have it be an Airbnb. Doon explained the choice is on the landowner to apply for that but for the town to apply for the neighborhood designation, it gives people the chance to apply for the incentives. The town only applies for the neighborhood designation. The rest is with the

landowner to build within those limits. Doon made a recommendation for the town to apply for the designation application. Doon felt the neighborhood map did outline the area. Sarah from Two Rivers shared this is a new process and they are figuring things out. There are checklists and Two Rivers is available to assist with the application. The tax credits themselves. Tax credits are focused on businesses. The guidance from the state as they understand is if you want a town considering applying new designation to move forward now. The board shared their support and will start the process.

Cemetery Request of ARPA funds: Tom and Nancy approached the board with concrete numbers as requested from the board at a previous selectboard meeting. They have an extensive list of deferred maintenance items required of the Rochester Cemeteries. Tom made a formal request for \$44,900 and submitted the estimates for the list of projects. Pat mentioned that she was sitting down with Larry Straus to go over the compared notes and where we stand and what has been earmarked to get a better idea of the ARPA funds that may be available. The board will advise. Tom asked if they need Selectboard approval to update rules and regulations and to increase lot fees. The board thought they would need to approve the fees. They felt the cemetery commission could write up their rules and present them to the selectboard. They will need to research.

Office Closure Wednesday, December 6 to attend NEMRC training: Doon announced the office would be closed on Wednesday, December 6 to attend a training.

Letter of Support for Ridgeline Outdoor Collective for VOREC grant: Angus McCusker shared with the board there was a planning grant for the Velemont Trail with CBDG funds in 2017 and they were very thankful for that grant opportunity. It was a \$60,000 grant for connectivity on the Velemont Trail between Pittsfield and Randolph. The trail is 90% completed on the Rochester Mountain range and all the way to Pittsfield. They are working towards another grant application for trail construction from the top of the range heading towards Randolph. Today, he is requesting a letter of support to continue in the efforts for a grant application that Velemont Trail Collective will be applying for. The towns of Randolph and Braintree selectboards are both in support of this trail. This grant would come from the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative grant fund provided by the State of Vermont Parks and Recreation. Frank moved to approve the letter of support for the VOREC grant. Pat seconded. Doon recused himself. All in favor. So, approved.

Appointment for the Planning and Zoning Committee: Sandy asked the board to appoint Mary Fratini to the Planning and Zoning committee. Doon moved to appoint Mary to the open seat on the Planning Committee. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Approval for application for time extension and funding addition to VCDP CDS Planning Grant: Vic, on behalf of the high school repurposing committee recommend the town apply for a time extension in additional funding to the planning grant that was originally granted in 2021. He shared the work has progressed. He said there is another additional \$10,000 funds. There are tasks that can be done with those funds with no additional costs to the town. He proposed the same architect that consulted with the feasibility study they retained to document the high school interior. He read to the board the letter of proposal to describe the work to be done. The time

extension is another question as the deadline is coming up at the end of the calendar year so they would like to ask for an additional 6-month extension. The 10,000 additional fund and time extension are the two key elements of the application. Sarah shared there are \$4,000 in funds left and they will need to request additional funds for the admin cost in the amount of \$800, also the environmental review costs for admin with an additional amount of \$2545.00. She has a formal proposal to submit with the selectboard and submit it to the state. She said they will need to extend the contract services as well as add the environmental services to that contract. Two Rivers would ask for formal approval for the request. Doon moved to approve the application for the extension of time and additional funds. Pat seconded the motion. All in favor. So, approved. Doon moved to revise the contract with Two Rivers should the extensions be approved. Pat seconded the motion. All in favor. So, approved.

Doon moved to approve the Rochester Zoning Bylaws as presented. Pat seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Highway Department Updates: Frank said we are down the Ford 550 truck. He said he didn't know how long it would be down.

Energy Coordinator: Jeff shared with the board he is still waiting to hear about the MERP application. He said the Valley Energy and Climate Action Committee participated with Randolph and Bethel for the window dressers community build project. Window Dressers is a non-profit out of Maine that has been helping New England states utilize their system to build interior storm window inserts at a very low cost. He said 249 window units were built over a 10-day period for 39 individual families. He will have more upcoming information to share as well as a proposal from surrounding communities to collaborate further.

Grant Updates: Kristen shared that she had a setback with the FEMA files she submitted. They somehow were corrupted when they renamed the files so she will be resubmitting them. She has been working diligently on the West Hill Bridge Grant reimbursement. She will have more information to share coming soon.

Meeting adjourned at 7:27pm

The Board entered an executive session to discuss employee salaries.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Smith