

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

March 24, 2025

Present: Pat Harvey, and Chad Richardson, Mike Teetsel

Guests Present: Kristen LaPell, Julie Smith, Rob Gardner, Mickaela Richardson, Terry Severy, John Champion, John Lambert, Walter Golub, Dave Harvey, Jeff Gephart, Maureen Young, Mike McIntyre, Nancy Woolley, Vic Ribaldo, Kathryn Schenkman

Guests Present on Zoom: Orca, Martha Slater, Troy LaPell, Heather Loughlin, Martha Slater, Brenda Downs, Deb, Erik Alling, Kevin & Paula Dougherty, Rita Seto, Zach Casey, Larry, Chelsea Steinauer-Scutter, Midge Scanlan, Marty Fratini

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

Pat confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

Prior Meeting Minutes: Pat moved to approve the Town meeting minutes for March 3, 2025. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved. Pat moved to approve March 6, 2025, Special meeting minutes which included opening the RFPs for the Construction Manager for HS Repurposing project. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved. Pat moved to approve the March 10, 2025, meeting minutes. Mike seconded. All in favor, So, approved. Pat moved to approve the March 17, 2025, special meeting minutes to award the company for the Construction Manager for the HS repurposing project. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Bethel Mountain Sidewalk project public information discussion-Erik Alling: Rita Seto, senior planner with Two Rivers -Ottawaquechee Regional Commission introduced Erik Alling, VTrans consultant, who spoke about the upcoming project which would happen in two parts. The first would be the crosswalk locations and upgrading the signs to beacon lighted signs. The second part of the project would be replacing a section of the sidewalk on Bethel Mountain Road from Brook Street to School Street. The funding would be through the Safe Routes to School program with no costs or match requirements to the town. He indicated the current sidewalk was in disrepair and needed to be extended to 5' in width to accommodate ADA compliance. Discussion continued with the town foreman, John about concerns with widening the sidewalk by taking 1' of the roadway and how that area is already difficult travel with a truck and plow and oncoming traffic. With others voicing concern about the need for safe sidewalks, Erik, Rita and John will meet to address the concerns. Once agreed, the project will be out for bid in May/June and hoping for completion in the early fall.

Approve February Treasurer's Report: Pat moved to approve the February treasurer's report. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Chair to sign HS Building Construction Manager agreement with Opus Corporation: Pat signed the agreement with Opus Corporation, who was awarded the contract for Construction Manager overseeing the construction of the HS repurposing project in the amount of \$10,000.

Rob Gardner asked about duties and who they would report to. Chad indicated the duties would include overseeing the project much like a general contractor and putting the various bid proposals together for the various tasks on the high school project. He indicated that this person would report to the architect, selectboard.

Discussion about the VHN BAYADA notice of non-service to Rochester. Whether to take action to remove or wait for further developments: It was brought to the attention of the board that the services provided by VHN and BAYADA had stopped due to lack of staffing. Kathryn was very concerned about what services would be available to Quintown Valley and if they could restaff. Home Health Nurses were an integral part of rehabilitation once a patient was sent home and was also part of the Medicare cost included for those services. Pat wanted to review this again in July to see if they were able to restaff and provide those services again to our area and bring awareness to a serious issue to the Quintown area.

Letter to legislature regarding Education funding: Pat drafted a letter to the VT Senators and Representatives in response to the states ACT 46 mandate for consolidating schools. This letter is written to bring concerns with the education reform and how the future will affect the community since we have already been through this process with high school back in 2018. She read the letter, and they all signed. A copy has been attached.

Response from VLCT on HS Repurposing: Pat said at the last selectboard meeting she was waiting for a response from VLCT pertaining to petitions on a vote. Her question to VLCT was “Do the citizens have the power to petition a vote on a question to force the selectboard to take a different position than what the selectboard wishes? She said the follow up to that question was the selectboard never needed to put any of this up to a vote, but it is completely fine they did to gauge voters’ sentiment. She said further state law doesn’t give the voters the right to petition to force the selectboard to put another Australian ballot question at a special or annual town meeting to vote on an issue. She said the selectboard can choose at its discretion to place another article as a special or annual town meeting on the issue as we had done previously with the first vote, the yes or no to acquire the building. We were not required to bring that to the voters, but we chose to do that. So, with that said, she continued that they are not required to go out to vote with a petition, but they can choose to do that. She said this is where they stand at this time. The board has asked the question, and they have received the answer.

Zach Casey from GMP spoke relating to lighting issues down at the car charging station. He has been working with Jeff Gephart to come up with a solution for lighting for safety at nighttime charging. He shared three options they came up with. Pat said they wouldn’t be able to make a formal decision tonight but could put it on a future meeting agenda for decision. She also thought it might be something for the planning board. Pat invited him to a planning meeting for April 1 for a formal decision. Slides shared during the meeting are attached.

Utilities Updates: Terry shared the Fire Department Tanker is being towed to Burlington for repairs. He didn’t know what the repair costs would be. He is concerned as he searched over the weekend for a used 20-year-old Tanker, and they are running about \$250K. He said new they are running \$450K. He feels that we really need to start putting money away in reserve accounts, for situations like this. Pat asked if the fire department has access to a tanker. He said they can call

in mutual aid but that is never a sure thing if they are tied up as well. He said with mutual aid assistance could be 30 minutes or more.

Energy Coordinator Updates: Jeff thanked the clerk for finding the ADA documents for the office building renovation in the 70s. He will get the request for proposals for the Office building and Town Garage building work through the MERP Grant.

Grant Updates: Kristen asked the board for permission to reach out to the Town Attorney to complete a document needed for the CDS grant to obligate the money. The board agreed.

Repurposing High School Committee Updates: Vic shared a group of volunteers led by Mickaela had cleared out the high school contents that had to be thrown away or put up for sale put in a tremendous amount of time. The school was open to the public for a rummage sale and was well attended. They made a little over \$1600.

The construction manager was on site today and worked with the architect to go over the building and review.

They started transitional planning for operational management for the school. He and Walter met with the principal, Lindy Stetson, to go over how the building is managed to all the details of operation.

They are working on the capital campaign. They have also had 2 applications to submit for two major grants. One is the preapplication which has been submitted and the other will be filed in early April for the Community Development Block Grant. The PCB testing will start in early April and will know more about the timing as the weeks go by. The results will show if the thresholds exceed the requirements for mitigation or not. If it does exceed, a mitigation plan will need to be planned for.

Selectboard Updates:

Pat asked Chad if he had an update on the tree removal at the new park beside fire house. He had not but was looking to work with Nancy. Nancy said she took photos and will send them to the office. The road foreman said he would take them down if they had asked.

Pat said they awarded a name to a private road at the last meeting, and it was asked what the criteria is for that. She reached out to Angus, and he said that when a shared driveway has 3 or more sites it would require a private road name. Anything with two or less would not require a name.

Pat said at the last meeting there was a notification from Suzie Smollen who reported the sign at the Skip Mart hung too low and people walking by could hit their head. She responded and informed Suzie this is more for the planning board and property owner. She asked her to attend a Planning meeting.

Pat received a notice from Rob Gardner about construction happening in the night in the village. She reached Windsor County Sheriff's Office to ask them to check it out while on night patrol.

Pat said we received a message from Quality Paving asking to go on to our bid list.

Pat said the last item is to change the Selectboard meeting time to 5pm or 5:30. The next meeting will be at the regular 6:15 pm waiting for public input.

Public Comment: Rob asked the selectboard if discussion about "Develop the Building" could be another proposal vs. the Repurposing of the high school building noting "save the building" Pat said if anyone could do the work and put together a proposal to bring to the board, they would like to have that as another viable idea on the table and that it's not too late. The town doesn't acquire the building until July. She said she admired Mike's plan to get a cost together for demolition.

Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Smith