

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

June 23, 2025

Present: Pat Harvey, Chad Richardson & Mike Teetsel (absent)

Guests Present: Kristen LaPell, Julie Smith, Nancy Woolley, John Champion, Terry Severy, Kathryn Schenkman, Jeff Gephart,

Guests Present on Zoom: Orca, Martha Slater, Troy LaPell, Vic Ribauda, Robert Franks, Heather

Pat called the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Pat confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

Prior Meeting Minutes: Pat moved to approve June 9th selectboard meeting minutes. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved

Additions/deletions: Grand Fondo asking permission to use Southwest side of Park for bike event on June 28, Addition to add wording update to the agenda item for Updated Tan amount of \$235,323 at Mascoma bank approval to include for our agenda to properly note on the agenda the following language: **Approve the tax anticipation promissory note to Mascoma Bank, loan number 64042835 in the amount of \$235,323.**

Highway Updates: John informed the board that the Ford 550 is back from repairs. He said the crew replanked the bridge in Corporation Road. He also said the paving on Bethel Mountain Road. The section that is being paved currently is near Kevin Dougherty and should be completed tomorrow. The upper section of the paving on Bethel Mountain Road will take place later this summer after the culverts are replaced.

Utilities Updates: All good. Meters will be read this week.

Energy Coordinator Updates: Jeff shared that the GMP lighting at the Park and Ride may not be correctly placed and will be in touch with them for further details.

He did follow up for details on the Resiliency zone. He said that someone would reach out to him soon with their status.

Regarding the library, Jeff has completed a spreadsheet to reduce the three walls down to the one north wall for figures. He said the first-floor cladding is not a product you can find. He has reached companies who do custom milling for quotes from 3 sources.

He informed the board the biggest hold up for the MERP (Municipal Energy Resiliency Plan) is the decision as to what is going to happen downstairs. He asked if it is considered a public area or a non-public area. The \$20,000 or up to \$20,000 directed to spend to become ADA compliant

is applied against the full grant. He explained that it amounts to \$70,000 in ADA expenditures. The issue is the occupancy is with the veteran's use of space downstairs. He said the document he is using is a 1992 review of the building. The elevator took care of the biggest ticketed item. There are a lot of things we didn't have to do because the basement was not a public space and back then it was a rescue squad. Pat asked if the vet's downstairs are considered a public organization or private club and if that would make a difference. Jeff said he was unsure and that the language he is reading is open to the public. Pat felt that was not clear and would need to be identified. Nancy shared the American Legion has been in there since the 1970's at the direction of the selectboard and the rescue squad came later than that. Discussion continued about the American Legion being an organization that holds meetings, but that the space is not open to the public. Further investigation into the matter.

Pat asked if the MERP will be providing AC to the building. Jeff said there is an option for air source heat pumps for heating and cooling the space. It would also require a propane backup. Jeff proposed to the state that we increase insulation levels and specify air tightness and see if we can eliminate the propane backup system.

He said to run window ac units the service panels would need to be doubled.

Repurposing High School Committee Updates: Kathryn shared that the CDBG grant they applied for, they did not get for \$750,000. She said the projects chosen for those grant monies were all housing projects based on the governor's suggestion. She said they were informed today that they did receive the catalysis grant for 1 million from Northern Borders. She said they were very excited about that. She said they met with Rena Peck from USDA last Thursday. Pat and Kristen were both attending. This was to discuss the letter of obligation that obligates the funds from the Congressional Spending fund from Bernie Sanders to the town. Kathryn shared Pat was not signing until certain answers were made clear. One of the questions shared in that meeting from a public question was What if the project fails, are we then going to have to pay back this money. The answer was no! This is because USDA funds are not going to be used to purchase the building and we are not borrowing money from USDA. That was good to hear. Kathryn shared another question Pat brought to the meeting was in five years can we transfer the property to VHI (Valley Hub Inc.) The answer was yes! Without any problem if the town decides that is what they would like to do there is no problem with doing so. Pat signed the letter and was reviewed by the town attorney. Pat said there hasn't been a comment shared yet from the attorney. He will prepare a statement representing the Town of Rochester for the grant. Kathryn said there will be a meeting on July 11 at noon within the school to evaluate the engineering and make sure we have a fully funded project with the funds we have. It's been in two stages, phase one and phase two. There has been discussion for a possible phase 3. Kathryn praised Kristen LaPell and Peder Rude for all their support and work under pressure many times to meet deadlines.

Vic shared words of support and excitement for the flexibility for the spending with both Sanders grant and the additional funds of 1 million today.

Many Thanks was share to Sarah Wraight from Two Rivers for all her help and support to the town.

New Business:

Grand Fondo asked permission to use the southwest corner of the park during their event on Saturday, June 28th. Pat moved to approve. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

May Treasurer's Report: Pat reviewed and moved to approve. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Driveway Permit for Sawmill Hill: Pat noted that it was approved by the road foreman. Pat moved to approve. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Updated Tan amount of \$235,323 at Mascoma Bank approval and permission for Kristen LaPell to advance funds as needed: Pat moved to approve the tax anticipation promissory note to Mascoma Bank, Loan Number 64042835 in the amount of \$235, 323. Chad seconded. The board signed the loan agreement documents.

Park Use Application-WRVP-Harvest Fair September 6th 10-4: Martha shared with the board this is the Harvest Fairs 37th year. She will be turning over the reigns to Christine Meagher and Erica Robinson. Pat thanked Martha for her many years of organizing the Harvest Fair. Pat moved to approve the park use application for the White River Valley Players to hold the Harvest Fair on September 6th. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Old Business:

Approve and sign revised amendment to the WLA (Wiemann Lanphere Architects) contact for the high school repurposing project: Vic said this was a new revised amendment to the contract for the engineer studies and flow test. Pat moved to approve and sign the amendment. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, approved.

Public Comment:

Robert Franks commented about a past selectboard meeting outburst that was against him and how displeased he was.

Susie Smolen asked the board for support with traffic concerns on School Street and parking in the municipal parking lot. The board will add this discussion to address at the next selectboard meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Smith