

Selectboard Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2025

Present: Pat Harvey, Chad Richardson, Michael Teetsel

Guests Present: Julie Smith, Terry Severy, John Champion, Doon Hinderyckx, Nancy Woolley, Orca Media

Guests Present on Zoom: Orca, Bryan Kovalick, Jakob Wilson, Victor Ribaud, Mickaela Richardson, Heather Loughlin

Pat called the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

Pat confirmed the open meeting law conformity.

Prior Meeting Minutes: Pat moved to approve the June 23 meeting minutes with a minor correction. Chad seconded. All in favor. So, voted.

Highway Updates: John said he has a contractor replacing culverts on Bethel Mountain getting it prepared for paving later this summer. He said the culverts may be done by the end of the week. Mike asked John if the contractor doing the asphalt shuts down at a certain date. John said typically they shut down around November 1st. John said they got the Ford F550 back from the show and the check engine light is back on so it will have to go back. Chad asked if we should address this on the next agenda. Pat said we do have to meet about it. She said we all know the repair bills are high. She said we will have to look at our options and meet with the budget committee and John to discuss it.

Utilities Updates: Terry said all is good and meters were just read.

Repurposing High School Committee Updates: Vic shared with the board that it's Suzuki Week. The building has been amazingly cleaned up and areas were painted to make it more attractive for them and other users this summer. He shared with the board he has a letter of intent to file with a proposal for Child Care Center Operator. The operator was in the building for the tour and very excited to submit a full proposal. The management agreement is still under development. He is hoping to have the next draft back to the selectboard within a week and continue with that process in hopes of bringing it to a conclusion. He said there wasn't to his knowledge a new date for closing. The board has not heard anything yet. She will reach out to the town attorney for a confirmed date. He said they had a working session on the capital costs estimating last Friday. They are still working it out for a final number. This will result in a final number for the work in Phase 1, focusing primarily on the classroom end of the building.

Selectboard Updates:

June 23 There has been an ongoing discussion about the Jones Mountain Road issue. Pat said she has entered mediation of abutting landowners. She said there is an issue with access to property that is served by a town roadway or trail or pent road. This issue continues to be researched. We

do know that access to that property must be in place. Trying to get a resolution between the two landowners and hope to come to an agreement. As a board, we are all aware of the situation. June 24 an estimate of engineering work to be done on the Haynes property for the riverbank restoration has been accepted. This project began two years ago. The backyard of a property owner's house is eroding down into the brook down by Tupper. They have received a grant from the USDA to restore that bank, so the house doesn't fall into the stream. The grant is through the river protection program. Pat said also on the same day she had a discussion with Jeff on the American Legion post about changing their meeting place from the basement to the conference room. They were happy to have their meetings upstairs in the conference room. This is in the hope of cooperating with the intent of the MERP grant and not having public access in the basement. This simplifies the Americans of Disability Act (ADA) and respects to the MERP grant. Pat continued on June 25 she had a discussion with finance entities regarding options with a fleet or lease program for upcoming truck purposes. She is hoping to meet up with John to go over these options. She said on June 25, bids are under state review. July 1, she received word that the LHMP (Local Hazard Mitigation Plan) that has been prepared with Two Rivers and a committee for many months is with the state. The state had questions pertaining to the plan. The committee will meet next week so it can be finalized. The selectboard along with the Planning board are co-hosting another public information meeting regarding the cell tower going south of town. The PUC is looking for the selectboard to submit a letter of recommendation or denial. Pat said she is asking the highway department and the fire department if having a cell tower is beneficial towards their jobs. Terry said he wouldn't see a benefit to them and John said it wouldn't make a difference for the highway either. John said it's not that it would be a bad thing, it just wouldn't make a difference for the highway department. She said lastly this past weekend, Rob Gardner asked how the public could get more information regarding VT alerts in light of the flooding that happened around the state. He was concerned that folks were not aware of the VT alert system on your phone to help with emergencies. This would alert road closures, tornado alerts etc. Nancy said maybe they would like to have sirens again. Pat also suggested having to sign up for VT alerts in our town reports. Mike said it must be easy to sign up from the website.

Utility bill forgiveness: Pat read a letter submitted by Rob Meadows and Patricia Rydle. There was a leaking toilet in one of their properties. He said the problem has been solved by hiring a plumber. Pat said historically the board agrees to half a bill. Terry said this is a onetime only forgiveness. The board discussed the bill. Terry said in the past when one of the residents had a hot water bust, it was only water usage because they have their own septic. The ones that have septic rates also put stress on the town system. Terry said he would follow up with his meter to make sure the issue was fixed. Pat moved to offer a credit of \$475 towards the bill. Mike seconded. All in favor.

Adopt Capital Budget and Program: Pat explained we had started the Capital Planning about a year ago. She asked Bryan Kovalick, planner with Two Rivers-Ottawquechee Regional Commission had helped with the planning how long we have to go before we do this again. Bryan said the life span of this plan is 10-years. He said once adopted; you can update as often as useful. Pat moved to adopt the Capital Budget and Program. Mike seconded. All in favor, so adopted. Pat thanked Bryan for his wonderful help in getting this plan done.

Adopt OML (Open Meeting Law) policy: Pat said that with the new legislation in place, VLCT (Vermont Leagues of Cities and Towns) has created municipal meeting rules for public participation. She said it is being presented as a policy to cover all municipal meetings that happen in the Town of Rochester. She said that there is a footnote at the bottom that the chair of any of the meetings can alter the rules at their discretion. She read the document (attached). Nancy had a question related to agendas with additions and deletions. She asked if before putting the additions on the agenda, could you act on the agenda. Pat said an item added that would warrant a decision from the board could be discussed but a decision would have to be addressed on a properly warned agenda at a future meeting. Doon had a question asking who can put or suggest the added agenda items. Pat said anyone can ask to put something on the agenda. The item would have to pertain to town or selectboard business. Also public comment could only be what is on the agenda and can't go outside the agenda. Pat moved to adopt the policy. Mike seconded the motion. Mike seconded. All in favor. So, voted.

Discussion on School Street Traffic flow: Pat moved to close the discussion for the time being. Mike seconded the motion. All in favor, so voted.

Complete FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program-Open Space Monitoring Checklist: Town Clerk explained this is something that comes up every 3-year. FEMA is asking for photos and document information pertaining to the buyout properties from Tropical Storm Irene. Town clerk said she will complete the checklist and submit. She wanted to have it on record that it is something that comes up every 3 years to complete. There are only two sites in Rochester on this checklist. One in the village and one on Quarry Hill.

Park Use Application-OCPCC (Orange County Parent Child Center pop up mobile food shelf: After much discussion, Pat will reach out to the contact and ask questions for safety reasons. The board felt a better location is at the school and She would need to reach out to Orange County Parent Child Center. She said we will not meet again before one of her dates, July 24th to see if they can find a better location.

Meeting adjourned at 5:44pm

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Smith