

**Approved Minutes**  
**MAIDSTONE SELECTBOARD MEETING**

Monday, December 5, 2022

7.00 pm

Hybrid Meeting, both in person and by Zoom Video Conference

Members Present in Town Hall (in-person): Scott Lovell, Brad McVetty

Members Present via Zoom: Bruno McKenzie

Town Officials and Staff Present via Zoom: Town Clerk and Lister Amy Pear; Assistant Town Clerk Suzy Irwin; Town Treasurer, Delinquent Tax Collector, Planning Commission and Zoning Board member Bob Champagne-Willis; Zoning Board and Planning Commission member and Auditor Chris von Alt; Lister, Auditor, and Health Officer Sandra Gray; Administrative Assistant Mary von Alt

Town Officials and Staff Present In-Person: Emergency Management Coordinator and Fire Warden Bill Sanborn

Also Present via Zoom: Karen Kotecki of NEK Broadband, Laurie and Bob Snowman, Lin Mixer, Carol and Burt Kline, Andy Champagne-Willis, Bonnie Lovell, Paul Kamins, June Lockert

Chairman Scott Lovell began the meeting by reading the Rules for Participation, based on the Rules of Procedure passed at the September 12, 2022 Selectboard meeting. (The Rules are posted on the Town website; they were emailed in advance to the people who have requested Selectboard meeting notifications.)

Chairman Scott Lovell then called the meeting to order at 7.01pm.

**APPROVE MINUTES:**

Brad made a motion to accept the October 5, 2022 Special Selectboard Minutes; Bruno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Brad pointed out an error in the November 7, 2022 updated Selectboard Minutes - the position of Town Moderator is a paid, elected position, included in the Town budget, not a volunteer as the minutes stated. Brad then made a motion to approve the minutes with that line rewritten to indicate that the Moderator is not a volunteer position, and NVDA is a volunteer position; Bruno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS, PART I: DISCUSSION WITH KAREN KOTECKI OF NEK BROADBAND:**

As discussed at previous Selectboard meetings, NEK Broadband plans to install an optical line terminal site on Town property near Town Hall as part of bringing high speed Internet to Maidstone. NEK Broadband has moved Maidstone up in the schedule and would like to get the concrete pad poured this winter and start on the installation in Maidstone in the Spring. Karen will file the required zoning permit applications as needed with the Town as well as with the State and will work with an attorney for the Town on the deed of easement language for the right-of-way that will be required, but first the exact location for the installation must be decided upon. The pros and cons of various location possibilities were discussed, with one consideration being room to expand to use fuel cells for backup instead of a generator. Karen and the NEK Broadband construction manager will meet with Brad and Scott on the Town Hall property in order to decide on the best location. If necessary, Scott and Brad said a special meeting will be called to finalize and decide upon a location.

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR POSITION:**

The vote on the motion at the 11/7/2022 Selectboard meeting to accept the Planning Commission's nomination of Eileen Thietten as the new zoning Administrator was accidentally not taken, therefore is being taken at this meeting. Brad made a motion to appoint Eileen Thietten as the Zoning Administrator for the Town of Maidstone; Bruno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**TOWN MODERATOR, NORTHEASTERN VERMONT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (NVDA) REPRESENTATIVE, NEK BROADBAND REPRESENTATIVE, AND ASSISTANT ZONING ADMINISTRATOR VACANCIES:**

**Town Moderator and NVDA Representative:** No responses have been received to the Moderator or NVDA Representative positions. In the absence of a Moderator, the Selectboard will be responsible for filling that role at the Town Meeting in March 2023.

**NEK Broadband Representative:** Jack Donnelly has expressed interest in the NEK Broadband Representative position; he is currently the Alternate Representative. Brad made a motion to appoint Jack Donnelly to the NEK Broadband representative position; Bruno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Assistant Zoning Administrator:** Scott raised the question of whether or not the Selectboard wished to fill the Assistant Zoning Administrator (AZA) position. Brad said that the Town had operated for years without an AZA and had no apparent problems. Bruno said that he is interested in being of help to Eileen, but thinks he can do that without being the AZA. Chris von Alt reported that he had spoken with Eileen and that she indicated that she feels she needs the support of an AZA to do the job; she told Chris that was how she had worked it out with Bruno before applying for the job. She said she would prefer to work with Bruno and did not think that she would keep the job if Bruno were not in the AZA position, although she realized that was not really a kosher position for her to take. Scott asked if we want to keep the position or do away with it. Brad said that we didn't really have the position; we were going to create it. Bruno said that in the couple of months he has been the Temporary Zoning Administrator, he has realized how much there is to learn about being the Zoning Administrator; he has made some mistakes from which he has learned, and he intends to continue learning about the Bylaws, whether as the AZA or not - it does not matter to him. Amy suggested, in agreement with a possibility Bruno had expressed, that the issue be set aside to let Eileen do her job and see how it goes. After some more discussion, Brad made a motion to postpone having an Assistant Zoning Administrator until we run into issues where we do need it; Bruno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**REPORT FROM THE ROAD COMMISSIONER:**

Brad said he didn't have anything to report right now. So far, we've had freezing rain and iciness rather than snow. He suggested we keep hoping for snow instead of rain. Chris commented and others agreed that the roads seem to be in good shape, for which he thanked Brad.

**REPORT FROM THE TOWN TREASURER:**

**Budget to Actual Financial Report:** Bob said there is not much to report. The budget is on track, except for items previously reported. The Town has received the PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) revenue on both land and building from the State, as well as the Current Use. Those came in right where they were supposed to, so everything is on track.

**Selectboard Warrant:** The Warrant is on the Signing Desk.

**REPORT FROM THE DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR:**

Bob reports that the list of delinquent taxes is getting shorter. The only property eligible for a tax sale is the Wiedeman property. The word from the attorney right now is that notifications for that tax sale will begin on December 13th, with the sale itself on February 9th, 2023.

**REPORT FROM THE TOWN CLERK:**

**Update on activities since November meeting:**

The Election went well, and Amy was able to get everything reported that night. Thank you to all of the election workers, who also assisted with handing out the Local Hazard Mitigation surveys.

The grant that Bill Sanborn discussed at the last Selectboard meeting was submitted. The people came back to the Town with some questions; the Town is working on getting responses to them, some of which

involve site visits and quotes from propane companies that are proving to be more difficult than expected, but we are working on that.

**Efficiency Vermont's report:**

The Selectboard has the report, but has no questions at this time. Amy suggested that one recommendation can be implemented easily and at no cost within a limited timeframe, that is, swapping out more efficient, better lightbulbs for the linear fluorescent lightbulbs that Vermont is prohibiting beginning in 2024. Once those bulbs become illegal to sell in Vermont, the Town will no longer get a free swap out on them. Recommendations are also made in the Report with regard to heat pumps. NVDA has told Amy about a \$45 million grant for municipalities in Vermont that will be announced shortly; she believes that Maidstone will be eligible for applying for up to \$500,000 for renovations on the Town Hall. That might be the time to look at alternate heating for Town Hall, such as heat pumps or solar on the roof, replacing the dependency on oil and reducing our heating bills. Amy believes the grant will be out any day.

**Annual Town Report printing contract:**

Brad made a motion to go with the two year printing contract; Bruno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Bob asked Scott to check the appropriate box and sign the contract, so that the Town could go ahead with that.

Amy says that at this point it looks like the Town will be able to hold a normal Town meeting in March 2023.

**OLD BUSINESS:****Update from the Emergency Management Coordinator about the purchase of an equipment trailer:**

Bill Sanborn suggested that the Town purchase a 6' x12' single axle trailer with an aluminum frame, capable of carrying at least one ton. He expects that would cost \$7,000 - \$10,000. Bruno asked why a single axle rather than double, to which Bill responded that a double axle can haul more, but requires more maintenance; he wants the trailer able to be handled by one person. Bob Snowman pointed out that a double axle trailer hauls a lot better on the highway, as it doesn't have the back and forth motion. He also questioned if the Town would consider putting an advertisement on the trailer's side(s) as that would bring in revenue, and if the trailer could be purchased through the State. Bill investigated and found that trailers purchased through the State come from the Carolinas, which means having to pay for transport to Maidstone, adding considerably to the price. Bill said the advertising or perhaps "Town of Maidstone" lettering would be up to the Town. The consensus was to buy local. Brad suggested that the Town should put together a bid request to send out to the dealers in the area, which Bob Snowman said, based on his professional experience, would definitely result in a better price. Bill will consider a double axle, decide on the specs, put together a bid request, and send it out to the dealers in the area. When responses are received, the Selectboard will evaluate the bids and make a decision on the purchase.

**NEW BUSINESS, PART II:****The Planning Commission requests approval to consult Attorney Low on Bylaw questions:**

The Planning Commission is beginning the process of reviewing and amending the Town's Zoning Bylaws, updating them as necessary to ensure compliance with State law. A list of questions for a lawyer has been generated, based on issues raised at the meeting on November 30; the Planning Commission will now review and refine that list. Brad asked the Town Treasurer how much money is in the Town's legal assistance fund; Bob said we have spent \$860 of the \$3000 allocation, leaving \$2140 available in the fund. Brad then made a motion that the Town allow the Planning Commission to contact Attorney Nick Low for assistance in the updating of the Bylaws; Bruno seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Lin said he discovered through a conversation with Tim Appleton of Vermont Fish and Wildlife that the State will be harvesting trees on the east side of the lake up on Stoneham Mountain; there are flags posted to mark the area for people bidding on the work. Lin just wanted to give people a heads up.

Business concluded, Scott moved to adjourn the meeting; Brad seconded. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7.56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary von Alt