

Minutes

MAIDSTONE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Monday, June 3, 2024

7:00 PM

Hybrid Meeting, both in person at Town Hall and by Zoom Video Conference

Members Present in Town Hall (in-person): Scott Lovell, Chair, Brad McVetty, Bruno McKenzie and Kathy Lovell.

Town Officials and Staff Present via Zoom: Town Clerk Amy Pear; Treasurer, Delinquent Tax Collector, Lister, Zoning Board and Planning Commission member Bob Champagne-Willis; Assistant Town Clerk and Lister Sam Graham; Zoning Board and Planning Commission member Bruce Barker.

Also Present via Zoom: Linwood Mixer, Andy Champagne-Willis, Suzy Irwin, Sam and Carol Gorham, Laurie Snowman, Jan Barker, Ray Lovell, Mary Von Alt, Bonnie Lovell, Lisa Plourde and Burt Kline

Chairman Scott Lovell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Scott reminded everyone of the rules and procedures of the meeting and that everyone has one time to speak.

APPROVE MINUTES

Brad made a motion to accept the May 6, 2024, Selectboard Meeting Minutes with amendments. Bruno seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Bruno questioned if we needed to have such detailed minutes. Mary explained that she researched it and it should have anything pertaining to the motion granted. Amy agreed that it's easier to research previous minutes if it's more detailed.

SELECTBOARD:

- Discuss and act on following positions:
- Selectboard Administrative Assistant – Discuss and act upon hiring someone.
- Planning Commission member(s) and Zoning Board of Adjustment member (s)

Bruno inquired about any software that would transcribe the minutes. Bob stated there probably is but was unaware of any and that he knew Zoom can have closed caption but did not believe it would transcribe so a separate software would have to be purchased. Scott suggested increasing the salary for the Administrative Assistant to help raise some interest and asked what the procedure was to do this. Bob stated that it would need to come out of the reserve account since the budget has already been set for this year.

Bruno made a motion to approve Raymond Lovell as a planning commission member and zoning board member. Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Bob Champagne-Willis inquired about the Zoning Board and receiving a challenge and having someone on the Board that is in violation raising issues. Brad asked if there have been any laws

broken but Bob was unsure of the past issues. Mary stated that Ray and the Town had an agreement and there was 3 different things Ray had to do. She stated Ray did not follow up on this. One of them was maintaining and hiding anything from the public and unfortunately, it's a glaring violation of bylaws and her concern is if Ray in charge of making decisions about what other people are doing, there will be no credibility no matter how good-hearted Ray is. Mary said she realizes the Selectboard has the authority to approve/disapprove members but the Selectboard needs to also protect the Town and do what's best for the Town. She also reminded the Board that Ray has voiced his opinion on how he feels about the Lake people versus the Town people as well as advocating getting rid of zoning for the Town. These are all serious considerations because if there is an appeal, this will become an issue. She believes the Selectboard would be opening the door to a raft of lawsuits and again said she doesn't have issues with Ray.

Bruno stated there hasn't been one person on the board that has complained about Ray's yard. He does not feel anything has changed at all. There's 2 people on the Zoning Board. He stated not one person from the lake or the town has stepped up to be on the board except for Ray. There isn't anyone else interested and we need a Zoning Board.

Linwood Mixer said hearing all these things about someone but feels you need to find written evidence to justify what is being stated and not 3rd hand words. He believes that when someone or anyone is pointing out something on someone else then something should be given for proof. No proof has been provided.

Laurie Snowman wondered if the Selectboard did appoint Ray, would Ray be willing to do what it takes to make it right with the agreement that was made between the Town's Lawyers and Ray's Lawyers. She feels it would show he'd be in good standing being on the Zoning Board.

Bruno mentioned he was aware that Ray bought an excavator and let him know he would be doing work on his property to start cleaning things up.

Brad asked Ray if he was appointed, would he be willing to repair his fence. Ray stated he runs a farm and feels he can line up his equipment as well as selling many of the cars that were on the property. He does not know what he is supposed to do with other cars that are for sale. He stated he wasn't sure how to answer the question as he's not prepared to do so and questioned should he be hiding stuff. Ray said he would move some of the trucks that he was selling.

Amy stated in an effort to compromise, would the Selectboard be willing to put Ray on the Planning Commission and hold off on appointing him to the Zoning Board until things are worked out. It would give the Town some time to research. This also gives Ray a voice on both boards but only as a member of the Planning Commission. She also feels because the Selectboard increased the number of members, there has been some questions whether the remaining 2 would be a quorum and believed that was why there hasn't been any meetings.

Mary stated that a minimum of 3 and no more than 9 is according to the State Bylaws and that cannot be changed by the Selectboard.

Andy Champagne-Willis responded to Linwood Mixer's comment. He said in his personal opinion, he doesn't care what people do on their personal property but what he believed to be

true is that Ray is in violation and agreed he didn't have anything in writing but questioned do we need something in writing or can we express our opinion like we always have in the past?

After hearing the discussion, Bruno again made the motion to approve Raymond Lovell to the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board. Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Selectboard returned to this agenda item as Bob pointed out that Jim Bennett did submit a letter of interest. Bruno made a motion not to accept Jim Bennett on the Planning Commission or the Zoning Board. Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

REPORT FROM THE ROAD COMMISSIONER

- The road is in decent shape. The gravel will start Wednesday, if everything goes well, from the telephone booth to the campground. Then ditching to finish up the Better Roads Grant.

REPORT FROM TOWN CLERK

- Update about activities of the Town Clerk's Office – Amy said she has not received the contract from the Groveton Fire Department. She said she has made several calls, spoke to the Chief and was referred to the Administrator's Office. She stated she finally spoke to the new Town Administrator and forwarded the information to Scott that was sent to her. She was told it's coming. She believes this is the first time the Administrator has handled one of these so she had her legal people looking at it and that may be the delay.
- New open meeting law – Amy said there was a new meeting law that talks about hybrid, physical location, requirement to electronically record which we are all doing all already. She stated we are now required to post the recording of the meetings on our website once the minutes are approved and the final approved minutes are posted and for 30 days the Zoom link must be posted (recording). There will be some training requirements. More details will be coming.
- Amy Questioned the compost training and needing to get approval from Selectboard to hold it and what the best way to handle it was. Should they coordinate the training and then seek approval from Selectboard? The Selectboard was fine with that. Amy did state they are looking into having 2 more in the future.
- There are a couple things on the signing desk that need signatures.

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

- The budget-to-actual report was provided and nothing extraordinary was to be reported.
- The Selectboard Warrant is on the Signing Desk for review and to be signed as well as the County Tax which requires all 3 signatures.
- Bob requested work needed at Town Hall and the ARPA Funds be put on the agenda for next meeting. Scott questioned if we were holding out on the grant but Bob said there is a deadline and we need to be discussing it. Bob mentioned the tiles at the town hall need to be repaired and has been a known issue and is concerned of someone tripping which will cause a problem and this needs to be addressed. He is also concerned with others using the building and tripping. He also mentioned the back steps are rotted and should be looked at now rather than later.

REPORT OF THE DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR

Bob said he gave the delinquent tax collector's report to the Selectboard and there hasn't been a lot of change but the number has decreased. Bob stated that the Legislation has passed a new policy on how delinquent tax sales are done. The new policy starts tax sales at 1 year delinquent and we wait for the 2-year mark. There has not been any training on this new legislation on how things need to be reported but it has changed.

REPORT FROM LISTERS

Grievance hearings have come and gone and the 2-week period for people to challenge expired last Friday. There's still a potential that there is something sitting in the mail but doesn't appear that we will have any BCA hearings. Our valuation went up 66.8% in the last 5 years which means it went from 67 million for a property valuation to 112 million. This means we are entering a CLA this year only of 113% which means that whatever rate comes out in the determination for the homestead tax rate and the non-homestead would be divided by 1.13 and would be reduced so all good news for the town. It will further reduce the tax burden for this year only.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Update on the purchase of the flagpole:** Scott said the pole has been received and is at Brad's house. They will work on getting it set up.
- **Status update for the Town Plan:** No update and Bob said as it currently stands, all 3 need to be in attendance to be a quorum and needed to have a unanimous vote. Bob will ask VLCT on what the laws are pertaining to quorum. Mary stated you can't change the bylaw even with the Selectboard vote, you can only recommend. Bob read the motion on the minutes and Mary suggested that it be relooked at and to check with VLCT on if this is changing the Bylaws. Bruno suggested looking at the zoom recording for wording and putting it on next month's agenda if amendment is needed. Scott stated he did ask VLCT and they stated anything between 3 to 9 but Mary believes that changes the Bylaws and suggests again to reach out to VLCT.
- **Discuss and act on a deadline for Taylor Cemetery work:** Scott asked if anyone has seen or heard anything. Bruno feels there needs to be a deadline given to the landscapers. Bruno said putting a deadline on it and then putting it out for bid if they don't meet the deadline. Bruno asked Amy if she could send a letter and Amy agreed as long as someone gave her the wording and she'd get it on the letterhead and send it out. The Selectboard decided a deadline for June 24, 2024. Bruno made a motion to give the Landscapers a deadline for work to be completed at Taylor Cemetery by June 24th or the contract will be terminated. Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Lemp status and changing Bill Sanborn to EMD:** Bruno made a motion to accept Raymond Lovell's resignation. Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The position will be posted for 2 weeks. Scott asked if Amy would take care of that and she agreed if the board would get the wording to her and she would check with Bruce Melendy on requirements. Brad believes we would just post that we are looking for an Emergency

Management Director and that training might be required. Amy suggested reaching out to Bill before posting. Mary stated there is a job description that she will forward to the board that she found on Google. Amy asked that the board email with suggestions on wording.

- **Use of Town Hall for Compost presentation on June 13, 2024, at 6:00 PM:** Bruno made a motion to allow use of the Town Hall for the compost presentation on June 13, 2024, at 6:00 PM. Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor.
- **PC Status:** Already discussed.
- **Modify Zoning Application:** Bruno checked into this and stated that is part of the Bylaws and cannot be modified.
- **Discuss and act on adopting for flying of the American Flag at the Town Hall:** Jack Donnelly researched and sent to Scott information on flying the American Flag. Scott received this information late and didn't get it sent out to everyone. He will send it to everyone else for the next meeting. This Item will be tabled to next meeting. Amy asked if Scott had anything from the Congressional Services from 2019. She said it was basic stuff on how to raise and how to lower the flag. She will forward to Board.
- **K-9 Warrant:** Bruno wondered what to do about this issue. He doesn't believe the Sheriff wants to get involved with it. Amy stated she is required to send a letter to the Selectboard by a certain date and believes in Vermont that the Selectboard would have the Constable that was appointed to make contact with the people then report back to the Selectboard. Amy believes there are 6 dogs. She stated she believes this year people have had issues getting vaccination appointments with the Veterinary availability.
- **Green Book Funding:** Amy forwarded an email to Scott and her initial impression was that they were asking if we wanted to continue to get the green books for \$401 a year but reading it a couple more times, she believes that's what it costs to provide to each town and are reaching out to towns to see if they need them in hopes to save money but she's not really sure. The green books are the legal books behind the vault door and we get updates each year. Suzy doesn't believe we have to get them because we have access to them online. Amy stated she hasn't used them in the 3 years she's been in office. Suzy stated that we don't use a lot of them and it makes sense to get them online along with VLCT being available to us. The Selectboard agreed we didn't really need the updates. Amy stated the attorneys do not use them either. The selectboard suggested that Amy contact them and let them know we will no longer need the updates. Amy agreed to do this.
- **Doug Morton update on date for the Traffic Study:** Amy said she left messages for Doug in May and in June with no call back. She said last she knew he had us on the schedule and now she can't get in touch with him. Amy said she'd keep reaching out to him.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Bob thanked Amy Pear and Gail Tattan Giampaolo for securing flags for the Veterans at both cemeteries. Amy stated they put 17 flags up this year. She also said if anyone knows of anyone they may have missed as the stones do not always reflect the service status to please let her know.

- Bob inquired about another applicant, Jim Bennett for the Planning Commission and Zoning Board. The Selectboard returned to that agenda item to act on Jim's letter of interest.

ADJOURN:

The business of the meeting concluded. Scott made a motion to adjourn the meeting for June 3, 2024; Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm.