

Draft Minutes

MAIDSTONE SELECTBOARD MEETING

Monday, November 4, 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, Bruno McKenzie and Brad McVetty

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 Sam Graham; Lister, Auditor and Health Officer Sandra Gray

Also Present via Zoom: Susan Irwin, Mary Von Alt, Linwood Mixer, Sam and Carol Gorham, Bob and Laurie Snowman, Bonnie Lovell, Jan Barker, Mary Von Alt and Burt Kline.

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

APPROVE MINUTES

Bruno made a motion to accept the October 7, 2024, Selectboard Meeting Minutes. Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

SELECTBOARD:

- **Discuss and act upon Selectboard Assistant or other alternatives** – Still no interest. Item will be removed from agenda for now.

REPORT FROM THE ROAD COMMISSIONER

Not a lot to report. We installed new road signs for Bear Hill Road, Maidstone Lake Road, and the Town Road weight limit sign at the mailboxes. We received reimbursement for the \$20,000 Better Roads Grant and now working on getting reimbursement for the grants in aid program for the North Road and Tamarack Lane.

REPORT FROM TOWN CLERK

Update about activities of the Town Clerk's Office

- Update about activities of the Town Clerk's Office – Still extremely busy time for the Town Office. The election is in full swing, polls will open at 10:00 AM and close at 7:00 PM. Results will be reported before leaving the office. Amy also spoke to the local Sheriff and they will be driving by when people are leaving so that nobody is leaving by themselves in the dark. Drop box has been busy.
- The septic has been taken care of and Rexford recommended it be done every 5 years.
- Amy has received a response from Doug Morton on the traffic study. He said we should have the results by next week and apologized for the delay.
- MERP Grant deadline was met and \$106,000 was requested for upgrades at the Town Office. Efficiency Vermont had until the 25th of October to decide who will be approved for the grant but still haven't been notified as to who has been approved for the grant.

- Follow up to the MERP mini grant for the members of our Town – Amy worked with State Agencies and now has an energy efficiency fair set up for November 21st at 3:00 pm to 6:00 PM at the Town Office for all town residence (come as you wish). There will be a multitude of agencies there to help people navigate their properties to be more efficient. There will be tables for people to go through and food. Emails and postings will be done. Active participants that are planning on being available are NVDA, Button Up, Efficiency Vermont, The Heat Squad, Meadow, NEKCA and Rural Edge. If people are unable to attend that day, contact Amy Pear and she can help you get in touch with individuals needed.

REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

- **Budget to Actual** – The income side of things to pay our ongoing expenses for the year is good. We had to raise \$310,000 to cover expenses and today's report shows we have collected \$309,000 so we won't have any issues covering this year's expenses. Lister wages will exhaust this month. We have gone over on the mileage budget and close on the training budget as well as the Town Hall maintenance budgeted line. One item of concern is the telephone expenses are approaching to go over budgets. Amy and Bob are looking into getting Fidium to the building. The internet is horrible and had to shut everyone down to reboot today (11/4/24). The IT person we use stated the current system is less than dial up. The Assessor contract will be over budgeted due to NEMRC finding a bill that wasn't addressed from last year.
- **Selectboard Warrant** – Warrant is on the signing desk to be signed as well as annual payroll sheets.
- **Update on Lost Tax Bills** – October 15th 364 bills were lost through the US Post Office. Of the 364 bills, 301 have been successfully addressed leaving 63 unpaid tax bills. Bob reached out to VLCT to see how to address this issue. VLCT advised him if the post office acknowledged they lost the tax bills, then a new bill can be reissued with a new due date which would be 30 days from the mailing date. On the 17th of October, the post office acknowledged they lost the parcels and reimbursed the town for the postage. Bob mailed the 63 tax bills with a new due date of November 18th. Of those 63, 16 were individuals who requested tax bills prior to the 15th and paid, 12 were local 05905 addresses but we have no way of knowing if they received the original bills or not, 2 were paid, 6 are on the delinquent list currently and the remaining 35 were definitely ones we had little contact information for. Bob included a contact sheet with the bills sent out. Of the 35 remaining, 19 paid and 16 are still outstanding. As of today (11/4/24), we have about \$25,000 that is outstanding from the October due date. This is pretty remarkable considering the mess it was. Payment to NEK District has been paid and the \$400,000 bill to the State is on the signing desk to be paid with a December 1st due date.
- Bob has been working with Passumpsic bank on fraudulent activity with checks not issued by the town. Today the bank notified him and the Town was chosen (along with 2 other businesses) to be part of the trial of positive pay which is a protection for the town at no cost. It is an offering for life so the Town will never have to pay for this protection service, being in the trial portion of it. Many other Treasurers use Positive Pay. Bob is also working with the bank to maximize accounts to get the best interest on accounts that sit idle and will be addressed at future meetings.

REPORT OF THE DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR

All of 2022 taxes have been paid so there is no property eligible for tax sale in 2025. Bob is currently working with 2023 people to get those paid. The delinquent taxes have dropped below \$10,000 for 2023.

REPORT FROM LISTERS

Listers completed the permit reviews which is done twice a year. They go around and look at properties and closed out any permits completed. In general, recent sales are outpacing our grand list. It's been an ongoing issue since Covid hit even after the new grand list values.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Discuss and act upon maintenance and paying from ARPA funds** – At the last meeting, the Selectboard voted to have any work be paid from the ARPA funds. There is about \$23,000 left to be expended or obligated by the end of the year. If there is any money remaining.
- **Discuss and act upon flooring** – Dennis Bacon is concerned about not having help for the job and decided he's not interested in the job. Bruno reached out to Pete Gray and Jim Gagne. Jim is not interested in the job. Pete went around to see what needed to be done. Pete gave Bruno a quote (sealed). Brad stated something needs to be written up to send out to contractors but does not need to be posted in the paper. Bruno's concerned about writing up specs without knowing what needs to be done. Brad suggested Larry Ruggles as he built the new addition to the Town Hall and may know what we need to do. Amy said we had the specs for the edition for the flooring that may be useful since Ruggles provided it.
Discussion: Bob Snowman asked if Jim would be willing to write out the specs to send out to people. Amy stated that quotes received not part of a bid process could be opened. Amy went over the purchasing policy with the difference between quote requests and bid process. The Selectboard will send out an RFP.
- **Approval of Service for the vault (Incidental Purchase)** – The last quote Amy received was \$2,500. The quote she received from another company is \$595 for the safe and new locks and master keys for Town Hall, it's unknown if anyone still has keys from working at the town office. This cost could be paid by the ARPA funds. This item will be moved to the next meeting so Amy can research a new grant she received as to whether it can be covered under that.

NEW BUSINESS

- **FEMA/Flood Map** – Potentially we would not be getting as much back from the Federal Government if we were affected by the floods. We are not signed up for flood plan insurance. There is material that Mary Von Alt put together for the Selectboard to research. Amy requested to move this item to next month's meeting as the elections have been priority and she would like to research and become more knowledgeable of this subject. Kyle from NVDA stated the new flood maps are incorrect and will look into it and get back to Amy.
- **Discussion** – Mary Von Alt provided information for next month's meeting. She talked about her concerns about flooding taking roads, homes and more. Mary provided information to the Selectboard on what the federal and state covers in the event of a natural disaster. Mary went over percents and other information. She feels by not participating, we are opting out of additional funding from the state and if the Town does participate, the town residence would have the ability to buy flood insurance. The state is recommending that anyone that lives by any water, even a brook, may want to look into

flood insurance. Mary shared a lot of information. Susan Irwin stated the maps are so incorrect and we have to go by the current map (which is wrong) and not sure if we could even get the flood insurance and may have to wait until the new maps come out. There was a lot of discussion on this subject and the zoom recording is available to review if anyone is interested. This will be discussed at the next meeting. Amy will reach out to NVDA and do some research for the next meeting as well.

- **Training requests: VLCT training: Board of Abatement Roles and Responsibilities \$10.00** – There is a training coming up for anyone on the Board of Abatement that Bob would like to attend. The cost is \$10.00 and we have exhausted the training budget line so he is requesting permission from the board. Brad made a motion to approve Bob's request to attend the Board of Abatement Roles and Responsibilities training for \$10.00. Bruno seconded the motion. All voted in favor.
- **NEK Collaborative Conference Nov 14 at Burke Mountain. Registration is \$50.00, travel is \$65.00** – The annual conference being held is November 14th and Bob would like to attend. The cost of registration is \$50.00 and the travel would be \$65.00. The training and travel expenses line budgets both have been exhausted and requests permission to attend. Bruno made a motion to approve the \$50.00 registration for the NEK Conference and \$65.00 travel cost for Bob to attend. Brad seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS –

Amy left a copy of the appropriation request on the signing desk that was addressed directly to the Selectboard. Bob does have a copy of request.

NEKCV is the new name for the Northeast Kingdom Broadband and an update was left on the signing desk.

ADJOURN: The business of the meeting concluded. Brad made a motion to adjourn the meeting for November 4, 2024; Bruno seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.