

Townshend Select Board Meeting Minutes

March 16, 2009

Present:

Select Board - Alene Evans, chair; Hedy Harris, Bruce Bills, Steve Ovenden, Michael Charles

Members of the Public - Joe Daigneault, (Treasurer); Meri Roberts, (Bookkeeper); Kit Martin; Cynthia Davis; Kurt Bostrom (Highway Foreman); Dale Davis, (Townshend Barn Committee Chair), (arrived at 6:55); Brud Sanderson, (arrived at 6:50); Richard Carusona, (arrived at 7:08); Craig Hunt (Select Board secretary);

1. **Call To Order:** At 6:02 p.m. Evans called the meeting to order.
2. **Additions and Deletions:** None at this time.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** Evans made a motion: **To approve the recessed meeting Minutes of March 2, 2009**, seconded by Harris. Harris made a motion: **To approve the Minutes of the reconvened Meeting of March 3, 2009**, seconded by Evans, and approved by those present.

4. **Reports:**

5a. Town Clerk's Report: None at this time.

5b. Treasurer's Report: Joe Daigneault was recognized and informed the Board of an approximately \$85,000.00 over-expenditure by the Treasury which had occurred the previous week. When questioned by Evans as to how that happened, Daigneault allowed Meri Roberts to explain. Roberts told the Board that a number of factors had contributed, including: late receipt of Highway aid money from the State in January at an amount lower than anticipated; the necessity to pay approximately \$498,000.00 in quarterly payments to Leland & Gray and Townshend Elementary Schools; and an anticipated \$25,000.00 payment from VLCT in recovery of the deposit for the John Deere backhoe, which hadn't yet been received through re-finance of the loan.

Evans questioned Roberts about the lack of general fund and payroll Warrants during the previous three weeks, and about how much time she was spending in the office. Roberts explained that she needed more time for those tasks, but that she'd been busy with FEMA documentation to secure payments for costs incurred during the December ice storm; with the audit for Valley Cares grants and Town FY 2007 that was being conducted by McSoley McCoy; and, up until the day of Town Meeting, with preparing the proposed Town budget. When Evans asked where the General Fund now stood, Roberts believed that it held approximately \$45,000.00, subsequent to Daigneault shifting money from the money-market account to the checking. Roberts expressed her thanks for assistance from the Town's auditors, and especially Cynthia Davis in preparation of the Town budget and working with the outside auditors to locate old Treasury documents.

Evans asked Roberts if she need more paid hours, and Harris asked about the clean-up of old accounts. Roberts indicated that she was now working about 18 hours a week, but might need 24 hours a week to get everything caught up. When Evans relayed a complaint that she'd received from Tiz Garfield that the Select Board was not signing the Warrants, Roberts recollected explaining to Ms. Garfileld that they hadn't been signed, because they weren't yet presented to the Board.

Ovenden requested that if a new Board member was to serve as liaison to the financial office, that Evans continue in her capacity as liaison during the transition.

Charles asked Roberts if the \$45,000.00 currently in the General Fund would cover the payments of Warrants presently before the Board to accept and sign, and Roberts said, "No."

Kit Martin was recognized by the Board and explained that the Town needed to establish a line of credit in anticipation of taxes, and suggested that the Board ask the Treasurer to make inquiry of various banks to get the best rate. When Ovenden asked Martin what he thought would be an adequate amount, Martin recollected that in the past, the Town had usually sought \$150,000.00, using only what it needed to to cover expenses.

Evans made a motion: **To have the Treasurer inquire about a line a credit from local banks in the amount of \$150,000.00, in anticipation of taxes,** seconded by Charles and carried by those present.

5. Warrants: Discussion continued regarding the Board's having adequate time prior to Board meetings to review the Warrants, followed by Evans making the motion: **To accept the Warrants as presented,** seconded by Charles and approved by those present.

PR 0316	\$ 20,364.91
AP 0316	\$ 55,849.31

6. Highway Foreman's Report: At 6:25 Kurt Bostrom reported on meetings that he had had with Pat Russo of FEMA, and that the review process of documents from the ice storm, and survey assessments by the Army Corps of Engineers of further work needing to be done was now complete, and that the Town could expect a payment from FEMA on the order of \$40,000.00. Bostrom explained that much of the work of picking up the debris would contracted out, and that he would get bids for that work.

Bostrom then expressed the need for crushed gravel, and lengthy discussion ensued about the amount that was budgeted for the coming fiscal year, with Evans believing that \$15,000.00 was still available from this year, and \$15,000.00 budgeted for next year. Roberts was asked to verify the amount with NEMRC. Charles felt that it might be more economical to buy gravel than to pay to crush Town stone, and, with the Windham Hill, Grafton Road and other projects anticipated this summer, that \$30,000, if that was the amount in the budget, wouldn't be enough. Bostrom agreed that \$30,000.00 wouldn't cover the needs, but that that figure was probably a minimum amount just to have a crusher brought in. Martin and Evans explained the budget numbers, and that the Board

would have to assign any surplus from the present year into a reserve for the coming year, rather than have it return to the General Fund.

7. Members of the Public: At 7:04 p.m., Evans recognized Town Barn Committee members Dale Davis, Brud Sanderson and Kurt Bostrom, and Davis explained that members Carole Melis, Ken Hofman, Brian Searles and Jeff Russ were unable to attend the meeting, and reported upon the accomplishments that the Committee had made to date. Evans asked Davis what was the legal question that the Committee needed an answer from the Town attorney to, which other members of the Select Board had heard about the previous week, and Davis replied that there was a question about the validity of the request for bids from contractors, and subsequent confusion about how the Committee should go forward. Evans then asked if the Committee had sought legal counsel from VLCT which could provide the Town with legal advice at no charge, and Hunt offered that it had, regarding whether municipalities were required to seek bids for public projects, but that VLCT would not likely now comment on the particulars of the Committee's actions as instructively as the Town's attorney.

Discussion followed, with Harris suggesting that specifications should probably be forwarded to all who expressed interest so that cost estimates could be compared equally, and Charles questioning whether a general contractor was not the obvious option for guaranteeing construction performance surities. Evans believed that the project was accepted by the taxpayer under the premise that it would be, inasmuch as possible, a local, or community endeavor. Sanderson explained that a general contractor would give local craftsmen an opportunity for employment, but that a general contractor would manage the entire project, and that the Town would need a Clerk of the Works only as an agent and overseer, to make sure that the Town's interests are assured, but not as a general or construction manager.

Evans nominated Charles to be the liaison to the Town Barn Committee, and Charles accepted, expressing concern about the lateness of the timelines to get the project underway. Evans asked Davis when the next Committee was to be, and Davis replied that Thursday, March 19th, was tentatively scheduled. Evans reminded Davis that Committee meetings should be Warned, and asked that the Minutes be posted on the Town webpage. Davis agreed to speak with Anita Bean and Rick Hege about having the Minutes published online.

Davis then requested, and Evans made a motion: **To authorize the Town Barn Committee to seek legal counsel not to exceed \$400.00 in expenses**, seconded by Ovenden and carried by those present.

Davis then requested, in order to get demolition permits, and Evans made a motion: **To authorize the Town Barn Committee to spend up to \$500.00 on an asbestos inspection at the present Town Barn**, seconded by Charles and carried by those present.

Davis then requested that the Chair sign applications for Wastewater and Drainage permits, acceptance for which had been previously approved by the Select Board. Evans then signed the applications. Davis, Sanderson and Bostrom left at 7:40.

At 7:45, the Board recognized Richard Carusona, and Carusona expressed his frustration with the Select Board on matters affecting his plans for a snowmobile touring business in West Townshend. Lengthy discussion followed regarding use and maintenance of Favreau's Corner Road, a Class 4 Town Highway; Town obligations and snowplowing practices; insurance liabilities; property lines of Carusona and abutters, including the Army Corps of Engineers; and Select Board procedures for reviewing plans and granting permits. As a result, the Board decided to hold a Special Meeting on March 28th at 10:00 a.m. at the Town Hall, to be followed by a site visit to Favreau's Corner Road. Richard Carusona, left at 8:35.

8. Old Business: Evans updated the Board regarding Town Hall use requests that had been granted, and two that had yet to be decided upon. The Board decided to look at Town Hall use policies before approving those requests.

9. New Business: Evans made a motion: **To make the Brattleboro Reformer the Town of Townshend's paper of record**, seconded by Harris and, after brief discussion, carried by those present.

Evans requested that Hunt change the Select Board Meeting notice in the Reformer to reflect that the Board will continue to be meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Harris agreed to review the Personnel Policy manual and brief the Board at their next meeting.

Ovenden agreed to be the Board's liaison to the Highway Department, and examine capital expenditure funding account practices and procedures.

Charles then made a motion: **To appoint Hedy Harris as Townshend's representative to Valley Cares**, seconded by Ovenden and carried by those present.

10. Correspondence: After Evans read a letter from Bob DeSiervo requesting reappointment to the Planning Commission, Charles made a motion: **To appoint Bob DeSiervo to the Planning Commission**, seconded by Evans and carried by those present.

Evans then made a motion: **To appoint Irving Stowell as Townshend's representative to Windham Solid Waste Management**, seconded by Ovenden and carried by those present.

Harris then made a motion: **To approve the applications for tobacco and malt beverage and vinous beverages sales to Riverbend Farm Market and the Harmonyville Store**, seconded by Charles, carried by those present and signed. Hunt was asked to investigate the incomplete application of Townshend Pizza.

Evans made a motion: **To approve the request of the Marlboro Morris Ale Association to use the Town Common on Sunday May 24, 2009**, seconded by Harris and carried by those present.

Harris made a motion: **To approve the request from the Townshend Common Farmer's Market for using the Townshend Common on Thursdays between June 4, 2009, and October 8, 2009**, for a farmer's market, seconded by Evans and carried by those present.

Charles made a motion: **To approve the request from Grace Cottage Hospital Foundation for using the Townshend Town Common and the**

Leland & Gray soccer field on Saturday May 16, 2009 for the Second Annual Community Health Fair, seconded by Evans and carried by those present.

After discussion, Evans approved and signed the Uniform Excess Weight Permit for Arthur T. Whitcomb, instructing Hunt to have the Road Foreman review and provide recommendation for other applicants.

Kit Martin and Cynthia Davis left at 8:55.

Evans relayed a request from Howard Lott, Lister, to have Richard Lucier help out in the Listers Office with data entry, as Gayla Gulag learns the job she was elected to on Town Meeting day, and as scheduling conflicts are resolved with Andrea Royce.

11. Executive Session: None at this time.

12. Adjournment: Evans made a motion, **To adjourn at 9:24 p.m.**, seconded by Harris and carried by those present.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig K. Hunt, secretary