

approved: 06/01/15

TOWNSHEND SELECT BOARD

Meeting Minutes

May 18, 2015

Present: Kathy Hege; Kit Martin; Irvin Stowell; Robert Wright;

In Attendance: Joe Daigneault; Kurt Bostrom; Trisha Shine; Jeff Russ; Kayla Royce; Andrew Rockwell; Richard Melanson; Craig Hunt

1. Call To Order: Hege called the meeting to Order at 6:01 p.m.

2. Executive Session: Martin made a motion: **To enter into Executive Session at 6:03 p.m. with Kurt Bostrom under 1 V.S.A. 313 a3 for an employee evaluation**, seconded by Wright and carried by those present.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 6:16 p.m. and, as a result, no action was taken.

3. Approval of the Minutes: Stowell made a motion: **To approve the Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2015**, seconded by Wright and carried by those present with one abstention.

4. Additions and Deletions: An Executive Session was added to the Agenda for discussion of a Public Safety matter. An update regarding the Health Order issued on February 16, 2015, was added to Old Business, and request for holding a concert on the Town Common was added to New Business.

5. Highway Report: Bostrom reported that when concrete blocks become available for the Deer Ridge Road culvert repair, he'll get them delivered to the site. The RFP to prospective contractors of the project will be ready to put out next week. The RFP for tree cutting along Grafton and Athens Roads should be going out with a bid return deadline of June 1st and the RFP for the paving project, returned by June 15th.

Bostrom updated the Board on repairs to the Sterling and painting on the doors of T-3. He informed the Board that he'd be taking some time off in early June for knee surgery, but that he'd be checking in with the department, daily.

6. Law Enforcement Report: The Board acknowledged receipt of the Sheriff's monthly accounting of patrol hours.

7. Town Clerk's Report: The Select Board reviewed the Town Clerk's cash journal reports from the prior weeks.

8. Treasurer's Report: Daigneault reported that the General Fund account currently held a balance of \$526,448.49, prior to the payment of Warrants. Hunt made reference to a Budget Status Report given to Board members for review prior to the next meeting.

9. Warrants:

Stowell made a motion: **To pay Payroll Warrant 51801 in the amount of \$11,296.60**, seconded by Martin and carried by those present.

Stowell made a motion: **To pay Payroll Deductions Warrant 51802 in the amount of \$1,241.34**, seconded by Martin and carried by those present.

Wright made a motion: **To pay General Fund Warrant 51803 in the amount of \$18,934.24**, seconded by Stowell and, following discussion about the Delinquent Tax Collector's funding of tax sale legal expenses, carried by those present.

Stowell made a motion: **To pay Highway Fund Warrant 51804 in the amount of \$1,044.94**, seconded by Wright and carried by those present.

Stowell made a motion: **To pay Equipment Fund Warrant 51805 in the amount of \$3,704.62**, seconded by Wright and carried by those present.

Wright made a motion: **To pay Equipment Fund Warrant 51807 in the amount of \$55,422.00**, seconded by Martin and, following brief discussion about TENCO's delay in fabricating the new plow truck, carried by those present.

Stowell made a motion: **To approve General Fund Warrant 51810 in the amount of \$3,760.00**, seconded by Martin, instructing the Treasurer to transfer funds received into the Government Banking account to the General Fund, carried by those present.

Hege asked Board members to consider clarifying the mileage reimbursement policy, noting that a request for travel expenses to a Board of Abatement meeting had been submitted. Hege conveyed that while, subsequent to discussions with VLCT attorneys, that request had been denied, elected officials had been, and were continuing to be paid erroneously for travel expenses incurred in the normal course of their duties. Discussion centered upon the Board clarifying the municipality's policy prior to starting the new fiscal year, factoring travel expenses while crafting next years budget recommendation and announcing any policy changes at the next Town Meeting.

10. Members of the Public:

Trisha Shine appeared on behalf of the Townshend Auditors and requested that the Select Board assure that the bookkeeper provide needed reports for auditing. In brief discussion, it was noted that the Auditors, since Town Meeting, have rarely shown up to audit, nor have tried to access reports by making arrangements with the bookkeeper. Hege suggested that the Auditors work with Town Hall personnel in securing what they need.

Jeff Russ criticized the Select Board for failing to follow through with Town Hall, fire station and Highway Garage projects, citing the half-done heating system at Town Hall, the need to have underground oil tanks removed and a new boiler put in at the fire station, and the need for a boiler and water filtration system at the Highway Garage. Russ reminded the Board that these problems have been known for many years, but that numerous Boards have neglected the obligation to attend them.

In lengthy discussion, Martin expressed appreciation for Russ's reminders, but suggested that with turn-over on the Select Board, multi-year planning was difficult to sustain. Martin and Hege both suggested that expense was also a consideration, given the present tax burden and the prioritization of spending for day-to-day operational needs. Hege relayed that municipal deficits have been and continue to be carried due to the failure of the Federal Government to reimburse for disasters, as promised.

Russ also offered that he thought that the road crew was doing a good job and believed that this and previous Select Boards were too-intent upon micro-managing the Highway Department.

Kayla Royce presented a letter on behalf of Northeast Firewood Plus requesting Select Board consideration for the Taft Meadows mowing contract. The Board expressed appreciation for her interest and promised that this matter would be taken up at a near-future meeting.

Royce then requested that the Town post signs along State Forest Road to slow traffic and place, "Yield," or, "Caution: Horses," signs at the intersection of State Forest and Dam Roads.

11. Correspondence: Hege read a draft letter in return response to a request from West River Valley Thrives for the Select Board's support. Following discussion, Martin made a motion: **For the Select Board to send the letter in support of West River Valley Thrives**, seconded by Wright and carried by those present.

Hege read a letter dated May 13, 2015, from Henry Pinckney with a complaint about not being able to list his property for sale with realtors. Hunt was instructed to send a response to Mr. Pinkney inviting him to attend a Select Board meeting and discuss the issues.

Martin made a motion: **To approve the contractual agreement with the State of Vermont Department of Taxation for the Lister Office's use of the Marshall & Swift property assessment tables**, seconded by Wright and carried by those present.

12. Old Business: Appointments: Martin nominated Douglas Ballantine and Amon DeWitt to one-year appointment as Viewers of Fences, carried by those present.

Municipal Land Sales: Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the sale of a parcel of municipal property in West Townshend and a lot in Townshend Acres. By general consent, the Board agreed to have Hunt consult with the Town attorney for language particular to posting legal Public Notices and arranging for these properties to be sold by review and possible acceptance of sealed bids received on or prior to July 20, 2015.

VCDP Update: Hege informed the Board that the Community Development grant for Valley Cares had been successfully closed out and Hunt conveyed how the administrative and auditing expense reimbursements were to be fully received.

Compactor Trash Bags: Hunt reported that the compactor bags ordered from Waste Zero had arrived. Discussion continued regarding how to best communicate the policy requiring resident purchase and use of these municipal trash bags beginning July 1, 2015. Martin made a motion: **To authorize Hege to order banners announcing the policy and put those, with posters on public display**, seconded by Wright and carried by those present.

13. New Business: Martin made a motion: **To approve the Bondville Boys request for use of the Town Common of July 10, 2015, for a band concert**, seconded by Wright and carried by those present.

Martin made a motion: **To issue the 2015 Constable's Warrant for the seizure of unlicensed animals**, seconded by Wright and carried by those present.

14. Executive Session: Martin made a motion: **To enter Executive Session under 1 V.S.A. section 313(a)(5) with Hunt at 8:45 p.m. to discuss a clear and imminent peril to the public safety**, seconded by Wright and carried by those present.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 9:05 p.m., and, as a result, Hunt was asked to invite Sheriff Clark to the next Select Board meeting.

15. Other Business: None at this time.

16. Meeting Schedules: Regular Meeting: June 1, 2015, at 6:00 p.m.

17. Adjournment: Stowell made a motion: **To adjourn at 9:14 p.m.**, carried by those present.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig K. Hunt