

MINUTES OF THE DORSET SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING NOVEMBER 15, 2016

PRESENT: H. Chandler (Chair), M. Thörn, J. Stannard, T. Smith, L. Ruffa

ALSO PRESENT: R. Gaiotti (Town Manager), Austin Chinn, Clarissa Lennox, Bob Menson, Joan Menson, Diana Green, Jim Mirenda, Danny Pinsonault, Ed Tanenhaus, Linda Sullivan, Bonnie Burke, Hoss (GNAT-TV).

H. Chandler called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and thanked the residents in the audience for attending.

Approval of Minutes: First item on the agenda is approval of minutes. R. Gaiotti explained an amendment suggested by Rosalie Fox be added to the October 18th minutes as took place. T. Smith made amendment correcting the name of Frank Parent under the Mad Tom Road & Route 7 intersection discussion. **M. Thorn moved and T. Smith seconded to approve the minutes as amended, motion passed 4-0.**

Public Comment: Austin Chinn asked the Selectboard about the status of the Town being involved with the Dorset Village Water System. He stated that the water shortages the last two years have been very difficult and things should be planned and fixed. H. Chandler stated that he and R. Gaiotti attended the Dorset Fire District Prudential Committee Meeting the previous night of November 14th, and that the Town has offered assistance with help working through some of the many challenges they face. Discussion ensued about the challenges the water system faces. A. Chinn asked about whether infrastructure planning was being done and wondered about financing. Further discussion ensued about the condition of the pipes and costs etc. H. Chandler noted that the Fire District received a \$20,000 grant to help with water infrastructure planning.

Jim Mirenda reported on the Act 46 Merger Study Committee approved that the School District merger was "advisable" as required about State Statute. The Community will hold public forums on the details, and the changes will but put forth to the voters of the Towns in the group on Town Meeting Day 2017. In addition to voting for the ballot initiative the new District School Board members will be voted. The merger report and study information is available on the Act 46 Northshire Merger Study Committee website. The new district would be comprised of: Dorset, Danby, Mount Tabor, Manchester, Sunderland, Peru, Londonderry, Winhall, Landgrove.

Clarissa Lennox asked about what jurisdiction if any the Selectboard has over the water situation in Dorset. M. Thorn explained how Fire Districts are separate legal entities that

provide that service and are responsible for it. H. Chandler stated the Selectboard does share the concerns and is hoping to offer assistance where the Town can help to improve the situation. Discussion ensued about the dynamics of each Fire District and water system. D. Pinsonault noted that small systems with volunteer boards are difficult to achieve. He also stated that the cost factor for the projects can be very expensive and the water users often have trouble with the price tag. Jack Stannard noted about the dynamics of the Dorset Fire District that allows voters in the entire District to vote on the Water Budget, even though they are not water users.

Noise Ordinance Review: H. Chandler explained that the Selectboard was able to have M. Thorn and L. Ruffa break the Noise Ordinance document and process down to build it from the ground up. H. Chandler noted that the goal was to attempt to get consensus on the main questions of what a noise ordinance deals with. This would then be folded into a noise ordinance document in the future. M. Thorn explained how she and L. Ruffa went about researching and coming up with the baseline information as to what to discuss. L. Ruffa and R. Gaiotti worked on a business survey better understand how limiting noise might impact business owners in Dorset. Discussion of items ensued about time periods for restrictions (week days and weekends being different), T. Smith stated that Holidays should be included in the weekend status. Discussion ensued about the survey and the input received from survey responses. T. Smith stated that perhaps a 9pm to 7am cut off and that the cut off of 11pm to 7am on the weekend would be best as to not harm businesses on weekends. Discussion ensued about the morning cut off and what effects it might have. Discussion ensued about possible exemptions for owners working on their own property vs. commercial work. T. Smith stated that it should be the goal to minimize the economic harm to any Dorset business and re-stated that 9pm to 7am weekday cut off and the 11pm to 7am cut off on weekends and holidays. J. Stannard stated that it can be difficult to regulate mowing certain times of year due to the weather and daylight hours. There seemed to be consensus about breaking out weekdays vs. weekends. H. Chandler stated that he was not supportive of an 11pm cut off on the weekends due to people needing to get to sleep. T. Smith asked to look at other comparable towns to assure that the regulation does not negatively affect Dorset businesses. Discussion ensued about parting out what time and what type of activity. M. Thorn stated that it would be balancing act to work through this process. Categories of noise to be limited were discussed as well, listing 13 items:

Categories:

1. Electronic or acoustic sound producing devices, radios, bullhorns, megaphones, TVs, and loudspeakers on motor vehicles/horns used in a way that creates a disturbance. **There was consensus of the board to include this item in the document.**
2. Defect in motor vehicle and discharge exhaust from motor vehicles and engine breaks. **There was consensus of the board to include these items.**

3. Construction noise, permitted during certain hours (no limit if emergency repairs). **There was consensus of the board to include this item.**
4. Parties, concerts, and events. **There was consensus of the board to include this item.**
5. Generic provision for other objectionable and disturbing noise. **There was consensus of the board to include this item.**

T. Smith noted that the Town could look to have a permit process for events in tents/ outside and that this could address the main concerns that the Town has been hearing from the community.

Exemptions:

1. Emergency vehicles and equipment
2. Municipal vehicles and equipment
3. Unamplified voices
4. Agricultural operations
5. Parades, athletic or other events sponsored by the Town, a school or a non-profit

Enforcement:

Objectionable noise complaints can be made by phone, in person or electronically to:

Selectpersons

Zoning Administrator

Town Manager

Police/Sheriff

Discussion then ensued about penalties and having the ordinance be civil vs. criminal. **It was the consensus of the board to have the ordinance be a civil ordinance document.**

M. Thorn and L. Ruffa stated that they would continue to work the issue and report back to the Board with the updates.

Mad Tom & Route 7 Intersection Update:

T. Smith stated that a large portion of the problem is speed enforcement through this area. He hoped that a chief goal under the new coverage with the Sheriff would address much of these concerns. T. Smith made reference to the letter received from resident Jim Mirenda on the issue and thought he had good points about speed control assisting to make the villages safer

for motorists and pedestrians. Discussion ensued about adding signs with flashing lights and lowering the speed limits to achieve safety goals. R. Gaiotti stated that Route 7 and Route 30 are State Highways and signs and traffic patterns are federally regulated so the request of the Town would have to conform with those regulations, but the Town could ask for this type of an effort. R. Gaiotti will follow up with VTrans on this issue.

FY2018 Town Budget Workshop:

R. Gaiotti presented the highlights to the FY2018 Town Budget.

Law Enforcement: T. Smith questioned the budget figure for the new Sheriff contract and whether it was enough funding to support the goals of the Town. R. Gaiotti stated that the budget figure would include 40 hours per week of coverage and possible funding to secure a lease on office/garage space for the Sheriff to receive residents with questions concerns. R. Gaiotti will review the numbers again to make sure enough funds are available to meet the goals.

Economic Development: R. Gaiotti explained that \$6,300 was still left in FY17 relative to an economic development effort (after the failing of the Manchester Chamber initiative). This line item has been dropped to \$2,500 in the FY18 budget with a concept idea of doing local economy work that is centered in Dorset. **It was the consensus of the board to leave this item at \$2,500 and research options.**

Salt Shed: R. Gaiotti reviewed and explained the dynamics around building a new salt storage building on Route 30. Funding by summer of 2017 will sit around \$200,000 and the goal is to construct in the summer of 2017.

Additional review was done with: Solid Waste costs, Highway equipment, Highway construction, Highway staffing, options for the Board of Listers and assessing etc.

The following schedule was adopted for the FY18 budget: November – review 1st draft and discuss items/needs; December – review and approve wages/benefits and finalize budget; January – Hold public hearing on the budget and prepare for Town Report publication.

Finance Report:

Delinquent taxes are around \$188,000 vs. last year at this time: \$123,000. Eight properties have been placed on the Tax Sale List. The last month has been fairly quiet with regard to the Town budget and things are tracking along as they should be. **It was the consensus of the board to approve the Finance Report for 11-15-16**

Manager's Report:

R. Gaiotti explained the work that has been done in the last month. Items include attending a Town Manager's conference where the gubernatorial candidates spoke. In addition economic and other challenges Towns face were discussed. R. Gaiotti further discussed the status of the solar agreement and other working items.

Approval of Payroll & Accounts Payable for 11/15/16 was done by Consensus.

Other Business:

Town Health Officer Appointment: It was the consensus of the board to re-appointment Dolores Marcotte to the post of Town Health Officer. Dolores has been doing the job for 10+ years and is a great asset for the Town.

Town Report Dedication: R. Gaiotti noted that it was time for the board to review and come up with ideas for dedication of the 2016 Town Report. Discussion ensued about possible candidates and the need to have something in place by the December meeting.

T. Smith moved and M. Thorn seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:15pm, motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Gaiotti, Town Manager

Jim Mirenda
PO Box 50
East Dorset, VT 05253

REC'D
11/10/16
RM

November 10, 2016

Dorset Select Board:

I am writing in support of two recent Select Board items and to provide my thoughts on speed enforcement in Dorset.

Bennington County Sheriff Contract

I support re-establishing a contract with the Bennington County Sheriff.

I see these benefits:

- Having one main officer dedicated to policing Dorset would establish clearer communications.
- We would receive more thorough responses to our specific needs and criminal events.
- Hours could be extended and be more flexible.
- This could be accomplished at a lower cost than the town is currently paying.
- We could increase speed enforcement efforts.

Mad Tom & Route 7 Intersection

I also support the effort to address this dangerous intersection.

In addition to seeking longer-term structural solutions I encourage increased speed enforcement through this area of town. Please contrast this area to the area on Route 7 through Mt. Tabor. Both areas are similar in design but we have more pedestrian traffic in East Dorset. Nobody speeds through Mt. Tabor. It is learned behavior. I would like to have the same standard for East Dorset.

Please consider putting up Welcome signs on either end of the village area. This could remind drivers that this is a pedestrian area and to drive safely.

Speed Enforcement

Over the last decade the Town's annual revenue from speed enforcement has fallen from about \$40,000 to about \$7,000. That decline is because we have not focused on enforcement and not because speeding itself has declined. I believe that **we do have a speeding problem** in town and we can see the results on our roads.

*Jim Mirenda
PO Box 50
East Dorset, VT 05253*

On Mad Tom Road this year we have had two dead dogs, two totaled vehicles, and one destroyed fire hydrant. And those are just the incidents that I am aware of, there may have been many more. I witness excessive speed on a daily basis and I was recently passed on Mad Tom Road in front of the town office.

A few years ago the town purchased a speed warning sign. I believe that this sign works well at slowing speeds when it is present. However, it cannot always be present. Individual drivers will only make a permanent adjustment to their driving when they are asked to pay a monetary price. Thankfully, the Town can use these additional revenues to purchase even more policing when it is needed (summer quarry, crime investigations, etc.)

Thank you,

Ji m

Jim Mirenda
Mad Tom Road