

Dorset Selectboard Meeting Minutes

January 17, 2023

7pm Dorset Town Offices

Members Present: Megan Thorn, Henry Chandler, Jim Salsgiver, Liz Ruffa, Frank Parent

Others Present: Rob Gaiotti, Darren Hadlock, Lynn Coolidge, Howard Coolidge, Kyle Bushee, Marilyn Kinney

Henry Chandler called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

December Minutes: Jim Salsgiver moved and Frank Parent seconded to approve the December meeting minutes with a correction on page 3 for the date of 1/17 not 1/15, motion passed 4-0.

Public Comment: None

Coolidge Lane / Legal Trail Update:

Town Attorney Jim Barlow was present to give an overview to the Selectboard. He presented information on town highway law, denoting classes of road and responsibilities of the Town. He explained the process for discontinuing a road and the requirements for notice and hearings. He noted that the Selectboard is not required to act unless the change comes via petition from citizens of the Town. At current there is a request to discontinue a portion of Coolidge Lane, but disagreement between residents on Coolidge Lane as to whether to Town should discontinue. Discussion ensued with regard to the condition of the road and the classification of Coolidge Lane as a legal trail. Upon discontinuance the right of way reverts back to the owners. The Town is not obligated to survey or locate the road it is giving up. Attorney Barlow stated that once the Town discontinues a road that residents on the road would then discuss how account for maintenance including expectations for maintenance. It was noted that Coolidge Lane is currently maintained by the property owners because Dorset does not maintain legal trails. Further discussion ensued amongst the neighbors about current levels of maintenance on the road and discussing future work. Henry Chandler asked the Board for a position on the topic. It was the consensus of the board to gather additional information. Board members will visit Coolidge Lane individually to see the condition of the road and put the topic on the agenda for February.

FY24 Town Budget Public Hearing:

Henry Chandler opened up the Public Hearing for the FY2024 Town Budget. No public comment was received. Rob Gaiotti gave an update on changes to the budget from the January meeting. Budget is up around 4% and taxes should go up 1-3% with an increase in the grand list. Jim Salsgiver moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to approve the FY24 Town Budget and send it to Town Meeting, motion passed 4-0.

Town Meeting Articles 2023:

Rob Gaiotti presented the Town Meeting Warning for 2023. He noted that the only changes were a small non-profit increase and the addition of a housing advisory article. Discussion ensued about the housing article and how best to write it. The language was amended to be simpler.

Frank Parent moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to approve the Town Meeting Warning for 2023, motion passed 4-0.

2023 Highway Mileage Certificate:

Jim Salsgiver moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to approve the 2023 Highway Mileage Certificate for Dorset, motion passed 4-0.

Old Business:

New Town Office (no change)

Maclay has finished the redesign of the smaller town offices at Raptor Lane. We have moved forward with option A as it retains the original layout of the building with 800 less square feet. This should get us at or close to the bond vote figure if Naylor & Breen's construction estimate holds.

Timeline: finish design and get permits winter 2022; start bidding spring 2023, start construction 2023 (time to be determined by N&B based on best pricing package window). Sometime this spring we will acquire a line of credit from a local bank.

East Dorset Village:

Still waiting to hear from the State on green space. Hoping weather will change soon so that we can install the new village ice rink at the fire station.

Read Farm Lane

We have received the wetlands permit and await the rivers permit. It seems like the work probably won't take place until after the winter when the water levels get lower (summer 2023).

We are awaiting the selection of an appraisal vendor for the Chantecleer buyout. We had a good conversation with VEM about applying for grant funding to cover the costs of moving Brookside Drive after the buyout. The Town will own the Chantecleer property and would be able to move Brookside, addressing both issues. Timeline pending.

We have communicated with Frost wells about extending the well casing at the Chalmers residence to keep potential floodwaters from entering the casing.

Raptor Lane

Rachel continues to improve signage and access for Town Forest. We included an advisory article for Town meeting relative to housing at Raptor Lane to put feelers out there.

Broadband (No Change):

Our CUD has received their \$9million grant and will continue to move forward with Consolidated to have fiber to every home in Dorset by the end of 2023.

Legal Trail 6 (no change)

Tread Lightly! Has documented lots of ATV use on the legal trail, some users have been covering up the cameras and cutting trees to access the road on their ATVs.

Coolidge Lane:

Attorney Jim Barlow will be present at the January meeting to outline his recommendations for Coolidge Lane and legal trails in general.

Route 30 Village Concerns (no change):

The Sheriff continues to monitor speed in the Village. He noted that it has been very quiet these last few weeks. We received shipment of the 2 radar speed sign units (same model as used in Manchester). Next step is to get a ROW permit from the State to put them up. We are debating waiting until spring to put them up, let us know if you think it would be worth putting them up this winter.

Finance Report:

Rob Gaiotti gave the monthly financial report. Expenses are tracking along a bit above normal, but we expect things to level off. The Town CLA is now 81% and COD is 21%, this will have an upward impact on education property taxes. Even though the base rate going down, taxes will go up. Frank Parent moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to approve the Finance Report, motion passed 4-0.

Manager's Report:

Highway:

- Grading/ graveling of roads
- Winter storm cleanup
- Tree work/Misc.
- 2023 project planning

Misc.:

- DFD opened up bids on the water line project on 1/9 and the apparent low bid of \$3,580,000 falls within the project estimate so things are moving forward! Construction likely to start sometime this spring. In addition, the Town has helped with an ACCD grant application that could bring in another \$1,000,000 in grant funding. This would bring the grant total to \$3.25 million toward the \$5 million project. Fingers crossed.

- Additional work on 2023 capital projects for paving and equipment purchasing. Trying to hone in pricing and scope.
- PACIF Board Meetings
- Town Budget and Town Meeting preparation
- Follow up meetings with Dubois & King about the Route 30 Pathway Study. We are working to keep the design productive while keeping pricing reasonable. Public input meeting on Feb 22nd.
- CLA is down to 81.15% down from 91% and COD is now 21.32%. Unclear how much this will drive up the homestead education tax rates for FY24.
- Still awaiting the final draft and presentation of the BCRC housing needs assessment.
- Continued work with FEMA and NRCS for Read Farm Lane.
- Coordinated with Frost Wells about extending the well casing for the Chalmers family.

Approve Payroll and AP for week of January 17th:

It was the consensus of the board to approve the weekly payroll and accounts payable by signing the warrants.

Liz Ruffa moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:15pm, motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Gaiotti

Town Manager