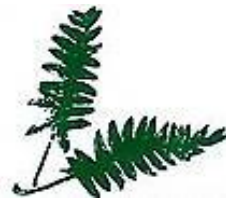


# Town of Dorset, Vermont



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=====*Chartered 1761*=====

## **Dorset Selectboard Meeting Minutes October 17, 2023**

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

**Members Absent:** Henry Chandler

**Others Present:** Rob Gaiotti (Town Manager), Kate Levine (GNAT-TV), Sandy Pinsonault, Penny Charbonneau.

Megan Thorn called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

### **September Minutes:**

Jim Salsgiver moved and Frank Parent seconded to approve the September meeting minutes as presented, motion passed 3-0.

### **Public Comment:**

Penny Charbonneau was present to inquire about the Town's agreement with Vermont Renewable Fuels to allow access over the Town Garage property to the rail road. Rob Gaiotti noted that the Town was working with the owner to allow the company truck to pull around the stone pile to the rail right of way to load pellets from rail cars. Penny Charbonneau noted that she could see the rail road from around the stone pile and did not want to see rail cars sitting on the rail road tracks. Rob Gaiotti noted that the rail road stores rail ties and maintenance equipment in this area currently. He also noted that the Town can't control or impact what takes place in the rail right of way. Penny Charbonneau asked why neighbors weren't consulted. Rob Gaiotti responded that the agreement allows for VT renewable fuels to gain access and that truck trips will be in the winter with about 1 trip per day. Town trucks and the rail road are in and out of the property multiple times per day seven days a week in the winter.

### **Bylaw Update:**

Rob Gaiotti noted that the Planning Commission has warned the bylaw map amendment for November. The amendment would then come to the Selectboard in December. The amendment will move the RRP zone up to a higher elevation on a portion of Danby Mountain Road.

### **Non-Profit Appropriations:**

Discussion ensued about changes to the current policy to not require a petition after 3 years. At the previous two meetings the Board discussed changing non-profit appropriations to an Australian Ballot vote. There is a general sense that some voters would be more likely to question or vote no on Australian Ballot, than via the floor vote. No action was taken on changing the method of voting. The Board reviewed options for the appropriate funding level to require a petition annually.

Jim Sasliger moved and Frank Parent seconded to amend the Town policy to require all non-profit organizations requesting \$2,000 or more to file a petition with the Town Clerk annually, motion passed 3-0.

### **Housing Task Force:**

Liz Ruffa presented a memo on the status of the Housing Task Force. Liz and Henry Chandler have worked to develop a list of interested residents and a scope of work with mission statement. The initial phase of the work will take place over 3+ meetings and will review macro and micro solutions to housing issues. After that there will hopefully be smaller working committees that move forward on particular issues. Liz Ruffa noted that she hoped the Board would approve the ad hoc committee so the work could start. She also noted that the group would present an update at each Selectboard meeting. Liz Ruffa moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to approve the ad hoc housing task force, motion passed 4-0.

### **Old Business 10-17-23**

#### **New Town Office:**

Had a design meeting with Maclay in early October. They have met with Naylor & Breen who will prepare yet another updated cost estimate in November that will help us set the stage for bidding in January-March to start work spring/summer 2024.

Permitting will take place in April-June; Design April-August; Bidding/Pricing Sept-Dec; Site Work possibly by winter 2023 with building starting in spring of 2024.

#### **Read Farm Lane**

FEMA has been sent our updated Chantecleer information and we await a decision. The State has said that at minimum they would use funds to make whole the sale price of \$1.2 million and possibly add in some of the business value (\$287,000).

**NEW:** the property owner at 78 Brookside Drive has expressed interest in pursuing a FEMA buyout due to current and future flooding concerns. The Town plans on helping assist her with the application process. This does mean that the Town could occur \$1-3,000 in expense related to this effort (which we

likely would get reimbursed if the grant goes through). This would be another potential piece of property that the Town would own in the flood plain.  
Thoughts? Concerns?

**Broadband:**

The buildout in Dorset is reaching it's end and in certain parts of Town fidium is currently offering service to parts of Town.

**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:**

Done!

**Route 30 Village Concerns:**

We have added extra shifts during the peak foliage season and will keep them in place through the end of the year.

**Prentiss Pond Dam Engineering Services Proposal:**

Rob Gaiotti presented the MSK Engineering proposal for reviewing the Prentiss Pond Dam to make an assessment and create a plan for maintenance improvements that might soon be needed or required by the State Dam Safety Office. Rob Gaiotti recommended that the Town move forward with the proposal and that MSK has worked well with the Town in the past. Jim Salsgiver moved and Frank Parent seconded to approve the proposal, motion passed 3-0.

**Finance Report:**

**October 17, 2023 Finance Report:**

**Delinquent Taxes:**

\$123,801 as of 10/17/23, last year \$116,561

**FY24:**

We are 25% expended at the 30% mark in the fiscal year. Still early in the expense side of the year. Monthly expense like payroll, utilities etc.

Coolidge Lane materials purchased and we came in around \$1,500 under budget. Property owners will pay back around \$6,500.

Paying the Fire Protection Tax payments to the Fire Districts the week of 10/16.

### **Sinking Fund Balances:**

**ARPA:** \$436,500

**Reappraisal:** \$195,044

**Equipment:** \$195,044

**Highway Paving:** \$203,388

**Unemployment:** \$50,882

**Land Records:** \$30,533

**Town Buildings:** \$11,383

**Highway Bridges:** \$10,141

**Debt:** Equipment Loan: \$26,190      2021 Town Office Bond: \$0 of \$3,600,000  
(current bond rate around: 3.97%)

**Assets:** 10 acres Upper Hollow Road / 308 acres Raptor Lane

### **Town Manager's Report:**

- Finished Coolidge Lane project a bit under budget, all parties seem happy. Kudos to the highway guys for the good work.
- Starting a grant funded retaining wall project on 10/17, on Mad Tom Road, it should allow us to widen the road shoulder in this location which will be an improvement.
- Equipment maintenance
- DFD project is around 40-50% complete. The work crews are a bit behind schedule, but we are also significantly under budget. This will create an opportunity for possibly adding in some main line replacements under the same favorable funding arrangements with SRF.
- VLCT Annual Meeting PACIF Board Meetings. PACIF insurance likely to be up 1.9% in FY25.
- Bylaw map amendment has been warned for the November PC Meeting.
- Planning continues for the Route 30 pathway, updates should come after 10/19.
- Met with NEMC about reappraisal last week, they expect to start work in Dorset in spring 2024 and will provide information that we can get out to all property owners.
- FEMA reimbursement work continues for the July storm. Total damages are around \$30,000.

- Our EWP project area has been impacted by new beaver activity; they have actually built a dam across the Battkenkill just after the bridge. Rail bridge 76 pre-construction meeting was last week, work will start in 2024.
- Housing Task Force creation discussions and background work.
- Multiple calls and meetings with VEM related to the Chantecleer buyout.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Gaiotti  
Town Manager