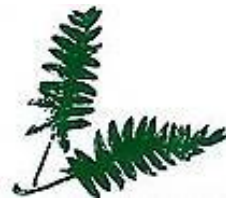


# Town of Dorset, Vermont



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

## **Regular Meeting of the Dorset Select Board December 15, 2020 (Via Zoom Call)**

Present: Megan Thorn (Chairperson), Tom Smith, Liz Ruffa, Henry Chandler, Jim Salsgiver, R. Gaiotti (Town Manager)

Absent:

Also, present: Darren Marcy, Bo Thorn, Rachel Batz (Recreation Director), Sandy Pinsonault (Town Clerk)

Megan Thorn, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

### **Approve Minutes of November 17, 2020:**

Henry Chandler moved and Tom Smith seconded to approve the October minutes as presented, motion passed 4-0.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Outdoor Recreation Master Plan:**

R. Batz was at the meeting to present a brief overview of the Master Plan for Outdoor Recreation in Dorset. She presented information relating to surveys, programs, and meetings with residents and other stakeholders. It was noted that over 200 people participated in surveys with help from Long Trail School students. She noted that the Conservation Commission had helped to give input into the plan. One item noted through surveys was the strong support for more trails and access to trails. Discussion ensued about other partners and projects. T. Smith asked about including information about the VAST trails in East Dorset and asked what their status was. R. Batz noted that the US Forest service has an agreement with the local VAST chapter to maintain the trails and work hasn't been done in a while. L. Ruffa thanks R. Batz for her efforts and thought the plan was a great resource for the community.

### **New Town Office Design Proposals:**

R. Gaiotti presented information relating to a 2017 study of the current Town Offices to try and map out improvements to make the building accessible and

better for meetings. This study noted that the re-design would cost around \$400,000 with the assumption that a variance for a lift vs. elevator would be received. If the elevator is needed the figure could go up by \$100,000 to \$150,000 or so. It was also noted that the 2017 costs are now closer to \$500,000, putting the estimates in the \$600-700k range. It was noted that after the study was received the Board decided to put the review on hold while the Town finished the Route 30 Shed project. Shortly after the Town acquired Raptor Lane, which again put the current office status on hold. After an 18 month review process with the Raptor Lane Committee a Master Plan was created and chief among options listed was the possible re-location of the Town Offices to Raptor Lane. After the Raptor Lane plan was finished the Selectboard decided to research options for possible design firms for a Town Office located at Raptor Lane. M. Thorn, H. Chandler and R. Gaiotti worked on this from September to December. An invitation for proposals was extended to three firms and Maclay Architects and Vermont Integrated Architecture responded. Discussion ensued about timing, costs, and what might happen to the East Dorset facility. R. Gaiotti noted that the assumption has been that the East Dorset building would be retained to serve a public purpose for benefit of the Village (library, public meeting space, community rooms etc.). T. Smith noted the importance of this decision in the process and that the Town should be researching these options concurrently. J. Salsgiver noted that there were many other State and Regional projects that create costs and he has concerns about the timing and costs. R. Gaiotti noted that the Town has been quite methodical through the process so far and has received input from residents through surveys and a sub-committee that the idea of re-locating the offices is something they liked. S. Pinsonault noted that lacking items for the current Town Offices and noted that a new facility at Raptor Lane could serve the community in ways that the current facility cannot. M. Thorn noted that the Board would discuss the contract specifics and costs in executive session later in the meeting.

### **Town Meeting Preparation:**

R. Gaiotti noted that other Towns have made the decision to move all items to Australian Ballot and hold the informational meeting via online platform (Zoom etc.). S. Pinsonault noted that the Board will also have to decide how to deal with mailing of ballots as well. Discussion ensued about mailing ballots per request or mailing to everyone on the voter list. It was the consensus of the group that it was a good idea to mail ballots to everyone. S. Pinsonault noted that costs for mailing and voting would be \$2-3k. J. Salsgiver moved and H. Chandler seconded to move all items to Australian Ballot, hold the informational meeting via zoom, mail ballots to all voters, and not require petitions for Town Meeting this year, motion passed 4-0.

### **FY22 Budget:**

R. Gaiotti gave a brief overview of the second draft of the proposed FY22 Town Budget. He noted some of the highlights: moving the Recreation Director position from part time to full time, continued support for trailwork, DPW projects (paving

Dorset West Road), the reduction in property & casualty insurance etc. He noted that the memo was updated to include the full cost of expanding the Rec. Director position, and the total increase in costs for the position is \$37,000 including additional salary and fringe benefits. The highway equipment and paving spreadsheets as well as the payroll spreadsheets have been provided. He noted that the estimate is that the budget would come in at 3.6% higher than FY21. L. Ruffa asked for the inclusion of funding for access to grants databases. J. Salsgiver noted a discrepancy between the equipment spreadsheet and the budget, but noted the correct amount was listed in the budget. He also inquired about the marble sidewalk expense and whether the Town should budget some costs here. He noted that the work done with year looks great and it's a really good investment for Dorset. Discussion ensued about the sidewalks and Dorset Marble Preservation Association's efforts. R. Gaiotti also noted that next step was to hold a public hearing in January. J. Salsgiver moved and L. Ruffa seconded to approve the budget for public hearing on January 19, 2021, motion passed 4-0.

### **Old Business: Raptor Lane/ Route 7-Mad Tom & Read Farm Lane**

R. Gaiotti noted that the Route 7 and Mad Tom work was largely complete and turned out very well. The only remaining items were grinding part of a curb and regrading near Wood & Signs.

R. Gaiotti gave an update about Read Farm Lane Flooding. The FEMA applications for moving Brookside Drive and buying out the Chantecleer have been submitted, no word from FEMA yet. He also met with VTrans recently and they have agreed to include an alternatives analysis with Northstar Hydro as part of the engineering work to be done relative to the new rail bridge. This will save the Town around \$23,000. The Town would then look to cover the costs of having Northstar Hydro continue to monitor the sediment levels near the Route 7a and rail road bridges. This cost is included in the FY22 budget and is estimated around \$7,000.

### **Finance Report**

R. Gaiotti reviewed the finance reports:

- Delinquent taxes are tracking about 10% higher than last year
- 48% through FY21 with 51% expended.
- Monthly expense included highway and recreation items.

H. Chandler moved and L. Ruffa seconded to approve the Finance Report as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

### **Manager's Report**

R. Gaiotti reported on the various items worked on over the last month: Dorset Fire District Water, Highway items, Recreation etc.

**Executive Session:**

L. Ruffa moved and H. Chandler seconded to go into Executive Session at 9:15pm to discuss contracts, motion passed 4-0. J. Salsgiver moved and H. Chandler seconded to exit Executive Session at 9:25pm. H. Chandler moved and L. Ruffa seconded to accept the proposal for design services submitted by Maclay Architects, motion passed 4-0.

J. Salsgiver moved and L. Ruffa seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 p.m. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rob Gaiotti, Town Manager