

## **Dorset Selectboard Minutes**

**Tuesday December 20, 2022**

**7pm Dorset Town Offices**

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

**Members Absent:** Liz Ruffa

**Other Present:** Rob Gaiotti, Gay Squire, Scott Thompson, Dave McNeany, Ken Gilbert, Greg Sukiennek

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

### **November Meeting Minutes:**

Jim Salsgiver moved and Henry Chandler seconded to approve the November 15<sup>th</sup> Minutes as presented, motion passed 3-0 (Frank Parent abstained)

### **Public Comment:**

None

### **Draft Bylaw Update from Planning Commission:**

Gay Squire gave a brief overview of the recent discussions and edits to the draft Zoning Bylaw. The Planning Commission has removed the mixed-use zone from Dorset Village due to recent input from residents. They also lowered the minimum suggested square foot building foot print to 3,000 from 4,000 in the Village zones. The Design Review Board will become the Design Review Commission (because technically they are a committee of the Planning Commission). The first public hearing before the Planning Commission will take place on February 28<sup>th</sup>. The Town is planning to mail postcard notices to every property owner and get the word out via email newsletter and on the website. This is above and beyond the notice being published in the newspaper. Megan Thorn asked about the new slope regulations and whether or not it would give the Planning Commission the ability to turn down projects that apply. Scott Thompson replied that yes, it will allow for a better process and give more consistency to

applicants and the Board. Gay Squire also noted that no building will be allowed above 2,000'. Henry Chandler inquired about checking in on the status of the conserved properties shown on the map. He noted that his property is only partially conserved but was shown as fully conserved. It was noted that the conserved properties come from a State data base of properties with conservation easements on them (the best info available). As the public hearing start and the process progresses it will be the responsibility of the property owner to review the information and respond with any concerns. Further discussion ensued about the process; it is likely that the Selectboard would be holding a hearing on the document in April. Gay Squire also noted that there is a Town Plan public hearing that will run concurrent to the bylaw hearing. The Town Plan edit will allow Dorset to include language in the bylaw the prohibits aircraft landing zones in Town and adds limitations to shooting ranges. The Selectboard expressed it's gratitude to the members of the Planning Commission for all their hard work during this process.

#### **FY2024 Draft Budget Update:**

Rob Gaiotti presented the latest draft of the FY24 Town Budget. Projects and items included: paving for Dorset Village after the waterline project, ramping up funding to cover the bond payment for the new offices, working with VT Parks to make upgrades at Emerald Lake, a 5% wage increase for staff, increased funding for Northshire Rescue. Overall the current draft is an increase of 3.1%. Discussion ensued about reviewing fuel pricing and solid waste to make sure those figures are good estimates. Further Discussion ensued about projects and the upcoming grand list equalization study that sets the common level of appraisal (CLA), which in turn impacts school tax rates. Jim Salsgiver noted that the State has a surplus which will push the base rate down, but T&G will have an increase which should net out before the CLA is applied. Rob Gaiotti noted that he would make the adjustments to the draft for January. Jim Salsgiver moved and Henry Chandler seconded to approve the budget including adjustments for a public hearing at the January meeting, motion passed 4-0.

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

Rob Gaiotti presented the re-design building options with the smaller square footage to make the project meet the \$3.6 million bond approval. The building size has been reduced down by 600 square feet (10%) and Maclay Architects have done a nice job to retain the original design. The Town will also save money by not having a walkway to the back of the building. They were able to locate a door and walkway on the front portion of the building and still meet code. Discussion ensued about the vault size, the level of storage, the size of the staff offices, and the public meeting space. The 10% reduction in space only applies to the office portion of the building, the sizes of the public meeting rooms have been retained as originally designed. Further discussion ensued about the vault, land records, digitization and cyber crime insurance

coverage. Henry Chandler moved and Frank Parent seconded to approve the Option A re-design, and allow Maclay Architects to work with Construction Manager Naylor & Breen to price out the new option and pursue permits, motion passed 4-0.

### **Emergency Watershed Project Proposal Review:**

In 2021 the Town received a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to remove sediment and debris from the Battenkill Channel, downstream of Route 7A. NRCS completed the design and the Town has received it's Army Corps wetland permit. The Town recently received proposals on the project. The low bidder on the project was Daniels Construction at \$32,275. The Town will contract directly with VELCO for timber mats which will cost around \$13,000. The total project budget will be around \$46,000. The grant will fund \$38,000, with the rest as local match. This should bring the water levels down from 3-6" in height based on engineering. Henry Chandler moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to approve the Daniels Construction proposal for the EWP project, motion passed 4-0.

### **Annual Error & Omissions:**

Jim Salsgiver moved and Henry Chandler seconded to approve the Three (3) errors & omissions as submitted by the Assessor, motion passed 4-0.

### **Old Business:**

**East Dorset Village:** Rob Gaiotti noted that the State has still not made a decision on the Town's request to take over ownership of the space behind the East Dorset Post Office. He will continue to push to get a resolution.

**Read Farm Lane:** EWP project will move ahead. Vermont Emergency Management has pledged to add funding to the FEMA funding to buyout the Chantecleer at full value. In addition, they have pledged to make funding available for move Brookside Drive from the floodway.

**Raptor Lane:** The VOREC funded bike trail will likely be built in 2024 based on environmental review and builder availability.

No updates or changes for: Broadband or Legal Trail 6

**Coolidge Lane:** Attorney Jim Barlow will be present at the January 15<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss his recommendations with the board, with regard to the request to discontinue Coolidge Lane and how to deal with legal trails in general.

Route 30 Village Concerns: The radar signs have arrived, and the Town will apply for permits from AOT to place them on Route 30. The signs will be installed when better weather arrives in the spring.

### **Finance & TM Report:**

Rob Gaiotti gave the monthly finance report. Delinquent taxes are pretty much level from last year. A couple of the properties have applied for State assistance, but the Town has yet to receive funding. The General fund is roughly 50% expended at the half way point in the year. Large purchases last month include salt/sand for winter. Henry Chandler moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to approve the finance report, motion passed 4-0.

### **Town Manager's Report 12-20-22**

#### **Highway:**

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

#### **Misc.:**

- Worked with Maclay to review the re-designed options for the Town Offices.
- DFD held a pre-bid meeting on 11/29, bids are due January 4th. Fingers crossed for favorable pricing; the good news is that 8 companies have taken out plans so we should get multiple bids. DFD will be applying for State ARPA funds for economic development toward the project, we are hopeful to land up to \$1,000,000 on top of the \$2,250,000 already received (\$5,000,000 total project cost).
- Additional work on 2023 capital projects for paving and equipment purchasing. Trying to hone in pricing and scope.
- PACIF Board Meetings
- PC held 2 follow up meetings after the joint meeting with the Selectboard. PC members will be in attendance to give an update on 12/20
- Almost time for Town Meeting preparation. I have attached the 2022 SB/TM Report and the list of possible dedication options for the Town Report (happy to take input).

- Follow up meeting with Dubois & King about the Route 30 Pathway Study. We are working to keep the design productive while keeping pricing reasonable.
- Expecting the 2022 sales study and equalized grand list soon. We expect CLA to continue to go down. Last year it dropped from 103% to 92%. Sales have slowed due to lack of inventory but prices continue to be very strong.
- Still awaiting the final draft and presentation of the BCRC housing needs assessment.

**Payroll & Accounts Payable for 12-20-22:**

It was the consensus of the Selectboard to approve payroll and accounts payable for the week.

**Executive Session:**

Jim Salsgiver moved and Henry Chandler seconded to enter into executive session at 9:00pm to discuss personnel. The board exited executive session at 9:10pm.

Jim Salsgiver moved and Henry Chandler seconded to approve a 2% wage increase for all staff effective immediately, motion passed 4-0.

Henry Chandler moved and Frank Parent seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:12pm, motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Gaiotti, Town Manager