

Dorset Selectboard

Meeting Minutes

March 21, 2023

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

Others Present: Rob Gaiotti, Jim Hand, Kate Lavigne

Rob Gaiotti called the meeting to order at 7:01pm

Board Organization:

Jim Salsgiver moved and Henry Chandler seconded to nominate Megan Thorn as Chairperson, motion passed 4-0 (M. Thorn abstained).

Jim Saslgiver moved and Frank Parent seconded to nominate Henry Chandler as Vice Chairperson, motion passed 4-0 (H. Chandler abstained).

February Minutes:

Henry Chandler moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to approve the February minutes, motion passed 4-0.

Public Comment:

None

Energy Coordinator Update – Jim Hand:

Jim Hand was present to give the Board and update about the efforts of the Dorset Energy Committee over the past year plus. He noted that on April 22nd (Earth Day) there would be a energy fair in Manchester at the Town Hall. He stated that the Dorset Energy Committee has been active in with programs like Window Dressers, that helps community members source window inserts that can cut down on heating costs dramatically. The process is run through a County level group. Discussion ensued about window dressers and the program. Jim Hand also presented info from Efficiency VT that all homeowners are able to get an energy efficiency kit if they log online with their green mountain power account number. Packet includes light bulbs, and low flow shower head and other items. Further discussion ensued about the Municipal Energy Grant Program. Dorset will likely apply for funding to further insulate and purchase heat

pumps at the Fire Stations. Megan Thorn thanked Jim Hand for the update and thanked the Energy Committee for all their good works.

Appointed Board Members Review:

The Board reviewed the open and expiring seats on town boards. At current there is 1 opening on the ZBA with 1 retirement, there are 2 openings for BCRC Rep, and 7 other expiring board terms. Rob Gaiotti will reach out to members with expiring terms to see about interest in continuing. Henry Chandler noted that the ZBA had talked about lowering the total membership down to 7 to make getting a quorum easier and voting on projects. R. Gaiotti will reach out to Attorney Jim Barlow to determine the process needed to reduce the board size.

Town Meeting Recap:

R. Gaiotti presented a memo reviewing the results of Town Meeting and inquiring with the Board on a few items. Discussion ensued about the nonprofit petition process for town appropriations. Henry Chandler noted that the Town has concerns with the equity of some of the appropriations. Specifically the VNA appropriation of \$40,000 being 25% of municipal funding for VNA when Dorset likely receives less than 5% of the VNA services. Further discussion ensued about involving the school district in some level at Town Meeting as was traditionally done in the past before the school district merger.

Article 22 Housing: Discussion ensued about creation of the Housing task force and the focus of the group to come up with measurable goals/objectives for the community. Liz Ruffa will help to coordinate and lead the organization of this group. Board members will review community names that could help. The 2019 Vermont Council on Rural Development Dorset Visit was also brought up. It was noted that there was a housing committee that began work before COVID and they likely could continue. Discussion ensued about meeting locations and timelines. R. Gaiotti and L. Ruffa will report back.

2023 Highway Forms

R. Gaiotti presented the Town Financial Plan for highways and the 2023 road and bridge standards for approval.

Henry Chandler moved and Frank Parent seconded to approve the 2023 Town Highway Financial Plan, motion passed 4-0.

Jim Salsgiver moved and Frank Parent seconded to approve the 2023 Road and Bridges standards, motion passed 4-0.

Liquor Licenses:

Henry Chandler moved and Jim Salsgiver seconded to recess the Selectboard Meeting and enter the Liquor Control Board, motion passed 4-0.

Henry Chandler moved and Liz Ruffa seconded to approve the 2023 Liquor Licenses for:

- Dorset Inn
- Barrows House
- HN Williams
- Dorset Bakery

Jim Salsgiver moved and Henry Chandler seconded to re-enter the regular meeting, motion passed 4-0.

Old Business 3-21-23

New Town Office/ Maclay Contract:

Meeting with Maclay and Naylor & Breen to confirm process and estimate. Engineering firm is working on permitting plans, should have permit review before the PC soon.

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.

East Dorset Village (No Change):

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

Awaiting easement signing by Hall/Chalmers and permit with USFS for instream grant work. Appraisals for Chantecleer are moving forward, should have that information by April/May. We can then work with VEM to get grant for full purchase (funding dependent) of the property.

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. We recently met with NATs to discuss signage and operations on the trails.

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:

It is on the list of things to do, to reach out to residents and get consensus on possible town assistance with road improvements to the legal trail section of the road. Will report back more soon.

Route 30 Village Concerns:

Cpl. Jason Thomas is now on Dorset Patrol and has focused on speed control in the Villages. We have had some good feedback about cars on Route 30 driving slower. This will be a focus for the spring/summer.

Other Business:

Jim Salsgiver gave a brief update of the status of a current piece of legislation that would threaten school choice in Vermont. He noted that the community input had changed the process and was hopeful that no negative impacts would occur.

March 23, 2023 Finance Report:

Delinquent Taxes:

\$118,025 as of 3/16/23, last year \$100,943

One DQ tax parcel is in the process of being refinanced, possible to have that balance \$32k paid soon.

FY23:

Roughly 72% through the year and sit at 67% expended. Monthly expense: personnel, utilizes, winter highway, non-profit appropriations.

Received the 3rd of 4 ARPA payments

Sinking Fund Balances:

ARPA: \$291,020

Reappraisal: \$180,376

Equipment: \$40,830

Highway Paving: -\$26,054*

Unemployment: \$50,882

Land Records: \$28,545

Town Buildings: \$11,383 **Highway Bridges:** \$10,141

Debt:

Equipment Loan: \$26,190 2021 Town Office Bond: \$0 of \$3,600,000

Assets:

10 acres Lower Hollow Road / 308 acres Raptor Lane

Town Manager's Report 3-21-23

Highway:

- Grading/ graveling of roads
- Winter storm cleanup
- 2023 project planning/ grant preparation

Misc.:

- The DFD application to ACCD has cleared the first hurdle by getting approval from the VEPC board. We are hopeful to get the award in early May from ACCD, the \$1 million would bring the outside funding for the DFD project to 65%, combined with a 0% interest 30 year loan.
- PACIF Board Meetings
- Cpl. Thomas continues to do a nice job serving Dorset so far.
- Survey is still out for the Route 30 Pathway Scoping Study, closes in about 7 days. Visit [Dorset Path Project - Town of Dorset, VT \(dorsetvt.org\)](http://dorsetvt.org)
- Grandlist getting put together for next year, assessing year ends 3/31.
- The Vermont Tax Dept. is changing the manner in which education property tax bills will be produced and homestead declarations are sent to the town database. This could cause some delays and a learning curve when new bills come out this summer.
- Continued work with FEMA and NRCS for Read Farm Lane; coordinated appraisal firms for Chantecleer buyout process.
- Shoutout to the Road Crew for working through the storm event on 3/14 and

3/15. Both very long 14+ hour days keeping roads clear for us.

- Planning Commission has approved the Town Plan edits. They continue to work on the bylaw changes, a working meeting is expected on 3/23. General understanding is that a public hearing before the Selectboard will happen in May or June.
- I will be out of Town April 18th; so the next SB meeting date has to be moved, or I can prepare materials and the board can keep the date, a member would have to take minutes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rob Gaiotti

Town Manager