

TOWN OF WAITSFIELD, VERMONT
Selectboard Meeting Minutes of
Monday, March 24, 2014

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Paul Hartshorn at the Waitsfield Town Office.

Members Present: Paul Hartshorn (Chair), Logan Cooke (Vice Chair) (7 pm arrival), Scott Kingsbury, Chris Pierson, Sal Spinosa.

Staff Present: Valerie Capels, Town Administrator; Carol Chamberlin, Recording Secretary

Others Present: Cheryl Allen (MRVTV), Chris Badger (Energy Coordinator), Nils Behn (Aegis Renewable Energy), David Cain, Larry Corthell, Darryl Forrest, Joe Klimek, Jerry Miller, Robert Shaffer (Lister), Nancy Turner; Liquor license representatives: Mary Ellen Alberti (Peasant Restaurant), Joe Buley (Screamin' Ridge Farm), Ginger Dew (Elusive Moose), Martin Loche (Elusive Moose), Jeffrey Lynn (Bridge Street Butchery), Connie Mendell (Occasions Catering), Larry Mendell (Occasions Catering).

II. Miscellaneous Business

Several topics were covered while waiting for the arrival of Mr. Klimek for his interview.

1. Consider appointment for Grand Juror.

MOTION: Mr. Kingsbury made a motion to appoint Fred Messer as Grand Juror. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pierson. All voted in favor.

2. Selectboard roundtable.

CDL drug policy – Mr. Pierson had been informed of the issuance of a revised model for drug policies related to CDL license holders and pointed out that Charlie Goodman should receive a copy.

Sidewalk sanding – Mr. Kingsbury noticed a Front Porch Forum posting regarding icy sidewalk conditions and wondered about the best way to let people know that icing is inevitable during thaw/freeze cycles. Board members are aware that there will be requests for sweeping of the winter's sand once the season ends.

3. Approval of March 10, 2014 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Pierson made a motion to approve the minutes of March 10, 2014. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kingsbury. All voted in favor.

4. Proposed amendment to Personnel Policies.

The proposed amendment is to clarify other recent changes to the policy and to implement a staggered approach in order to eliminate the problem of difficult to meet deadlines for submission of time cards. There has been no further investigation of time clocks, as they would add both expense and an additional step in the payroll process; the current practice of including work completed on time sheets would need to continue as that information is useful for grant documentation purposes.

The amendment clarifies that payday is Wednesday and implements the initial staggering. Ms. Capels suggested that text be added that the change would begin with the first pay period of April, 2014.

MOTION: Mr. Kingsbury made a motion to approve the amendment to the Personnel Policy. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pierson. All voted in favor.

5. Continuation of Selectboard goals and general schedule for 2014.

Mr. Pierson requested that a meeting be scheduled with appropriate Agency of Natural Resources officials to discuss the possibility of removing gravel from the Mad River above the Covered Bridge. He pointed out that the frequent flooding of the parking area behind Bridge Street shops was eliminated for a while after the post-Irene extraction of gravel, but that there was parking area flooding again this past summer and the gravel buildup is noticeable.

III. Continuation of Annual Appointment of Town Officers

1. Interview with Joe Klimek for Lister position.

Mr. Klimek presented his background and explained that he has spoken with the other Town listers and completed other research, providing him with a good understanding of what is involved in the position. He understands the time commitment involved; his work may only occasionally prevent his attendance at meetings.

MOTION: Mr. Spinosa made a motion to appoint Mr. Klimek to the position of Lister. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pierson. All voted in favor.

III. Regular Business

1. Public Forum.

Mr. Miller inquired as to whether bridge planking and sidewalk repair were included in the current plan for Bridge Street upgrades. Mr. Hartshorn affirmed that these items are part of the project.

2. Meet with Listers regarding town-wide reappraisal.

Mr. Shaffer explained the need for a reappraisal, pointing out that the coefficient of dispersion is just within allowed percentage variations, but that it points to a level of inequity that exists among properties in town. There have been a significant number of grievances over the past few years due to this, and it is probable that a reappraisal will also lower state education tax payments. Preliminary work, such as putting out an RFP for professional appraisal assistance, should begin now in order to complete the process by 2016.

MOTION: Mr. Kingsbury made a motion to authorize the Listers to begin the reappraisal process. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cooke. All voted in favor.

Mr. Shaffer discussed upcoming training possibilities for listers, including one more expensive opportunity related to appraisals that is scheduled for later this year. He explained that such training helps the listers make better decisions, thus reducing appeals of these decisions and related legal expenses. There is not enough budgeted specifically for lister training to cover tuition for the upcoming trainings.

MOTION: Mr. Spinosa made a motion to allow the use of reappraisal reserve funds for training expenses related to the workshops discussed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kingsbury. All voted in favor.

3. Consideration of an application to the CEDF Community Solar and Wind program: Nils Behn.

Mr. Behn, CEO of Aegis Renewable Energy, presented two options for solar installations, one at the Town Garage and one on the Munn property. The size of the array proposed would cover school and municipal electricity use, and is likely to allow for the new Town Office building to be the first net-zero town office building in the country. The Garage site would allow for connection to the grid via a single-phase setup right at the site; the Munn site provides access to a 3-phase connection and would be able to expand for that reason as well as more available ground space.

The timeline that would allow for applying for a CEDF grant is very tight, with the need for a bond vote before the application is due to be filed on May 9, 2014. Concern was expressed regarding the need to move quickly, not allowing enough time to get citizen feedback on which site is more appropriate. There was discussion that both the grant availability and a likely increase in component prices due to legal proceedings would indicate that delaying implementation of the project could lead to greater expense. At Mr. Behn's proposed cost, the project would be cash flow positive from the onset.

There was discussion about competitive bidding and whether the Procurement Policy would allow for contracting with Aegis without going through a bid process. The Selectboard reviewed the policy and determined that it allows them to move forward with Aegis.

Another funding option considered was financing through a private investor with the possible purchase of the system by the Town in several years. It is possible such an investor would pass on the tax savings realized by the investment in renewables to the Town. Board members were also interested in determining what the costs and payback period would be if a grant was not awarded to the Town.

Mr. Behn answered several questions regarding his availability to assist in writing the grant proposal, lifetime of components of the solar system, warranties available, necessary repairs, and available insurance. These costs are included in the cash flow estimate that he provided. He pointed out that a lease agreement with a private investor may not be lengthy enough to allow for positive cash flow, however, using this type of funding mechanism would allow for a less abbreviated timeline. Mr. Behn estimated that without grant monies to apply to the project it was unlikely to experience a negative cash flow but rather there would likely be several years of neutrality before experiencing positive cash flow.

MOTION: Mr. Kingsbury made a motion to bring forward a bond vote for installation of a solar project through Aegis Renewable Energy within the timeline presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pierson. All voted in favor.

The Selectboard will meet on Thursday, March 27 at 7:00pm to further review the matter and draft the requisite bond warning for timely publication. They requested that Mr. Behn provide information regarding cash flow without the inclusion of grant monies for review at that time.

4. SCHEDULED APPEARANCE – 8:00pm: Annual liquor license meeting and review of license applications

Mr. Spinosa explained to the licensees present that for three years after granting a license, the Board requires an annual in-person meeting for the purpose of reiterating how important it is to pay attention to laws and best practices regarding the serving of alcohol. The Board receives relevant reports of issues arising at local establishments, and those reports have been improving since this requirement has been implemented. Ms. Capels reminded the group that outdoor consumption areas are strictly defined and must be adhered to. The licensees present reported that all was going well and that they understood the seriousness of these matters. They also reported that all employee training was current. The Board thanked them for taking the time to appear in person for the meeting.

5. Rejuvenation of Energy Committee.

Mr. Badger explained that the Town Plan addresses several aspects of energy creation and consumption and that this committee would help in addressing these matters. There exists a previous charge to the Energy Committee which may need review.

MOTION: Mr. Kingsbury made a motion to rejuvenate the Energy Committee with a minimum of five members, appoint Mr. Badger and Mr. Spinosa as representatives and place an ad seeking other candidates. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pierson. All voted in favor.

6. Formation of Town Meeting working group.

It was felt that gauging interest in citizen participation would provide a better basis for determining the size and scope of this group. Ms. Turner reported that she had spoken with Joshua Schwartz, and that he is willing to entertain the idea of a Valley-wide group for this purpose.

MOTION: Mr. Kingsbury made a motion to advertise that this group is forming and thus provide an opportunity for people to express interest in joining. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pierson. All voted in favor.

7. Consideration of DuBois & King contract amendment: adjustments to Bridge Street projects scope of work.

Board members questioned aspects of the proposed amendment and the hours assigned to certain activities.

MOTION: Mr. Cooke made a motion to invite a representative in to explain exactly what work was performed during the hours billed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pierson. All voted in favor.

8. Bills payable and Treasurer's warrants were signed.

9. Selectboard Roundtable (continued).

Second constable – Mr. Kingsbury raised the possibility of appointing a second constable due to Mr. Laskowski being in Florida for part of the year. While there is some money designated for training, it is difficult to keep up with State requirements. There was agreement to review the state requirements and clarify the job description before opening the position and advertising for candidates.

Participation – Mr. Cooke expressed his concern that when setting up Selectboard meetings outside of the regular schedule his participation appears to be valued less than that of other members.

10. Town Administrator's Report.

Ms. Capels had nothing to add to her written report.

IV. Other Business

No other business was addressed at this time.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Chamberlin
Recording Secretary

reviewed by Valerie Capels
Town Administrator