

TOWN OF SWANTON
MINUTES
SELECTBOARD MEETING
Swanton Town Office Building
1 Academy Street, Swanton, VT 05488
Tuesday, December 17, 2013 @ 7:00 p.m.

Present: John Lavoie, Selectboard Chair; Dick Thompson, Kathy Lavoie, and Joel Clark, Selectmen; David Jescavage, Town Administrator; Cathy Fournier, Town Clerk, Yaasha Wheeler, Secretary; Harold Garrett, Road Foreman; Shawn Dashno, Animal Control Officer; Greta Brunswick, Regional Planning Commission; Heather Buczkowski, Channel 15.

A. Call to Order

Mr. Lavoie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Lavoie led those present in the pledge of allegiance.

C. Meeting Topics:

1. Minutes

a) December 3, 2013 Regular Meeting

Kathy Lavoie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to approve the minutes. Motion carried. Dick Thompson abstained.

2. Public Comments

No public comment.

3. Old Business

a) Discuss 4th Street Property/Brownfields (Executive Session for Real Estate)

Kathy Lavoie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to enter executive session for real estate at 7:05 p.m. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to exit executive session for real estate at 7:40 p.m. Action taken: The Selectboard had discussed the Brownfields Site and a potential contract regarding the Fourth Street garage.

4. Economic Development

There were no updates for this item.

5. Animal Control Officer

a) ACO Monthly Report

Mr. Dashno stated that November was a slow month, in which he mostly followed up on unlicensed animals. An anonymous call sent him to Sunset Terrace in regard to a neglected dog, but he was able to confirm that the dog had access to food, water, and shelter, and was at a healthy weight. He had one dog at large call, but could not find it. December was already more busy than November; there had been a dog bite. The dog had been quarantined for 9 days before the owner had shot it. Because the dog still had usable brain tissue, Dr. Bob Johnson (state veterinarian) advised that it could be tested for rabies. It tested negative. The Selectboard thanked Mr. Dashno for his work on behalf of the Town.

6. Expenditures

a) General Orders (11/21/13 – 12/18/13)

Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to accept the General Orders as printed. Motion carried.

b) Highway Orders (11/21/13 – 12/18/13)

Mr. Clark and Mr. Garrett reiterated that the end of January would be the goal for moving completely out of the old garage. Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Kathy Lavoie, to accept the Highway Orders as printed. Motion carried.

c) Payroll (11/21/13 – 12/18/13)

Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Clark, to accept the payroll as printed. Motion carried.

d) Economic Development Fund

Mrs. Fournier explained that a portion had been paid out of the Economic Development Fund to Peter Cross, for the dates of October 2 to November 22, and for work relating to Park D permits. Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Kathy Lavoie, to accept the economic development fund report as printed. Motion carried.

7. Highway Department

a) Updates

Mr. Garrett reported that the overhead doors still worked inconsistently; the Selectboard agreed that it was Mr. Pratt's job to speak with the subcontractors involved to resolve the problem. There was also an issue with muddy water; Mr. Jescavage said that Chevalier had recommended running a hose for 24 hours to see if that would clear the mud out. Mr. Garrett pointed out that the mud was already in the hot water system. It was noted that the water at the new town garage was very hard; a water softener should be installed in order to protect the longevity of the water system. The Selectboard instructed Mr. Garrett to run the hose as suggested, when a warm day was available. Mr. Clark raised his concerns about the large exhaust fan as well, and about the significant frost on the interior of the personnel doors facing west.

The Selectboard emphasized the importance of keeping a log of all problems, especially with the overhead door issue. It was agreed that Mr. Jescavage would ask Mr. Pratt to attend a meeting on Monday, the 23rd, at 8 a.m., to be followed by a meeting with Chevalier Well & Drilling at 9 a.m.

Mr. Clark said that Mr. Jescavage should send a letter to the state, informing that the guardrails had been installed on the bridge on Woods Hill Road. Kathy Lavoie mentioned that she had been unable to see the lines in the new construction; Mr. Garrett thought it likely that mud had covered the lines because of farmers drawing manure.

8. Proposed Articles

a) Change Revote % from 5% to 20%

b) Appropriate Annual \$\$\$ for Highgate Arena

Mr. Lavoie asked to table these items until the full board was present to discuss it.

9. Quarterly Budget Discussion

Mrs. Fournier noted that some bills for general and highway were still to come, as well as 3 more payrolls. She expected the budget funds to be "close" but not overbudget. She presented proposed budgets for 2014, which included some items requested by the Zoning Administrator and listers. The Town Office Complex Maintenance line item would be over, because part of it had been used to purchase a lawn tractor. Also, they had budgeted for half of the cost of a new rack for the vault, but then unexpected expenses had put this line item overbudget. Overall, however, the budget would be on track. The VMRS contribution was expected to increase again in 2014.

Mr. Jescavage added that the current health insurance cards would be good until March 31st. The Town would be informed if the GIS updates would incur costs beyond the contract. Mr. Clark asked if the Woods Hill guard rails would get charged to the state, but Mr. Jescavage said that the project was already over the match. Mrs. Fournier added that the bill had already got out to Sheldon to recoup money from their part. Mr. Garrett added that they were about \$100,000 under the estimated cost.

After discussion about which fund would pay for the radios, Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to pay for the radios out of the contingency fund. Motion carried. Because the money for the hot/cold patch had not been used, the Selectboard discussed using it to offset taxes for the next year, or asking the voters if that money could be put toward another highway project.

10. Public Comment (reprise)

No public comment.

11. Correspondence

Mr. Jescavage presented a request from the VCDA to pay the yearly membership fee, and passed out the e-mail from David Pratt for the discussion in executive session.

12. Any Other Necessary Business

Mr. Garrett informed the board that the state was trying to implement a plan by which all town roads would have to have a stormwater permit and meet all state guidelines. Any ditching done at 5% would have to be stone-lined with a fabric bottom, and all new construction would have to have fabric in the roads, plus a certain amount of stone. If implemented, the plan would greatly increase Swanton's highway budget, and would likely bankrupt small towns with many hills, like Farfield and Montgomery. Canada and New York did not have to abide by these rules, which were intended to improve Lake Champlain, so Mr. Garrett felt it was simply a hardship on Vermont and unlikely to result in real improvement. Mr. Clark recommended attending the legislative breakfast to bring these concerns forward. Mr. Thompson agreed with Mr. Garrett that the situation was not equitable, and put the burden on the taxpayers, who were not causing the problems.

13. Upcoming Events

- a) December 18, 2013 @ 7 p.m. Planning Commission in Village Complex
- b) December 18, 2013 @ 7 p.m. JLB Body/Zoning Bylaws Public Hearing in Village Complex
- c) December 19, 2013 @ 6 p.m. Development Review Board Public Hearing in Town Office
- d) December 21, 2013 First Day of Winter (Shortest Day of the Year)
- e) December 24, 2013 Christmas Holiday Office Closed
- f) December 25, 2013 Christmas Holiday Office Closed
- g) January 1, 2014 New Year's Holiday Office Closed
- h) January 7, 2014 Next Selectboard Meeting @ 7 p.m. in Town Office

14. Executive Session

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thompson, to enter executive session at 9:05 p.m. for personnel and contracts. Motion carried.

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lavoie, to exit executive session at 10:00 p.m. Motion carried. No action taken.

15. Adjournment

Mr. Clark made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lavoie, to adjourn at 10:01 p.m. Motion carried.

Typed on December 20, 2013
Minutes by Yaasha Wheeler
Received and filed by:

Cathy Fournier, Swanton Town Clerk

Date