

DRAFT

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STRAFFORD SELECTBOARD

June 24, 2015

Members of the public body present: John Freitag, Stephen Marx, Toni Pippy, Brent Cadwell, Brian Johnson

Other active participants: Lisa Kendall, Town Clerk, Jennifer Brown, Herald of Randolph Reporter, Jon MacKinnon, Road Foreman, Janet Hardy, Peggy Thorp, John Linehan, Bob Bushway, Misty Caez, Tom Essex, Suzanna Liepmann, James Biota, Chris and Steve Gex,

Meeting called to order in the Town Office at 6:00 p.m.

1.) Citizen Concerns:

Peggy Thorp and John Linehan from the Our Lady of Light Church came in to make sure that drop inlets (DI) designed to remove water from the road would be installed when the Linton Bridge is replaced in South Strafford. One of the drop inlets needs to be installed by the Town near the junction of Mine Road and one near the bridge as part of the project. Peggy explained that to get the DI's on the plans a letter needs to be submitted by the Board to Kristin Higgins. Brent, who is the Selectboard point person on this project, said that he would make sure this would be done.

Misty Caez brought to the Boards attention that the sign for LaFluer Road has been stolen every time it is put up. There are a number of residents on this private road with health issues and her concern is that an ambulance if needed will not be able to find where they need to go. Road Foreman Jon Mackinnon expressed his frustration at the situation as well noting the time and expense to the Town in trying to keep a sign up at this location. He said a new sign was on order and that it would be installed when it arrived. The Board felt that having 911 addresses clearly marked was needed and efforts will be made to see what can be done to prevent the removal of the sign in the future.

2.) Correspondence:

Jane Prescott asking when the cell phone units along Rte. 132 would be activated. Stephen, the point person for the Board on this project, has and will continue to try to find out why these units that were supposed to be activated on January 2015 have not been. His research to date has found a lack of responsibility on the parts of those involved to finalizing part this project. It was suggested that if he does not get some action soon, this might be an ideal situation for Valley News columnist Jim Kenyon to look into.

A request for the use of the Common for the Children, Climate, and Faith Symposium, August 8TH and 9th was received. This is the third year of the symposium and there being no problems in previous years, the request was granted.

The Board received correspondence from Robert Murray, Tom Essex and Suzanna Liepmann, James Biota, Bob Bauer, and Sarah Root regarding the Elizabeth Mine solar project. These would be considered along with comment from the public when the project comes up later in the agenda.

3.) Minutes:

Brent moved and Brian seconded a motion to adopt the minutes of June 10th and June 17th. The June 10th minutes were changed to reflect the location of that meeting. Minutes were adopted unanimously with this change.

4.) General

Paving handicapped parking space at the Town House - John brought up the problem of repeated washouts

resulting in a slippery surface of pebbles on the driveway going up the hill. Representatives from the Town House Advisory Group were not able to be present at the meeting. The Board noted that funds for taking care of this problem were available from either the Mix Fund or George Brown Town House Fund. Jon Mackinnon will meet with Rocky Fuller to discuss what is needed. John noted that there will be a small paving project on the walkways at the gym and perhaps the paving could be tagged on with this project to save money.

Decision on request for letter of support for the solar project at the Elizabeth Mine Site -John had drafted a qualified letter of support for the Board to consider. Stephen moved that we approve the letter (see attached) and John opened discussion asking each Board member for their opinion before a vote would take place. Toni expressed mixed feelings noting that the Board still lacked information on the full impact of the project. She did indicate her support for the concept of the project but felt there should be revisions to the draft letter. Brian said at this point he was opposed to a letter of support and questioned the value of the project for the town. Brent was in favor of the project and while he too felt more information was needed felt that the mine site was not suitable for other uses and the cap had been designed with the possibility of a solar site in mind. Stephen who has had solar power at his home for over 20 years, noted that he's had no problems even when a panel had accidentally been cracked. He indicated his support as well. John talked about how a Selectboard member's responsibility was to make the best decision for the overall good of the town. He said the last time he was on the Board he voted in favor of moving the Town Garage out of the village and across the street from his home, because it was the right thing to do to get the machinery and diesel fumes out of the village even though it would have a negative impact on his own property. John noted that the solar farm project is not a town project but a private venture on private land that could not realistically be used for any other purpose. While the exact amount is still not known, there will be a positive contribution to the Town in terms of municipal taxes and overall benefit in helping to address the problems of climate change. John then opened the floor for comments. Those in attendance, including Tom Essex and Suzanna Liepmann and James Biota urged the Board not to sign the qualified letter of support at this time and to wait for more information before taking action. The Board then discussed making changes to the draft letter. It was felt that more time was needed to make these changes. Stephen withdrew his motion. Brent made a motion and Brian seconded to postpone a decision on a letter of support for the project until our next meeting on July 8. All voted in favor of this motion.

Solar project information on our website – Toni suggested and the Board agreed to post information about the Elizabeth Mine Solar Project on the Town's website.

Dog licenses and body camera request - The Board reviewed with the input of Janet Hardy and Lisa Kendall the dogs that still needed to be licensed and rabies vaccinations confirmed. We are down to only one or two dogs and a final follow-up attempt will be made before the Board turns the matter over to our current Dog Officer Ed Eastman.

The status of the new kennel was also discussed. Donated parts are at the Town Garage and Stephen and Brian will follow-up with Brent. Once a new kennel is built Janet Hardy has offered to again take over as Dog Officer. This is something Ed Eastman is very much in favor of. Ed after a recent unpleasant experience with a dog owner has purchased a body camera to record difficult interactions. He felt that this would be a good idea so that the Board would know some of things he has to go through as well as to provide a record of his own actions. The cost of the camera which he purchased on his own was \$280. There was some question regarding the legality of the use of body cameras. The feeling was that this was an acceptable practice for Town enforcement officers. John will follow-up with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. The Board decided not to directly reimburse Ed for the camera. It did approve of Ed drawing 6 months of the stipend for the dog officer for the time he has served this year. This amounts to \$250.

Solid Waste follow-up - trash/recycling /GUVSD / town generated trash - The new law takes effect on July 1st. Durkee Rubbish Removal is making adjustments in their operation to comply with the new law. John will follow-up on making sure town recreation areas have containers for recyclables as working with the town

buildings to make this transition. Per the decision at the last meeting the Town will be switching back to Durkee Rubbish Removal. Brent brought up the idea of perhaps using a dumpster for both school and town trash. It was decided that over the next six months we would closely monitor the situation and review our options at the end of the year. John reported that he had not yet heard back from the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste District on their investigations into the current value of the permitted but unopened landfill site the District owns in Hartland and for which the Town continues to make bond payments. This will continue to be on our agenda until answers are provided.

Budget review - Lisa provided the Board with the budget figures as of the end of May. To date things seem to be overall on target. There is no word yet on possible FEMA reimbursement for extra work paid for the Town that needed to be done last year. Paperwork was submitted months ago and Lisa will check with FEMA to see what the current status is.

Barrett Hall Generator grant – Brent reported that we did not get the grant we had applied for to replace the generator. It was reported that the current generator has been repaired and is working.

DRB alternate appointment - At the request of Terry Garrison, Chair of the Development Review Board (DRB), Kip Lindsey was appointed as an alternate. She does not replace any sitting alternate, but is an additional appointment. Brent moved and Brian seconded a motion to appoint Kip Lindsey as an alternate to the DRB. All approved.

5.) Highways and Equipment Bridge updates - Jon reported on the current status. Roads continue to be graded and washouts from our heavy rains this year dealt with. Some mowing has already been done to deal with invasive plants. More mowing will continue. The Bridge on Dodge Road has been completed. Work on Farley Bridge is continuing despite some high water for this time of year. Jon updated the Board on the need for a new guard rail at the Old City Falls Bridge due to an accident that occurred there earlier this year. This may help pay for the overall cost which is estimated at \$6,400. Jon would like to use the company F R Lafayette, Inc. who has done other guardrails in town. A question was raised from the floor whether this should go out to bid. Jon explained that Lafayette is one of the few companies region wide that does this work and they have provided good service to the Town in the past. The Board had no objection to him proceeding on this matter.

Jon Mackinnon vacation request -The Board approved a vacation request for Jon for the week of July 6. Brent will work out with Jon what needs to be done that week and will check in with the crew each day.

6.) Other

Toni made a motion to adjourn and Brian seconded. All approved and the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Next Meetings:

Regular Board Meeting at Town Office on July 8, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Regular Board Meeting at Town Office on July 22, 2015 at 6 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Toni M. Pippy

Draft Letter

To Whom it may concern,

The Strafford Selectboard has been asked by Dori Wolfe of Wolfe Energy for a letter of support regarding her proposed large scale solar project at the Elizabeth Mine Site. The Selectboard has heard numerous comments regarding the project and has held a Special Meeting attended by over 70 citizens at which more information was provided and citizens given the chance to voice their questions, concerns, and/or support. Making presentations at that meeting besides the developers, were representatives from Green Mountain Power, and our State Representatives. (Attached are the minutes from that meeting).

It is clear there are still unanswered questions as well as concerns, especially by those in the area most affected by the project. While we reserve the right to change our opinion once we see the completed project submission, the Strafford Selectboard, based on what we know at this time, supports the concept of Wolfe Energy creating a solar farm at this site.

We look forward to more information and our chance to participate fully in the 248 process. We especially are interested in mitigating, where possible, the impact of the project on those living closest to the site. We also feel strongly that given the level of interest, the 248 public hearing on the project, that is required to be held in the county of the project, should take place in Strafford.