

Mt. Vernon Selectboard Minutes

January 18, 2021

Board Members Present: Sherene Gilman, Paul Crockett, Mac Hardy (Chair)

Support Staff & Guests Present: Kerry Casey, Melanie Knox, Ron and Mark (TV Crew)

Call to Order. Chairman Hardy called the Selectboard meeting to order at 7 pm.

Additions/Adjustments to Agenda. An Executive session will take place at 7:10 and the following items were added to the agenda: 14a. Grant money to non-town entities; 14b. Ordinance review and governance committee; and 14c. Risk management and on-line managers.

Motion and Discussion on Accepting Minutes from 1/4/2021.

Selectman Gilman motioned to accept minutes as written from 1/4/2021 Selectboard meeting. 2nd by Selectman Crockett. Vote Unanimous.

FEMA Discussion. FEMA money was received thru a grant for road repairs from a washout that took place in 2017. There is carryover money in the amount of \$117,066.94. Discussion regarding the status of the remaining funds and whether they should be held separately or put into the capital improvement road fund. This is all pending FEMA's outcome. There is a chance that monies may have to be paid back to FEMA -so the account must remain opened. Treasurer Casey reported that all FEMA monies were spent appropriately. Selectman Gilman asked if the extra money spent on paving should come from the capital improvement fund or the FEMA money. More discussion to come under contract section of agenda.

At 7:13 the Selectboard went into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. At 7:33 Executive Session ended and the regular Selectboard meeting resumed. There was no vote nor were any decisions made. The issue was resolved.

Budget Planning Discussion. Selectboard members discussed a variety of ways to tackle the budget process. They decided that they would take a "first pass" through the budget together and deal with the line items that were staying the same, requesting zero budget and using carryover, etc. Treasurer Casey stated the bottom line is that budgets need to hold steady and keep to status quo or less. Contract expenditures will impact how much funding is available for other sections of the budget. More discussion on February 1st meeting. Census data will be coming out April 1, 2021 to the States which will impact cost sharing expenditures to a variety of organizations. Melanie will reach out at appropriate time.

Cottle Hill Bridge. Chairman Hardy asked the Road Commissioner to come up with figures on cost of upgrading the Cottle Hill Bridge. This needs to be discussed with Engineers from the State of Maine. The report on the bridge is problematic. One of the steel beams is bent; there is a crack in the

structure; and the beams are set in, so you do not know how rusted they have become and so forth. Chairman Hardy stated that if the bridge repairs cost \$500,000, bonding would be required.

Discussion on Residency Policy for Committees. It was determined that if an individual is a non-resident but owns property in town, there is no problem with them Chairing a committee. There is a problem with an individual that is neither a resident or property owner and lives in an adjoining town. If they are pushing for a bond, for instance, there may be some local people who grew up here asking, “why are they pushing for money from Mt. Vernon?”

ACTION: Chairman Hardy asked Selectman Gilman to draft a policy about being a chair or treasurer for a committee or board for review by the Selectboard and she agreed to bring a draft to the February 1, 2021 meeting.

Closing Winter Roads to Maintenance.

ACTION: Selectman Crockett motioned to close Moore Hill Rd to Transfer Station driveway to the North Taylor Road; 34 Cottle Hill Road to 267 Cottle Hill Road; and 2284 Echo Lake Road to Mt. Vernon town line. 2nd by Chairman Hardy. Vote Unanimous.

Recycling Tonnage and Christmas SS Problem. Discussed during budget warrant section.

Road Commissioner Road Plowing Cottle Hill North End Request. Chairman Hardy and the Road Commissioner have met twice regarding issues with current contract. The contract states that, “a minimum of 1 loader and 5 trucks all capable of plowing and sanding -of the 5 trucks 4 should have plows and wings and sanding capabilities.” The problem identified is that the 1-ton truck is the only truck that can be used. However, when loaded with sand, its 3 cubic yards and the contract does not cover that. The Road Commissioner has agreed to do it but wanted an additional \$4500 added to the contract to include that truck. There is money in the capital improvement fund to cover the cost. The other issue identified with the contract is previous contracts say that you only must open the road to bare tar, 3 ft from the center line either way. The current contract says the roads must be bare from shoulder to shoulder from edge of tar to edge of tar. This requires more plowing and sanding. They are currently sanding at a 9 to 1 ratio -more than what the state recommends.

Special Town Meeting. Treasurer Casey suggested that there was a need to hold a special town meeting as she needs to appropriate more money for elections due to Municipal Accounting. Additionally, there is a need to expend money received from a grant to non-town committees. An example would be Neighbors Driving Neighbors wanting a portion of the PPE grant. Although the money is in the budget, it cannot be expended because Neighbors Driving Neighbors is an outside, non-town committee MMA has advised Treasurer to hold funds until next summer or to hold a special town meeting. More discussion to come.

Contract Mileage Discussion on 2020-2021 Plowing Extension Year. The new contract shows 47.48 miles. The old contract shows 46.45 miles. This is a difference of 1.03 miles.

ACTION: Selectman Hardy will discuss with Road Commissioner.

Off Road Plowing Contract Suggestions for Upcoming Contract bids. Selectman Crockett spoke with Off Road Plowing Contractor who feels like the contract is more of a maintenance job. The contract needs to be clear about maintaining the sidewalks and walkways. When he bid on the contract, he thought he committed to plowing, not checking the stairs at each town building. Chairman Hardy suggested rewriting the contract, so they are just plowing and hire a system wide janitor for all the town buildings. This would include shoveling, sanding etc. -a Town Handyman for the Library, Community Center, Town Office, Fire Station. Selectman Gilman and Crockett agreed. Selectman Crockett suggested putting 500 pounds of salt in the budget and meter it out to the town buildings. Selectboard will revisit at next meeting and discuss possible job duties. It will be part of the budget as well, so would require a vote. The Off-road contract is 3 years, and the On-road contract is 3 years with 1 optional year.

ACTION: Chairman Hardy will review contracts on road plowing and see what can be put into a job description for a Handyman. 2nd by Selectman Crockett. Vote Unanimous.

Request on how to get Energy Innovation Act on Town Warrant. Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act -putting a tax on oil companies and their products to discourage the use of oil vs clean energy products. Selectman Gilman stated that the purpose of putting on warrant is to show support for clean energy. Chairman Hardy gave Randy 2 options. (1) Citizen Petition needing roughly 10% of last gubernatorial election; or (2) you can approach Selectboard with the idea and ask to be on the warrant. Selectman Gilman thought that was a fair response and added that a petition would follow existing protocol and be consistent.

Cable Franchise Renewal Contract. Currently past the renewal date. Selectman Crockett requested information and has not received it.

ACTION: Selectman Crockett will get update this week and distribute via email to Selectboard members. Will add to agenda and discuss on February 1st meeting.

Ordinance Review Committee: Discussion regarding electronic vs paper as it relates to ordinances. Sue Herman, Chair of Ordinance Committee, asked if there was an update of ordinances passed last year electronically? Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard completed that work and Melanie will follow up with him. Actual content changes may require that it go to Town Meeting but editing and formatting is not an issue. Susan informed Selectboard that small changes had passed last year. Selectboard will see if the changes were made. Reference Land Use Ordinance orange book.

Governance Committee. Chairman Hardy asked if the Governance Committee would be reconvening and if the Selectboard was going to address appointed vs elected positions, setting office hours, and considering a Town Manager position. He discussed with Sue Herman who advised that it was the

Selectboard that could not decide what to do about appointing or electing, so the Governance Committee did not address that issue. Selectman Gilman thinks there is a strong case for looking at an appointed position there as well as the treasurer because then they are hired and report to the Selectboard or CEO. This builds continuity among all positions. The best way to achieve that is to look at appointed and that is just a step toward eventually Mt. Vernon having to go to a Town Manager type position because of more and more state mandated things coming along. Chairman Hardy stated that if the Selectboard decided to pursue that, because elections are several days before town meeting, it would have to be put on this year's warrant that the next election would automatically revert. Selectman Crockett stated that it would start when the current 2-year term ends. That is one approach. The other approach would be to go right to a town manager. Two ways to get to similar solution. Chairman Hardy wanted to have a couple public hearings dealing with town manager position to let town citizens voice their opinions, etc. Selectman Crockett suggested that if we are thinking about it, we should get the Governance Committee to look at the pros and cons. Selectman Gilman added -with the idea that Selectboard members would be open to pros and cons of appointed vs elected.

Risk Management Online Courses. There are a multitude of courses available. Most deal with the Fire Department and Rescue, etc. They need managers to manage people that take these courses. Chairman Hardy volunteered the Fire Chief and himself. Treasurer Casey reminded Chairman Hardy not to forget June Cauldwell -you can name or appoint others for different groups.

TREO. Selectman Crockett is waiting for the TREO representative to explain to him what features we are currently paying for. The server was updated last year, so ready for next steps. Heather and Amanda saw the demo and are not interested in using it. Selectman Crockett is researching and will report back to Selectboard. TREO is not going to be supporting or selling the version we have any longer. They want us to upgrade. Amanda said she will type up her grievances about what she saw so that Selectman Crockett can go back to TREO. He will be working on this issue this week.

Savage Computers Contract. Nate is currently working for the Town Office, Fire Department, and library. Considering developing contract as town wide. Nate wants to do launch new website ASAP and Selectman Crockett will send us the new link when fixes have been made. Selectman Crockett suggested we renew annual contract. Selectman Gilman asked what is he thinking for overall amount with holistic view of town? Selectman Crockett will provide information so Selectboard.

Motion and Adjourn.

At 8:55 Selectman Gilman motioned to adjourn. 2nd by Selectman Crockett. Vote Unanimous.