

Mt. Vernon Selectboard Minutes
January 4, 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. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hardy at 7:02 pm.

Additions/Adjustments to Agenda. Chairman Hardy asked to add the following items: Item #5 Making the Broadband Group an official Town committee as well as the Economic Development Committee. Item #6d The Spectrum contract is due for renegotiation of the franchise agreement.

Motion & Discussion on Accepting Minutes from 12/21/2020.

ACTION: Selectman Crockett motioned to accept minutes from 12/21/2020 Selectboard Meeting with no changes. Selectman Gilman 2nd the motion. Unanimous vote to accept minutes.

Broadband Group to become an official town committee: Selectman Gilman advised selectboard that the Broadband Group was formed out of a comprehensive plan, working as a unit, and representing the Town of Mt. Vernon. The Town has signed an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the group as well.

Motion by Selectman Crockett to make the Broadband Committee an official town committee and as such can appoint the membership.

Treasurer Casey asked about criteria to become a committee. Selectman Gilman stated that a committee must serve the broad needs and citizens of the town. The committee members will have to be appointed and sworn in. The responsibilities of a town committee will be outlined and distributed to the various committees in the future.

2nd by Selectman Gilman. Vote was unanimous.

Economic Development Committee.

Selectman Crockett motioned that the Economic Development committee be recognized as an official town committee and will receive information about their roles and responsibilities as a committee.

2nd by Selectman Gilman. Unanimous vote.

Contracts for Review (3):

Off Road Plowing. Would like to get current contractor, Brett Roberts, input as well as any recommendations he has for the selectboard relative to his plowing contract.

ACTION: Selectman Crockett will reach out to Brett for information and share with Selectboard members.

Snowplow for Main Roads. Need to review the contracts. Mileage cost has increased. Mt. Vernon has more miles of road than any of the surrounding towns. Any ideas about keeping costs down?
ACTION: Chairman Hardy spoke with Lee and Sons regarding their contract and they have agreed to send us information on increased costs they have experienced. They will send recommendations to the Selectboard ASAP.

Savage Computers – Nate Savage

ACTION: Paul will speak with Nate regarding renewal of his contract with the town of Mt. Vernon, get any feedback, and update the Selectboard ASAP.

#6d Addition – Spectrum Contract. It is time to renegotiate the contract franchise fees with Spectrum.

ACTION: Selectman Crockett will review past emails on this topic and send out to Selectboard members to discuss at next meeting.

Budget Request from Belgrade Lakes Dam Committee. Mt. Vernon has received notification of their share for the annual cost to the town from the Belgrade Lakes Dam Committee. With 7% shore frontage and over 5.4 miles of frontage within the Belgrade chain, Mt. Vernon's share is \$2944.62.

Budget Process Discussion/Zoom with Budget Committee. Selectman Hardy asked Katie Farrin, Chairman of the Budget Committee, where they would like to start. He advised them that Melanie would be sending out budget requests to the various committees and boards with a due date for return of February 1st. He read aloud a draft of the letter that will be going out. Selectman Crockett asked about the FICA line item to be included in budgets. In past years, FICA may have been forgotten. That is why we are requesting each board/committee/department to add that figure in as a line item in their budgets. The new paid leave law also came up. Treasurer Casey was asked if she would calculate this figure for all budgets? Treasurer Casey explained that the various boards/committees/departments will have to know that information. One hour of leave time is earned for every 40 hours worked up to a total of 40 hours annual leave for any qualified employee. The most any budget would be paying is 40 hours per qualified employee. Qualified employees must work at least 32 hours/week. Selectman Gilman asked if Treasurer Casey could generate a list identifying eligible employees so that information can be shared with the various groups to use in budget development.

ACTION: Treasurer Casey will generate a list of departments that will be affected, and they will be notified.

Budget Committee Chair Farrin suggested another piece might be to keep a separate list of eligible employees so Mt. Vernon can track how much money is being expended in paid leave. Selectman Gilman agreed and suggested treating paid leave as its own separate budget line like FICA. Town level, not department level.

ACTION: Treasurer Casey will keep a spreadsheet of employees eligible for paid leave time.

Selectman Hardy suggested a schedule be created for budget meetings, etc. A letter will be going out to committee/board/department chairs tomorrow requesting that budgets be submitted no later than February 1. Selectman Gilman stated that due to COVID, most meetings will be held via zoom. The committees will not be submitting budgets in person. Roads, fire/rescue, and the clerks. These will be the only 3 budget groups that will be meeting via zoom and should be added to the schedule. Budget Chairman Farrin shared her spreadsheet format for Budget for use in the process. Budget and Committee and Selectboard will meet April 5 via zoom to present their recommendations.

ACTION: Budget Chairman Farrin will send Melanie the budget electronically for distribution to the Selectboard members.

Selectman Crockett reminded folks that minimum wage has increased, so there may be a last-minute adjustment to incorporate into existing budgets. Treasurer Casey has a call into MMA to see if we could be considered exempt. Selectman Hardy asked if we want to officially move towards hourly wages for everyone or continue with some being salaried. Last year the Town voted to go hourly, which went into the Town Warrant. The Town Clerk of Mt. Vernon is currently the only salaried position. An agreement was made with the Town Clerk to record hours worked. The Independent Budget Committee was aiming towards making all positions hourly. Selectman Hardy has spoken with the Town Clerk and learned that she is required to start work early some mornings to prepare and submit weekly DMV reports and that time needed to be allotted for that. Selectman Crockett suggested that it was something the Selectboard needs to think about. Not as much a Selectboard decision as it is a management decision. The Town Clerk reports to the whole town -Selectboard is not her boss. We will try to set policy and include in warrant, but still more discussion to take place. Selectman Gilman explained that essentially the Town Clerk position was re-elected. It went into the Town Warrant as an hourly position but was never converted from salary. Selectman Hardy suggested that the Selectboard, as a committee, based on number of hours the office is opened, needs to revisit this issue. Selectman Gilman stated that the Budget Committee, last year, asked the Town Clerk to help in that area by supplying documentation about expectations etc. as well as a time study. Once the Selectboard receives that information, it will help inform them how to move forward. Treasurer Casey suggested assessing the Deputy Clerk position and how that time was being used as well. Selectman Crockett suggested that we should be able to sit down with Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk and have that discussion. Selectman Gilman stated that Treasurer Casey was also asked to do a time study, including documentation, roles, responsibilities, and duties. Treasurer Casey has completed that task and submitted the information to the Selectboard as requested. The same information is needed from the Town Clerk. Chairman Hardy stated that Melanie would be sending budget planning schedule and letter out tomorrow. Treasurer Casey asked that something be added about if you don't respond to request by February 1, your budget will be the same as last year. Emphasize how very important to submit budget timely so you don't have to use same info as last year. Due to COVID19, signatures are not required, only if additional money is requested. The Selectboard agreed to waive the signature gathering for Petitions for the historical submitters and no increase.

Channel 7 Slideshow Update. Selectman Gilman updated the PowerPoint presentation slides for Channel 7. Selectman Crockett asked about a group photo for the Selectboard so the individual photos could be deleted. Other suggestions included adding other resources and affiliations to the slide show. Opportunities and upcoming activities should be considered as well as **CALL TOWN OFFICE FIRST** slide encouraging folks to call before coming to drop off or pick up any documents they need to process.
ACTION: Melanie will review and update the PowerPoint slides.

Other Business:

Mail slot and bulletin board for entry. Ben put stakes out last Thursday and rented trench digger and laid conduit next to it for measure. Conduit is not laid, but there is an open trench. Chairman Hardy showed him where to install the mail slot. Some issues due to siding and wiring but thinks it can be done. The bulletin board is being made and will be delivered shortly.

Generator connection to Community Center Discussion. Chairman Hardy met with CMP engineer, Steve Malin and Ed Ketch, who do electrical work for the Mt. Vernon Fire Department, and Chief Dunn to discuss the generator at the fire station being hooked into the Community Center. We will know by Wednesday what the cost factor will be. If they (CMP) pick up cost of wiring, Steve and Ed thought it may cost between \$1000 and \$2000. The Question becomes is CMP going to do that? CMP usually does not like private lines installed within their system -so they will sometimes pick-up cost. More information to come.

Chairman Hardy spoke with RSU #38 Superintendent regarding the school installing a generator and Town of Mt. Vernon splitting the cost (next year's budget). Superintendent was very enthusiastic. Long term goal would be to have an agreement with RSU #38 to utilize school as a shelter if needed. Selectman Gilman stated that because the building is not town property, we would need to enter into an agreement with RSU 38. They own title to it. Town liability would have to be on file for use by the town on such an occasion. Selectman Crocker suggested that a generator for that building would cost approximately \$50,000 to \$80,000. If we engineered in a way -we could explore both angles. May need to be all or nothing.

The short-term goal would be to utilize the community center as a warming place for a hot meal -not a shower or overnight facility. Chairman Hardy advised the Selectboard that currently we do not have an emergency manager on board. Fire Chief Dunn said it was held by Lee Dunn. Lee doesn't want to continue. This position is generally a fire department employee, or someone appointed through the fire department.

ACTION: Chairman Hardy will speak with Jason Beckler, Assistant Fire Chief, to see if he is willing to take on the responsibility of Emergency Manager.

Printer Update. Printer quote was received. Selectman Crockett asked for merger of the two printer contracts, but contract price is the lowest it can be. The quote was a good enough deal to purchase the machine at a cost of \$759 and pay an additional \$260 in annual maintenance fees.

Action: Selectman Crockett motioned to accept bid as written to buy the printer outright for \$759 and pay \$260 annual maintenance fee and asked Chairman Hardy to sign the contract. Selectman Gilman 2nd the motion. Unanimous vote. Selectman Crockett will email vendor and have him send paperwork.

County Commissioners. Clyde Dyar currently serves the Town on the County Board and will continue. Chairman Hardy will check deeper regarding town representation.

PPE Grant. PPE Grant submitted by Alex Wright was finished by Treasurer Casey submitting the 3rd quarter report. It was not received by DHHS. Kerry contacted Jeanie Garza at DHHS and let her know that it was originally submitted on 12/14/20 and submitted a 2nd copy.

Motion and Adjourn.

Selectman Gilman motioned to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 8:34 p.m. Selectman Crockett 2nd the motion. Unanimous vote.