

**TOWN OF CLARENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
REGULAR**

October 26, 2020

Attendees

Select Board:

Mike Klopchin, Chair

Bob Bixby, Clerk

Cash Ruane

Robert Congdon

Rick Wilbur

Heidi Congdon, Treasurer

Katie Rock, Board Secretary

Kelly Jakubowski, Delinquent Tax Collector

1. Call to Order

Chairman Klopchin called the meeting to order at 6:02PM.

2. Agenda additions/deletions

Selectman Congdon motioned to add a discussion about the Chippenhook Cemetery under New Business, Selectman Bixby seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Selectman Congdon motioned to approve the Regular Meeting minutes from October 12, 2020, subject to any corrections. Selectman Wilbur seconded for discussion. The Board, finding no errors, passed the motion 4-0.

4. Highway

Road Commissioner Report- Last week the Road Crew started grading East and West Tinmouth Road as well as Bump Road. The Kingsley Covered Bridge is back open after a VTrans inspection gave the Town the "okay." So far, the Sheriff's Department has not been able to locate the perpetrator. The description of the box truck that went through the bridge, was a large white one, with NY state license plates. Selectman Bixby asked if the damaged 4x4 at the end of the bridge should be replaced. Cash said there was no structural damage to it; he is more concerned about the guide wire connected from the bridge to the tree. That tree appears to be sloping down the hill. The Road Commissioner fears if the tree goes down, it will take out that corner of the bridge. Cash has already spoken with the landowner and they have agreed to let the Town do some tree work. Chairman Klopchin advised Cash to contact a tree removal company and take care of it.

5. Approval of Select Board Warrants

All new warrants and warrants previously signed by the designated Select Board Member were approved and signed by all Select Board Members.

6. Guests

N/A

7. Public Comments

N/A

8. Old Business

Hazard Mitigation Plan- Selectman Wilbur motioned to discuss the approval of an updated Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and Selectman Ruane seconded for discussion. Chairman Klopchin expressed that he still did not quite understand why the Town has to do it, but if the funds are available from RRPC, maybe it would be smart to do it now, so there's less expense to the Town later. For an updated version of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, FEMA would cover \$10,150 of it, and the Town match would be \$2,500. Selectman Congdon feels this kind of Plan is a carrot on the stick from the State and just giving someone work. Selectman Bixby said if anything, just do the update version, not a completely new one. The motion to approve updating the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan did not pass (1-3). Selectman Congdon said he would like Stephanie from RRPC to come down to a meeting and convince the Board why the update is needed. Chairman Klopchin asked Katie to email her in such a way that lets Stephanie know that the Board is against it.

9. New Business

Approve and Sign Letter of Intent- Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program- Selectman Congdon motioned to have the letter of intent to be signed by all Board members, Selectman Bixby seconded the motion, and all approved. The Grants-in Aid program provides funding for municipalities to implement best management practices in compliance with the MRGP. The letter of intent is an initial agreement/application between the Town and the Program.

Chippenhook Cemetery- Board Secretary, Katie, explained the complaint she received from a lady about the Chippenhook Cemetery. The lady had visited her parent's grave 3 years ago and noted dead trees, hanging over it, and the shade from it had encouraged moss growth on the headstone. She had recently visited again, and noticed that the trees hadn't been cut down. Katie, Heidi, and Selectman Congdon did a site visit. They found the stone, she was referring to, was underneath two trees, but the trees were not dead. Selectman Congdon asked Katie to email the picture of the headstone to confirm if that was what the lady was referring to. Katie, Heidi and Robert also noted that the mowing contractors, Johnsons Refuse, did do the 10 hours of extra work as authorized, and it was a job well done. Selectman Congdon expressed that there is still a lot more work that could be done. There are some saplings growing up around several graves. The Western perimeter, as well as the Northern, needs to be significantly cut back. Chairman Klopchin asked Katie set up a meeting with Johnson's to show them the additional work the Board would like them to do and use up the remaining 15 hours of additional work that was authorized.

10. Town Officer's Report

Kelly Jakubowski, Delinquent Tax Collector – Delinquent Tax Collector, Kelly Jakubowski, reported that she has decided not to do any tax sales this year due to COVID-19, because of the financial toll it has taken on residents in Town. She explained, though, she is working on getting two properties taken care of that have accrued back taxes.

The first property she has focused on is the Morton property. It is a one- acre parcel, with about \$16,000 in back taxes. The owners have not been located in the last 15 years, nor any heirs. Kelly has been in contact with the Town's legal counsel and they have recommended the only solution that seems to be appropriate is, the Town put it up for sale. Whoever purchased it would be issued a quick-claim deed, but there is a 15-year stipulation. If the owners came back, they do have the legal right to take their property back. If the owners do not claim it after 15 years, the Town can issue a clean title to the new owner. Kelly thought the best solution would be to see if the abutter of this parcel was interested in absorbing it. It's currently surrounded by Casella's property. The Board encouraged Kelly to keep working with the Town's attorney and proceed with this property.

The other property is Marianne Frederick's on Cold River Road. There are delinquent taxes on that property from FY17 through FY21. Previous to that, the taxes had been abated in

2015, from all the back taxes from FY09-16. It is a 2-acre parcel with a house and barn on it. The Board had removed an old trailer from it years ago. The property is eroding into the river and the danger is that the structures could potentially fall into the river. The building has asbestos siding on it, which is an environmental hazard. Selectman Congdon remembered that the contractor that removed the trailer was interested in removing the other two buildings at a reasonable price. Heidi recommended the Board doing a site visit. Chairman Klopchin advised Kelly to spend the next 2 weeks, trying to get a hold of any family members to have them sign the property over to the Town. Then the Town will take down the buildings. Selectman Congdon thought that after the buildings are taken down, the Town could at least try to sell the land and not have the headache of owning the property. If the Town does have to own it then at least the town will have a clean property. Selectman Ruane advised getting estimates to see what it would cost to take down the two structures. Kelly will spend the next 2 weeks seeing what action can be taken on this property.

Kelly also reported that Jeffery Jalbert had owned an unlanded mobile home. The Vermont Housing Authority has ordered it to be destroyed. The taxes on it will have to go to the Board of Abatement.

Heidi Congdon, Treasurer – Heidi thanked Kelly for digging into those delinquents and thanked the Board for moving on them. Heidi provided the Board with an updated budget status now that they're through tax time. She turned over the delinquent taxes today to Kelly. This year's delinquents were at \$219,000, a significant decline from previous years, even in a pandemic year. She thanked the tax payers for their diligence in getting their taxes paid. Heidi is working on getting Vermont Digital to the Town Office to repair Kelly's computer. Heidi wanted to give Gloria Menard, Town Clerk, thanks and kudos for securing a \$5,000 grant for elections. Heidi had also heard that VTrans was not giving out paving grants this year, and instead split the 7M fund that the State uses to allocate grants, between all the towns in VT. The Town of Clarendon received \$36,453.20 as a result. The Board and Heidi scheduled budget meetings for FY22. Internal Auditors like to start reviewing the budget by January. They decided they would meet one hour before regularly scheduled Select Board meetings. The first one will be November 9 at 5 o'clock at the Town Hall. The public is encouraged to participate.

11. Select Board Member Concerns

Selectman Congdon and Bixby strongly encouraged Town residents to get out and vote in the upcoming presidential elections by next Tuesday (11/3). At this point it is recommended to drop off ballots or vote in person.

12. Adjournment

Selectman Congdon motioned to adjourn at 6:58PM, Selectman Bixby seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

SIGNED: Mike J. Klopchin Mike Klopchin, Chair

SIGNED: Robert Bixby Bob Bixby, Clerk