

TOWN OF CLARENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
REGULAR
July 12, 2021
Minutes

Attendees:

Select Board

Mike Klopchin, Chair
Bob Bixby, Clerk
Cash Ruane
Robert Congdon
Rick Wilbur

Heidi Congdon, Treasurer
Katie Nop, Secretary
William Chmielewski, PEG-TV
Gale LiCausi
Andrea McCormick
Carol Tashie
Dennis Duhaime
John Casella
Tom Fuller
Art Peterson
CJ Frankiewicz

Call to Order

Chairman Klopchin called the meeting to order 5:59PM.

Agenda additions/deletions

Selectman Ruane requested to add the paving grant and open paving bids to the agenda under Highway, Selectman Congdon seconded, and all members approved.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Selectman Congdon motioned to approve the June 28, 2021 Regular Meeting minutes and Selectman Bixby seconded. The motion passed unopposed.

Highway

Road Commissioner Report- The Road Crew has been getting Walker Mountain Road ready to pave. Roadside mowing is ongoing. The east side of Town is almost done, and the Crew is working towards getting the west side mowed. Chairman Klopchin received a complaint from a few residents who were wondering why the smaller dirt roads hadn't been mowed yet. He explained that the tar roads were higher priority and the Crew had been working on Walker Mountain Road ditching. Cash said they would be working on the west side of Town soon and will get to the small dirt roads. The Town took delivery of the new excavator today. The Board discussed how they would post the old one for sale. Selectman Congdon motioned to authorize posting the used excavator on Craigslist to receive the highest offer and finalize the sale at the next meeting, and Selectman Bixby seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Gorge Road Parking- Carol Tashie was present and spoke on how she got a parking ticket for parking on Gorge Road. She asked the Board to reconsider the parking ban, and to allow parking during the day, for folks who want to utilize the river. Selectman Wilbur responded by explaining that the ban was in place because of day time parking. It had presented real danger because of all the cars parked along the road. The Board relayed the history of Gorge

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Road parking and how the ban came to be. Selectman Congdon felt as one person on the Board, that they've just gotten Gorge Road parking under control and wasn't ready to loosen up the rules. Chairman Klopchin wondered if the Town could do some more research with who owns the land along the river and maybe the State can put in additional parking. Selectman Congdon suggested to Carol that she ask a resident of Gorge Road if she could park in their driveway so she could access the river.

Paving Bids- Cash received 3 paving bids for the Walker Mountain Road paving project. This paving project was awarded \$184,000 from the VTrans Town Highway Grant program. Cash explained that the important thing to note when reviewing the paving bids is the tonnage pricing. Walker Mountain Road is going to require more product to build up the shoulders that are presently banked the incorrect way. Selectman Congdon announced that Pike's reclaim square yard price was \$1.50 and asphalt was \$72.15; Wilk Paving reclaim square yard price was \$1.15 and asphalt was \$66.55. Fuller Sand & Gravel came in at \$1.25 for reclaim square yardage, and asphalt priced at \$65.90 a ton. The Board asked Cash what his opinion was on the pricing. Cash recommended going with the company that had the cheapest price per ton because of the nature of this project. Selectman Congdon motioned to go with Fuller Sand & Gravel's bid because of the tonnage pricing. Selectman Bixby seconded the motion and it passed unopposed. Selectman Congdon further motioned to approve the State of Vermont paving grant agreement with the award amount of \$184,000 and have the Chairman sign it. Selectman Wilbur seconded the motion and it passed 4-0. Gale LiCausi questioned which section of Walker Mountain was getting Paved. Cash confirmed that it would be from the intersection of Creek Road to East Tinmouth Road.

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.

Guests

Gale Licausi & Andrea McCormick- Casella's Act 250 permit concerns- Gale and Andrea were present to speak to their concerns about Casella's Act 250 permit changes. Gale stated that no one in Town was made aware of the site visit or prehearing that was held in June. She didn't think that any Town officials received paperwork or emails with notification of the changes. Gale listed some of the proposed changes to the crushing hours, blasting limits, and operating season. Andrea's concerns pertained to the blasting sounds, lack of the warning bell, and additional truck traffic. John Casella was present on behalf of Casella Construction to answer any questions or concerns. He said that for most blasts, he is at the quarry and they do sound the warning. If Andrea would like she can be called before each blast. John said that the changes in the permit will not add to the truck traffic. He explained that they have been preparing for the changes by installing noise cancelling technology in a lot of their equipment. Casella is more than willing to work with their neighbors to be as accommodating as possible. Gale questioned when the next meeting would be regarding Act 250 changes. John said that emails had just started regarding the scheduling of it but hoped before the end of July there would be a meeting in place. The Board and Gale requested that the meeting take place in Clarendon so that Town residents could attend. They asked to receive confirmation of the time and date of the follow up meeting so that they could attend.

Public Comments

N/A

Old Business

MRUUSD withdrawal discussion- Representative Art Peterson was present at the meeting to talk about the ongoing issues with Mill River Union High School. The School Board has their first in person meeting since the pandemic on July 21. Art would like the Select Board

members to attend. His concern is that the School Board members don't understand the aftermath that raising the BLM flag has caused. Aside from the issue of political division that it's caused, he worries that it will have financial implications to the tax payers of Clarendon. He believes that the School Board should have gone through a risk assessment, per their bylaws, before raising any flags. Art requested that if the Board members don't want to attend the meeting as a Select Board, they go as tax-paying individuals who are concerned for their children's education. Board Chairman, Mike Klopchin, asked his fellow Board members what their thoughts were on attending. Selectman Congdon abstained from the conversation as he stated "I administrate an institution that has reaped the benefits from Mill River's decision to raise the BLM flag and the fall out that it incurred (decreased enrollment) and my presence could have a polarizing effect on the meeting. For these reasons I have stayed out of the conversation." Selectmen Wilbur, Bixby, and Klopchin stated their unhappiness with the state of the High School and reiterated their belief that all lives matter. Selectman Ruane shared that he is disappointed with the quality of education that is coming out of the school and that change is needed. The Board left it with Art that if they were available, they would try to attend.

Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CLFRF) / ARPA - The Board asked Heidi and Katie if it was necessary to accept these funds since they are so restricted. Treasurer, Heidi, explained that she had been advised by VLCT, Sullivan Powers, and RRPC to accept the funds even if the Town was unsure how they would use them. The interest on the sum is unrestricted so if anything, the Town would make some money off of it. Heidi also said that she hopes once the State sees that a lot of the rural towns are unable to use the funds, they will loosen the restrictions. Selectman Congdon mentioned that he thinks this money will be similar to the grants that were made available to schools during the Coronavirus pandemic- you will have to claim funds, and then guidance will come out later on how to use it. Selectman Congdon motioned to accept the Town of Clarendon's allocation of CLERF from the US Treasury and sign the appropriate documents (Award Terms & Conditions, Assurances of Compliance with the Civil Rights Requirements) signed by the Chair, appoint Mike Klopchin, Chair of the Board, to be the authorized representative on behalf of the Town, and Katie Nop as the contact person on behalf of Clarendon. Selectman Wilbur seconded for discussion. Chairman Klopchin asked CJ Frankiewicz his opinion on the federal funds. CJ asked what the current interest rate was with the Town's bank and if the interest had to be given back if the money went unused. Heidi said that she would have to look up the interest rate, but confirmed that interest would not have to be handed back if the money was not used. After the discussion, the motion passed 4-0.

Kingsley Bridge lighting and fire-retardant options- Katie explained that she had reached out to VTrans for their estimates and options for lighting and fire retardant on the Kingsley Covered Bridge. They would be looking for a decision by September. The NOCHAR fire retardant coating and lighting was included in the original cost estimate. The Town would be responsible for the monthly power bills. Selectman Congdon motioned that the Town go with the original cost estimate that included NOCHAR and lighting; Selectman Wilbur seconded for discussion. Town resident, CJ, said that lighting on the bridge would be a complete waste- as headlights on a car should be sufficient. Selectman Bixby was hesitant to install lighting because of the monthly charge, as well as the aesthetics of it- he thought it would take away from the historic look of the bridge. Selectman Congdon amended his motion to install solar lighting instead and Selectman Wilbur seconded. After the Board discussed the pros and cons of solar, Selectman Congdon withdrew both his motions. Selectman Congdon motioned to go with the NOCHAR fire retardant and Selectman Wilbur seconded. Selectman Ruane asked about the maintenance of the fire coating. The Board was unsure whether there were any maintenance costs associated with it. The motion passed unopposed.

New Business

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UniFirst shop rags contract- Katie explained that the contract was for the rags used down at the Garage and there would be a monthly rent fee of about \$25 for the service. The agreement would be for three years. Selectman Congdon asked if that pricing was comparable to the Town just buying paper towels. Selectman Ruane explained that it would be about the same price but the rental rags were eco-friendlier and more convenient. Selectman Ruane motioned to approve the contract and have the Chairman sign the agreement, Selectman Bixby seconded. The motion passed unopposed.

Town Officer's Report

N/A

Select Board Member Concerns

Road Commissioner Ruane said that a few people were complaining about how far back the Crew is mowing the sides of the road. He wanted to remind them that they are mowing in the Town's ROW and it is always done for safety reasons. CJ questioned why they were doing roadside mowing near his house, where he thought the grass did not impede vision. Cash responded that its routine maintenance.

Selectman Bixby thanked the Road Commissioner for fixing the pot hole near Scott Brook. Selectman Wilbur warned the public about mowing grass into the roads- it is illegal and very dangerous for motorcycles. He will contact the Sheriff's Department to write tickets when they see it.

Executive Session- Personnel

Selectman Congdon motioned to enter in executive session at 7:55PM not to exceed 15 minutes, to discuss a personnel issue. Selectman Wilbur seconded and the motion passed unopposed.

Selectman Congdon motioned to come out of executive session at 8:22PM, Selectman Wilbur seconded and all members approved.

Selectman Congdon motioned to have the administrative assistant draft a notice to be enclosed in all employee's paychecks who have not yet signed the Personnel Policy acknowledgement form- to remind them to hand it in by July 31. Selectman Wilbur seconded, and all of the Board members approved.

Adjournment

Selectman Congdon motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:23PM. Selectman Wilbur seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

SIGNED:  Mike Klopchin, Chair

SIGNED:  Bob Bixby, Clerk