

TOWN OF CLARENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
REGULAR
July 26, 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
Zack Ames
Karen Ames
John McKenna

Call to Order

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

Agenda additions/deletions

Selectman Ruane motioned to add an executive session at the end of the meeting. Selectman Congdon seconded and all Board members approved.

Selectman Congdon extended his condolences to the Kennedy family with the passing of Tim Kennedy and asked for a moment of silence in honor of him.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Selectman Congdon motioned to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting on July 12, 2021. Selectman Bixby seconded, and the motion passed unopposed.

Highway

Road Commissioner Report- Road Commissioner, Cash Ruane, reported that roadside mowing is ongoing. The Road Crew will continue to do ditch work and riprapping on Hier Lane and Anderson Hill Road. Cash received multiple offers from individuals who were interested in purchasing the CAT 307 Excavator. The offers ranged from \$12,000 to \$24,000. Selectman Congdon motioned to authorize the road commissioner to sell the excavator for \$24,000, Selectman Bixby seconded, and all approved.

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

Karen Ames spoke about her concerns with Casella's Act 250 permit changes. She walks on Walker Mountain Road frequently and was concerned that the permit would allow for additional truck traffic. The Board assured her based on their understanding that it would not increase truck traffic. She requested her contact information be given to Casella so that she could stay informed of the process.

Public Comments

John McKenna was present to discuss and bring clarity on how the MRUUSD formed. He had heard that the Select Board was considering a non-binding article to be put on the ballot in March to ask Clarendon if they would like to withdraw from the district. John reminded the Board that he had been on the committee that reviewed whether forming the district would be feasible. Chairman Klopchin explained that the Select Board's initial displeasure with the district came when they realized that the School Board had the authority to appoint a representative on behalf of the Town of Clarendon. John commented that that is an issue the Select Board should have taken up with the State, not the district. John addressed the Select Board's distaste with the education tax rate continually going up. He reminded them that the Town was not promised a decreasing tax rate- just an initial cost savings, and a 4-year tax break incentive, starting with 8 cents. John clarified that nothing had been allegedly "snuck" in to get the voters' approval. All information on the merger had been posted at the appropriate locations and info had been mailed out. He explained that consolidation was inevitable, but at the time that they decided to merge, they had more control over the details, opposed to waiting for the State to consolidate them. John said that the merger put a lot of protections in for smaller schools which he stated "we can all agree that smaller schools are better for kids." Selectman Bixby agreed that it was his own ignorance in not understanding the law, with the whole School Director appointment process. The Board had minimal comment beyond that and thanked John for coming.

Old Business

Kingsley Bridge lighting options-Katie explained that she felt she didn't have a clear understanding of what the Board had decided on for lighting for the Kingsley Covered Bridge rehab. She wanted to confirm with the Board before letting VTRANS know. Some Board members had thought the conversation was tabled, while others thought they decided. Selectman Ruane motioned to not have lighting installed in the bridge and Selectman Bixby seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Katie thanked the Board and told them she would let VTRANS know their decisions on lighting and fire retardant.

Chippenhook Cemetery trees-Katie explained that an elderly couple had come in and wanted trees taken down near a family headstone. They came in the fall as well, and had requested them be removed. Last year the Board had said no. Chairman Klopchin was in the office when the couple was there and noted that the husband was concerned about the roots getting underneath the stone. The Board was worried they would set a precedent if they took trees down upon citizen's request, so they denied the request. Katie said she would let them know.

New Business

E911 Correction; Squier Road-Katie explained that there was a spelling error on the 911 maps. Squier Road is spelled Squire. She was notified by a member of the Squier family. She contacted the State and they said that it is an easy fix, they just need the Board's approval to make the change. Selectman Congdon motioned to correct the issue of spelling on Squier Road, Selectman Bixby seconded, and all members approved.

Approval of FY22 Tax Rate-The Treasurer and Listers went over the tax rate with a fine-tooth comb. The total homestead property tax rate is \$2.0779 and the non-residential tax rate is \$2.1361. More details on the tax rate are available at the Town Hall or by request from the Treasurer. Taxes are due Saturday, October 16, 2021. Selectman Congdon motioned to approve the FY22 tax rate, Selectman Wilbur seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Town Officer's Report

Approved August 9, 2021

Katie received a letter from an individual with the last name of Barbieri (from Wallingford), with information on a possible conflict of interest issue on the Mill River School Board. The Board asked that Katie send it to Clarendon's School Board reps and CC the chairman. The Board also requested that she ask for confirmation they received the email.

Select Board Member Concerns

The Board extended their heartfelt condolences to the Kennedy family with the passing of Tim Kennedy. Tim served the Town for many years and he will be greatly missed.

Executive Session

Selectman Congdon motioned to enter into executive session at 6:56PM to discuss personnel matters. Selectman Bixby seconded and the motion passed unopposed. Selectman Congdon motioned to come out of executive session at 7:28PM, Selectman Wilbur seconded, and all approved.

The Board discussed a few different personnel issues that are ongoing. They publicly reminded Cash to remind his employees to sign the Personnel Policy acknowledgment forms by the end of the work week. The other matters they discussed remain confidential.

Adjournment

Selectman Ruane motioned to adjourn at 7:30PM, Selectman Congdon seconded, and the motion passed 4-0.

SIGNED: Mike J. Klopchin Mike Klopchin, Chair

SIGNED: Robert Bixby Bob Bixby, Clerk