

**TOWN OF CLARENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**  
**REGULAR**  
**April 25, 2022**  
**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Select Board

Mike Klopchin, Chair

Bob Bixby, Clerk

Robert Congdon

Art Menard

Heidi Congdon, Treasurer

Katie Nop, Secretary

Gloria Menard, Town Clerk

William Chmielewski, PEG-TV

Matt Jakubowski, Fire Chief

Mike Pedone

John McKenna

Shanti McKenna

Janice McCoy

Jane Sarno

Marianne Stephen

Kate Taylor

Bob Harnish

Margie Southard

Ryn Gluckman

Tom Miles

Alicia Wuesthoff

Bex Aiken

Madison Aken

Art Peterson

**Call to Order**

Chairman Klopchin called the meeting to order at 6PM.

**Agenda additions/deletions**

N/A

Selectman Congdon motioned to move to the Inclusion Statement under Old Business as the next item on the agenda, Selectman Bixby seconded, and all Board members approved.

**Old Business**

*Inclusion Statement -*

Chairman Klopchin started the conversation off by stating that Governor Scott had signed a proclamation of inclusion back in May of 2021. A couple members of the Select Board had drafted a declaration of inclusion for the town based off of the governor's. Selectman Congdon read the statement aloud:

*"The Town of Clarendon formally condemns discrimination in all of its forms and welcomes all people who want to live and work and add richness to our town.*

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*Clarendon calls upon all residents to denounce prejudice, to openly acknowledge and address our own implicit bias and welcome and celebrate all people and continue to work together to ensure every individual can live freely, equitably, and express their opinions."*

Chairman Klopchin explained that some of the same verbiage was taken from the governor's proclamation. He asked if the public had any comments. Margie Southard said she thought it was a good statement and agreed with it. John McKenna read the last 3 paragraphs of the governor's proclamation aloud:

*"1. The State of Vermont formally condemns discrimination in all of its forms and welcomes all people who want to live and work and add richness to our State, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age, or disability and will protect these classes to the fullest extent of the law.*

*2. Let the second week of May be known as Inclusion Week to emphasize these ongoing efforts to make Vermont a more inviting state for all people.*

*3. I call upon all Vermonters to denounce prejudice, to openly acknowledge and address our own implicit bias and welcome and celebrate all people, of all races, colors, religions, national origins, sex, gender identity or expression, ages, disabilities, and continue to work together to ensure every individual can live freely, equitably, and express their opinions free from fear, intolerance and prejudice."*

John asked the Board why phrases about race, gender, and other identities were taken out. Selectman Menard said he didn't want to have groups listed because someone will be left out. Selectman Menard pointed out that topography identities are left out. For example, the term "flatlander" was not listed. Selectman Menard felt that if groups were not listed, no one is left out. John McKenna responded that it's not inclusive to not name historically marginalized groups. Madison Aiken agreed that the intent of this statement is to include marginalized identities. Selectman Menard said that he has spoken with a lot of people, and he has shown them the generalized town statement. Town residents that may not have supported the governor's inclusion statement, said that they could support the Board's proposed statement. Selectman Menard's fear was leaving out groups, and then coming back a month from now and having to edit it because someone was left out. Shanti McKenna questioned why the Select Board wouldn't adopt the governor's proclamation verbatim and why those marginalized groups were intentionally left out. Margie Southard commented that putting these identities at the fore front of our minds is bringing up a problem that she feels Clarendon does not have. Ryn Gluckman felt homophobia is a real issue in Clarendon and she experiences it on a regular basis. She explained that the groups listed in the governor's statement are protected identities by law and classes that are historically judged. She wondered if other towns who have adopted an inclusion statement dealt with the issue of having to add additional groups after the fact, because someone was left out. Her bet was that it wasn't an issue. Madison Aiken thought the Board should listen to someone with lived experiences who is a part of a marginalized group. Chairman Klopchin questioned why the identities need to be listed if the Board's statement that says "all," would encompass all those identities. Madison responded that listing those identities would mean that the town is learning and trying to accept the specific people that have been called out. Ryn Gluckman added that historically, "all" hasn't really meant "all." John McKenna spoke on the groups that were listed in the governor's proclamation; those groups have had to have legislation or court trial to tell them that they are all are equal, but it hasn't fixed the problem socially. He thinks listing them out is acknowledging that these groups have been discriminated against. "All" has not historically included all these groups. The discussion went on at length about the definition of "all."

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Margie Southard said the Select Board members were voted on by the town and they should be left with the decision on how the inclusion statement be worded. She knows groups of people that want this to be signed and lay the issue to rest. Chairman Klopchin asked Rep. Art Peterson what kind of discussion went on at the state level regarding the idea of inclusion. Art Peterson responded that the governor's proclamation of inclusion was signed in May of 2021, which would have been while the legislature was still on Zoom. He couldn't quite recall the discussion. Tom Miles mentioned that Bob Harnish was at the meeting and he was one of the founders of the equity and inclusion movement in the state. Bob Harnish reported that there are currently 44 towns that have adopted some type of inclusion statement. He said it's a good starting point and has drummed up a lot of conversation. The hope is that these ideas would be incorporated in policies, ordinances, and hiring practices.

Rep. Peterson suggested putting "historically marginalized groups" before all people (in the Board's proposed inclusion statement) as a way to compromise. The residents in favor of the governor's proclamation would like to see all the identities listed out. Margie Southard questioned if this inclusion statement is mandatory. Chairman Klopchin said no, it was at the public's request. Selectman Menard said he was from Connecticut and there was a lot of people of color and inclusion was never an issue. Ryn Gluckman said that this statement will speak to gay children and children of color. She needed this type of statement as a child.

Chairman Klopchin asked what the biggest setback was with the statement that the Select Board had come up with. John McKenna responded that it did not include or list out the marginalized groups.

Selectman Congdon's solution was to create an inclusion committee. Tom Miles mentioned that the proclamation by the governor should be used as a guide for municipalities. He said that the governor's proclamation is rather empty and leaves it up to each town to create their own unique statement. He suggested being thoughtful and spending more time on the document. Chairman Klopchin confirmed with the other Board members if they were okay with creating a committee- they were. Selectman Congdon said that the committee should consist of 7 members max, 2 of which would be Select Board members. Selectman Congdon motioned to: begin the process of creating an inclusion committee that would discuss and draft an inclusion statement; with the Board to begin accepting letters of interest from individuals who would like to be on the committee; with the intent to set a committee at the next Select Board meeting (5/9); with a target date of June 13<sup>th</sup> to have a statement ready for the Board to review. Selectman Menard seconded for discussion. Selectman Bixby said that he is neither for or against this idea. However, he has two black grandchildren and they have not experienced major discrimination. Selectman Menard said the issue is people who do not want change. The motion passed unopposed.

Marianne Stephan expressed her appreciation to the Board for listening to them. It's important to respect each other.

Selectman Congdon motioned a 5-minute recess at 7:01PM, Selectman Bixby seconded, and the motion passed unopposed.

\*The Board resumed following the agenda per normal\*

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Selectman Congdon motioned to approve both sets of minutes (Regular Meeting 4/11 and Site Visit 4/11), Selectman Bixby seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

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### **Highway**

*Road Commissioner Report-* The Road Commissioner was not present.

Treasurer, Heidi, reported that she is aware that the road crew has been working on grading the roads. Selectman Menard suggested purchasing "cross traffic does not stop" signs for the intersection of Walker Mtn Road and Creek Road. Selectman Congdon motioned to order two of those signs, Selectman Menard seconded, and the motion passed 3-0.

### **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**

N/A

### **Public Comments**

N/A

### **New Business**

*2022 LEMP adoption-* Emergency Management Director/Fire Chief Matt Jakubowski, said there were no changes from last year, except names and contact information. Selectman Menard motioned to approve the 2022 LEMP as presented and for the Chairman to sign off on it. Selectman Bixby seconded, and all approved.

*VSP2 Letter of Support-* Katie, Secretary, explained that this letter of support is for Bridge #10 to be considered in the State's bridge replacement program. It's located on Walker Mountain Road. Chairman Klopchin read the letter aloud. Selectman Congdon motioned that the Chairman sign it, Selectman Bixby seconded, and the motion passed unopposed.

*Rutland County Regional Dispatch Center-* The Select Board received a letter from Rutland Town that explained how the state will be discontinuing dispatch services by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and was requesting support from Clarendon and other Rutland County towns to participate in a regional effort by forming a local dispatch center. Clarendon's Fire Chief, Matt Jakubowski, explained that the details are vague at this point in the process. There's been talk about Rutland City PD taking over dispatch, possibly the Sheriff's Department. There are still a lot of unknowns but the need for a local dispatch center is great. The Select Board agreed. Selectman Congdon asked if Clarendon was to write a letter of support where it would be sent. Matt said he would find out. Selectman Congdon motioned to write a letter in support of creating a regional dispatch center, Selectman Menard seconded for discussion. Selectman Bixby asked Matt if there was any talk about Washington County dispatch taking on any more VT towns. Matt figured they wouldn't be able to take on any one additional. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Town Officer's Report**

Katie, Secretary, reported that Green Up Day is May 7 and there are bags available at the Town Hall. She asked the Board if could post an announcement on the website. They approved.

### **Select Board Member Concerns**

Selectman Bixby asked when the Board will hire a transfer station attendant. Katie said she was planning on putting it on the May 9 agenda to allow for the full two-week posting notice to be in effect. Selectman Bixby also reported potholes on Chambers Bridge and asked Katie to let the road crew know.

Matt Jakubowski reported on behalf of the Rec Committee. They are working on the back field of 7b to make it a baseball field. They will be putting clay down and placing rocks

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along the parking lot. They picked a new contractor for mowing this year. The committee is discussing the idea of an ice rink at the field for the winter months.

**Adjournment**

Selectman Congdon motioned to adjourn at 7:23PM, Selectman Menard seconded, and all Board members approved.

SIGNED:  Mike Klopchin, Chair

SIGNED:  Bob Bixby, Clerk