

TOWN OF CLARENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
REGULAR
November 14, 2022
Minutes

Attendees:

Select Board

Mike Klopchin, Chair

Bob Bixby, Clerk

Cash Ruane

Heidi Congdon, Treasurer

Katie Nop, Secretary

William Chmielewski, PEG TV

Joel Baker

Tom Garden

Kevin Peck

Bob Underhill

Marie Fabian

Melissa Hance

Dan Pinkowski

Call to Order

Chairman Klopchin called the meeting to order at 6:01PM.

Selectman Bixby requested a moment of silence in honor of Veteran's Day that was on 11/11.

Agenda additions/deletions

N/A

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Selectman Bixby motioned to approve the Regular Meeting minutes from October 24, 2022 as presented. Selectman Ruane seconded, and the motion passed unopposed.

Highway

Road Commissioner Report-

Road Commissioner, Cash Ruane, presented the Board with 2 grader quotes. One was a John Deere and the other a CAT. He suggested the Board members take the next couple of weeks to look them over and have this discussion at the next meeting. If the Board has any questions, please ask him or reach out to either of the salesmen.

The road crew has stock piled winter sand. With the possibility of a winter storm coming, the equipment has been readied and the crew will be getting the wings on the trucks.

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

Marie Fabian is a member of Rutland but has family members buried in the Chippenhook Cemetery. She felt she was not properly informed about the new rules and regulations that

are set in place for Clarendon cemeteries. She would like the Board to have another meeting to discuss the rules. She found that only 18% of the cemeteries in the state of VT have such restrictive rules. Marie would like to see less restriction and more balance. Her and her sister (Melissa Hance), would like to sit down with the Board and have a discussion about this. Chairman Klopchin said as one member of the Board, he's walked through the cemeteries and has seen what the trinkets, mementos, and artificial flowers that are left behind have caused; they've left the cemeteries in poor condition if not kept up with properly.

Chairman Klopchin asked Kevin Peck (Cemetery Committee member) what his thoughts were. Kevin said there's two ends of the spectrum. Before Nov. 1, Clarendon had no rules for their cemeteries. But you can go down to Bennington County and they have a very restrictive policy in place. Clarendon took a middle of the road approach. He showed examples from local cemeteries. Bob Underhill mentioned that a plot that has been actively maintained is one thing, but there are plots that have plants that are overgrown. They are not being maintained- families move out of town and no longer care for those lots. His other point would be, the town does not have the majority of contact info for families whose members have passed on. Chairman Klopchin added that over the years, all the debris left behind has hindered the mowing contractors' efforts to keep the cemeteries neat.

Marie said that the town cemeteries have been much improved because of Kevin's actions. There's also renewed interest in the cemeteries because of it. It was decided that the Cemetery Committee will meet with these concerned members and bring something back to the Board after the New Year. Marie would also like to clarify the date about items being removed. Kevin said that the two ladies made a good point about the date of items removed being May 15 rather than November 1. Kevin will make that change and it will be reflected on the website.

Old Business

N/A

New Business

Delinquent Tax Collector Appointment-

The Board had a special meeting previous to this meeting to conduct interviews for Delinquent Tax Collector. There were two candidates; Ashley Robinson and Brownson Spencer. Cash Ruane nominated Ashley Robinson to be appointed for Delinquent Tax Collector and Selectman Bixby seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Katie will let the candidates know the results.

Lister Appointment-

Kevin Peck submitted a letter of interest for Lister. Selectman Bixby motioned to appoint Kevin to Lister until March 2023, and Selectman Ruane seconded. The motion passed unopposed. Bob Underhill was excited to see Kevin join the team and they're thrilled to have him aboard.

Rutland Regional Emergency Management Committee discussion-

Katie explained that the Regional Emergency Management Committee is seeking two representatives from Clarendon. The term would be for one year. The two representatives from last year have declined reappointment. She will post the vacancy around Town. She asked the Board if they had any recommendations for the committee and they did not.

Triland Partners- Preferred Solar Site- Tom Garden of Triland Partners was present to discuss designating a piece of the Pinkowski's land to be a Preferred Solar Site. He has met with the Clarendon Planning Commission (CPC) and they have signed off on it. The parcel of land is

about 3 acres right off of Middle Road (north end of Pinkowski's barns). They would be subdividing this section off from the 10 acre lot- which is a requirement of the VT Utility Commission. The solar array would be set off the road more than 100 feet (50 feet is the legal requirement). This would give room to do some landscape screening. Middle Road is a highly traveled road and Triland understands that not everybody wants to see the solar field. The CPC brought up this issue in their meeting. The Planning Commission is not dictating how it the screening would be done, but they want to weigh in on the final design plans. Dan mentioned possibly have some softwoods and hardwoods put in but he was opposed to a solid barrier.

Tom Garden explained that they will be using bifacial solar panels. They will be higher off the ground because they generate electricity on both sides. People tend to use bifacial panels to circumvent the Chinese tariff that are on other types of solar panels. Tom presented the Board with the document that he would like signature on. He explained that by the Town signing off on it, it gives the designer (himself) the permission to continue to work with the Public Utility Commission. He also had paperwork for the Board to review that showed the environmental impacts that this solar field would have. It will not be impacting wetlands, woodlands, or prime agricultural land. There is a minor flooding impact (1 in 500 years). After tonight, Tom will go on to meet with the Rutland Regional Planning Commission, and then Green Mountain Power. After working with GMP, he will draft a 45-day letter to all abutters, town boards, state boards, etc. Cash questioned how much power the 3-phase line on Middle Road could hold. Cash didn't think it could take much more. Tom responded that he won't know until he meets with GMP. There was lots of discussion around the power lines.

Selectman Bixby asked what effect solar projects are having on property values and those around them. Tom said there's no evidence of them decreasing property value. He won't say that not everyone wants to look at them. Selectman Bixby's other question was wondering what would happen to these solar panels 25, 30 years down the road. Tom said they are "decommissioned" and the site has to be restored to the way it was originally. Bob asked if the panels will go to landfills. Tom thinks they will be recycled. He believes that in 25/30 years that they will be working at 85% efficiency though. Tom presumed Selectman Bixby's follow up question would be if they will contaminate the soils. Tom said they will not. All solar modulars are different but they one they will be selecting contains silicone, not cadmium. Chairman Klopchin asked if Dan Pinkowski had talked to his neighbors about the solar field. Dan responded, no.

Selectman Bixby motioned that the Chairman sign the page for Pinkowski's Preferred Solar Site and Selectman Ruane seconded. The motion passed.

In closing, Dan, mentioned that his company is building a house in Andover and they are putting reused panels on this house to convey the message of solar panel recyclability. He noted that nobody knows for sure what the longevity is going to be with solar panels.

Town Officer's Report

Heidi, Treasurer, would like to schedule the first budget workshop. It was decided that the first budget workshop would be at 5'oclock on Monday, November 28th (one hour before the Regular Select Board meeting). Cash asked that the Highway budget be discussed towards the end of the budget workshops.

Katie, Secretary, reported that the Town received reimbursement from State Farm for the guard rail replacement on Alfreacha bridge.

Select Board Member Concerns

N/A

Approved November 28, 2022

Adjournment

Selectman Ruane motioned to adjourn at 7:10PM, Selectman Bixby seconded, and all Board members approved.

SIGNED:  Mike Klopchin, Chair

SIGNED:  Bob Bixby, Clerk