

**TOWN OF CLARENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**  
**REGULAR**  
**May 22, 2023**  
**Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Select Board

Robert Congdon

Art Menard

George Ambrose, Clerk

Heidi Congdon, Treasurer

Katie Nop, Secretary

Gloria Menard, Town Clerk

William Chmielewski, PEG-TV

Bill Buschbaum

Kevin Peck

Bob Bixby

Bob Underhill

Matt Jakubowski

**Call to Order**

Select Board Clerk, George Ambrose, called the meeting to order at 6:00PM, since Chairman Klopchin was not present.

Selectman Menard motioned to elect Robert Congdon as Chair for the meeting tonight, Selectman Ambrose seconded, and all approved.

**Agenda additions/deletions**

N/A

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Selectman Ambrose motioned to approve the Regular Meeting minutes from May 8, 2023 as presented. Selectman Menard seconded. The motion passed unopposed.

**Highway**

*Road Commissioner Report-*

Katie reported that they received a hydraulic report on the structure that's at the intersection of Walker Mountain Road and Teer Road. The town applied for a structure grant for engineering for that but have not heard back on it.

Matt Jakubowski who chairs the Rec Committee, had requested several times in the past year that the Road Commissioner move stones around in the lower parking lot of the 7B rec fields. Chairman Congdon suggested Katie following up with the Road Commissioner about that. Katie responded that she had reminded him the week prior.

Treasurer, Heidi, said that roadside mowing had started and asked that public be cautious around the equipment.

**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**

#### *Bob Bixby-*

Bob reported that they had a Neighborhood Watch meeting last Wednesday night. There were more people in attendance than the last meeting but they would still like more people to join.

Bob suggested a moment of silence to honor military personnel who have died while serving their country. A moment of silence was held in remembrance of the upcoming Memorial Day holiday.

### **Public Comments**

N/A

### **Old Business**

#### *Kevin Peck-*

Kevin Peck of the Cemetery Committee reported that the tree in Spafford Cemetery is still standing. He had gathered quotes in the fall to remove it. 2 contractors have backed out. Katie reached out to the third contractor in line and hadn't heard back. Kevin was looking for direction from the Board on what he should do. Chairman Congdon said that he was pretty sure at previous meetings the Board had given Kevin permission to do whatever he needed to do to get it removed. He said to look back at minutes and if that's so, Kevin had the permission to get the tree removed however he saw fit. Matt Jakubowski suggested talking with Ace Arborist. Chairman Congdon suggested talking to Cash who might have a direct number for someone who works at Trees Inc (the 3<sup>rd</sup> contractor in line).

### **New Business**

#### *Fireworks Permit-*

There was a request for a firework permit for July 3 at the location of 1735 East Tinmouth Road. It was from Nicholas Winney. They've received a firework permit the last several years. Selectman Menard motioned to approve the permit; Selectman Ambrose seconded. The motion passed unopposed.

#### *Chippenhook Schoolhouse-*

Selectman Ambrose initiated the conversation by explaining that he would like to feel things out with the Board about the direction of the Chippenhook schoolhouse. He thought, possibly, by the end of the discussion perhaps a subcommittee could be created to do further research. Currently the schoolhouse land is listed on the Grand List as owned by Clarendon. The building itself is owned by the West Clarendon Church and Hall Association ("the association"). The members of the association have all since passed on (the association was created in 1893)- only left now are heirs to those who were a part of the association. Selectman Ambrose questioned whether the land is actually owned by the town or not, and how that came to be. If it is in fact owned by the town, he wondered what the implications were in regards to insurance responsibilities. He also wondered if it was valued as a nonprofit property, thus there would be a difference in taxation. The schoolhouse taxes had gone delinquent for a while but as of now are paid up.

Bill Buschbaum, Clarendon resident and former boy scout troop leader, was invited to the Board meeting to be a part of the conversation. The boy scouts at one point had been allowed to use the schoolhouse (circa 1980s). Bill is the individual utilizing the building and had paid the taxes on it. He explained that they had used it for storage and now he also stores some lawn sale items and cold storage items in there.

He said that the members of the West Clarendon Church and Hall association have all passed away. He thought that to be a lifetime member, there was a dollar fee. His connection to the building was his involvement in boy scouts. Bill said Max Carlton's mother had a tote full of records and other scout leaders did as well. He thought within those tubs was a deed. Bob Underhill, Lister and Clarendon Historical Society President, chimed in that the records were given to Dr. Coco. Those records were donated to the Historical Society and Bob has gone through all the documents. A large quantity of what was recorded were the association's meeting minutes. Bob further explained that the State, in 1999, paid the association for a drainage easement on their property when they did work on Firehouse Road. One would assume the West Clarendon Church and Hall would have owned the land if the State made payment to them. There's been no record found where the transfer from the association to the town owning the land came to be.

Selectman Congdon said that ownership of this parcel is significantly in question. Matt suggested talking to Max Carlton who was the troop leader; he would be a good resource. Dave Potter's relatives were also a part of the association. The Board asked if anyone had spoken to him. Selectman Ambrose said Dave acknowledged that his relatives were a part of it. Selectman Menard who was a former Lister, said that Attorney Bloomer had looked into this in 2019 and stated that it would be very problematic to deal with the ownership of the schoolhouse. Bob Underhill said his concern is that the schoolhouse is a very historic structure and the preservation of it is important to Clarendon's history. There's not a long-term solution in place. Selectman Congdon said that the association's constitution states that the association members and its heirs are the "technical" owners of the building. Selectman Ambrose reiterated the need for the subcommittee to research who those heirs were. Selectman Congdon figured if the heirs of the members of the association are still around, they could get together and reform and decide on ownership. Bob Underhill noted that from his research the association was not a registered organization with the State and "reestablishing" would be more difficult than that.

Selectman Congdon asked if there was any action on this subject tonight. Selectman Ambrose moved to establish a subgroup to look into the ownership of the parcel. There was no second to the motion so it failed.

#### *Sheriff's Dept. contract-*

The current FY23 contract is not to exceed \$70,200. Dave Fox sent an email to towns saying that some had requested more hours for the next fiscal year. Currently the Sheriff's Dept. is contracted for 30 hours/week. Heidi said that they've changed the way they bill the town. Instead of 2 monthly payments, they are actually billing for hours worked because of the short staffing they experienced. This was in the town's best interest. Selectman Menard asked about how close they are to fulfilling their 30 hours/week obligation. Heidi said they're right on track to hit the contracted amount. Selectman Menard said he recalled discussing this at budget time, and increased coverage wasn't needed. The Board was in agreement that there was no need to increase hours with the Sheriff's Dept for next year (July 1, 2023).

#### *Appropriations Policy discussion-*

Chairman Congdon explained that over the years there's been discussion about creating an Appropriations Policy. This would be in regard to the March ballot where voters approve the town budget and appropriations (from social services). Currently Clarendon does not have a policy in place and any nonprofit can request to be placed on the ballot. There was talk at budget time as well at the Town Informational Meeting about this subject. The Board decided they would work on this issue during a workshop. Chairman Congdon asked that Katie coordinate setting up a workshop for this in hopes something would come together before early fall.

**Town Officer's Report**

*Lister- Bob Underhill-*

Bob explained that the Lister's office is in a holding pattern with the State. The State's new software is not fully operational yet.

*Secretary-Katie*

Katie reported that the town was awarded the \$4,000 mini grant from the Municipal Energy Resilience Fund. They were denied the AARP grant that the town had applied for in hopes of installing a speed feedback sign.

**Select Board Member Concerns**

Selectman Ambrose requested that the Chippenhook Schoolhouse discussion be placed on the next meeting's agenda so that the full Board will be present; and because there was a lack of a second to his motion in the previous conversation.

**Adjournment**

Selectman Ambrose motioned to adjourn at 6:43PM, Selectman Menard seconded, and all approved.

SIGNED:  Mike Klopchin, Chair

SIGNED:  George Ambrose, Clerk