

TOWN OF CLARENDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

REGULAR

Monday November 25, 2024

Clarendon Town Hall @ 6:00PM

MINUTES

ATTENDEES

Mike Klopchin, Chairman

George Ambrose, Clerk

Cash Ruane, Selectman

Robert Congdon, Selectman

Art Menard, Selectman

Ashley Robinson, Admin Asst

Kevin Peck, Lister

William PEG-TV

John McKenna

Sarah Kumm

Marjorie Southard

Bob Bixby

Shelley Lutz

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Klopchin called the meeting to order at 6:05PM

AGENDA ADDITIONS/DELETIONS

Selectman/Road Commissioner Ruane requested a 15 minute executive session for personnel reasons. The board agreed to add it at the end of the meeting after Selectboard concerns.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

-Regular meeting November 13, 2024

Selectman Ambrose motioned to approve the meeting minutes from November 13th, 2024. Selectman Menard provided the second. Selectman Ruane recused himself from the motion as he did not attend. The remaining board members approved.

HIGHWAY

-Driveway Permit

Selectman/Road Commissioner Ruane requests approval of a driveway permit that was applied for by Tim Colvin on Cobb Lane. This is the new house that was just installed recently. Selectman Congdon wants to assure this is off of Cobb Lane and not off Middle Road, Ruane confirmed. Selectman Congdon made the motion to approve the permit with Selectman Ambrose providing the second. The board approved the motion unanimously.

Ruane would like to know if the town can do away with the unused compactor that is at the town transfer station. Selectman Congdon thought it had been listed on Craigslist for sale previously, and the answer was no. The machine does not work. Ruane isn't sure if the motor is ceased so we would have to sell as is. Ruane and Ashley will do research to find out what it weighs and what it would be worth to scrap it, or if we could make more selling it.

APPROVAL OF SELECTBOARD WARRANTS

All new warrants and warrants previously signed by the designated selectboard members were approved and signed by the present selectboard members.

GUESTS

N/A

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Marjorie Southard wanted to speak regarding the Town Plan. The plan is on the agenda later in the meeting so the board withheld her commenting until the town plan is discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

Transfer Station

Chairman Klopchin informed the public that during the budget workshop the transfer station was over budget by 80,000 with a revenue of roughly 11,000 and wanted to know if the board would like to discuss some changes that could happen to reduce the deficit. Possibilities would be upping the cost, cutting the hours, or contracting the work out. Selectman Ambrose brings up some research he had done. He is concerned that when items are going to the transfer station we are charging by volume and not weight. Volume can vary so much, and believes this may be a place for improvement. In year 24 expenses were \$35,145

for salaries, and Casella charged \$50,000. If you take the 80,000 total expenses, and the total of tax bills sent out of roughly 1300, that breaks down to \$61 per tax payer. He gives another scenario that if each person was charged a flat fee of \$100 a year for trash, that would be \$130,000 a year to cover the expenses and residents could go to the transfer station without the use of punch cards. Selectman Ambrose continues with figures from research. The town of Clarendon doesn't charge for cardboard or food scraps and maybe that also needs to change. His concern as a tax payer is if we have a service coming in to take over the operation of the transfer station that they will be also trying to be profitable, and why would tax payers want to pay for that. He believes we can be smart enough in the town that we can close the deficit at hand. Marjorie brings up that if the town does a flat rate charge to tax payers that there will be an increase on how many people go to use the transfer station. She believes that will end up costing the town a lot more money due to the higher usage. The concern among the group was that also by doing that there would be many people who are subsidizing other people to use the dump when they don't use it themselves.

Selectman Congdon knows there are two issues. The town has not raised the rate at the transfer station in 10-15 years. Inflation charges haven't been accounted for. Cards have to be punched, and at the appropriate amount of punches for the size. Just to roughly cover the salaries and hauling costs our cards would have to at least double in value, with the correct punches, and see where the town ends up. At this time we know we are not punching correctly, and we know that the cards aren't correcting revenue. Selectman Menard notes that the information supplied to the board only shows what the other towns in our area are charging for trash, not if they are also losing monies. Ashley does note that Wallingford emailed and what they make in revenue is half of the amount that is actually spent. Selectman Congdon says the other thing that was brought up in the budget workshop is that we need to ensure that only Clarendon residents are using the transfer station. The board discusses that there are stickers that residents are supposed to apply to their vehicle to use the transfer station. Selectman Menard notes that Gloria (town clerk) does have them available. Selectman Ambrose brings up the different sizing of items residents bring will also be something that needs to be addressed. Selectman Congdon reminds the board that we are only a year in on a five-year Casella contract, and wonders how we address the current situation. He suggests sitting down with the attendees and going over how important it is to punch correctly for what is coming in for what the town has it listed for. There is a revenue problem and an expense problem. A sit down with Casella also should happen. Our disposal rates are higher than others who are bringing canisters to solid waste district themselves. Kevin Peck is concerned that the town will be asking the transfer station attendees to police the residents who come in, and that puts them in a uncomfortable situation. There is a concern that changing to a weighted system it would be too labor intensive and the wait times would be a lot worse than they have been. Chairman Klopchin believes taking short steps to start the process would be a good start. Posting the bags on a sheet of plywood and showing the number of punches per bag. This will educate the attendants as well as the residents. Selectman Menard agrees with Kevin Peck

that asking the attendants to police their neighbors is a hard job to do. Klopchin says they have to understand it is their responsibility and being adults they should be able to do so.

The board needs to have a conversation with Casella and a possible re-negotiation with rental fees, hauling fees as well as the disposal. Over \$400 a month in rental fees a month alone are being charged, and aren't seeing rebates when there should be.

Selectman Congdon says we need a list to bring to Casella to discuss. We also need to have a gathering with the attendants, and check traffic flow on the days that they are open to see about cutting back to two, or changing timing of being open.

~Selectmen Congdon and Ambrose will look into the Casella contract.

~Selectman Klopchin will work with the attendants and Ashley will create a form for them to tally the amount of people who come through on a day-to-day basis to judge flow.

~Selectmen Menard and Ruane will look into card rates for the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Cold River/Fitzgerald/HMGP Grant

Administrative Assistant Ashley Robinson would like the board to discuss what we have hired Fitzgerald Engineering to complete in the contract that we have with them. It was Ashley's understanding that the contract was for sediment management from the Shrewsbury line to the Otter Creek, however when looking into it more it seems to be a small portion west of the route 7 bridges to the railroad bridge west of Middle Road B10 bridge. The board also believed that was the case and Ashley will set up a meeting with Fitzgerald and board members to discuss further. She let the board know that the HMGP grant that had been applied for is not able to move forward due to not having the contract complete as well as a plan of how they plan to stabilize the B10 bridge. It would also have to have a benefit cost analysis. Ashley had met with Maggie from RRPC earlier in the day and she did let her know that roughly 98% of the applicants that did apply for the grant were flooding property buyouts up north and that seemed to be the way the HMGP grant was gearing towards.

2025 Selectboard Meeting Schedule

Selectman Congdon motioned to approve the updated schedule for 2025. Selectman Ambrose provided the second. The motion was approved by all with no discussion. The schedule will be posted to the website.

Town Plan Adoption

John McKenna (Planning Commission Chairman) addresses the board as they had been waiting for Bronson Spenser to show up to the meeting. He states that Bronson was the one person out of 6 who had voted against the plan moving forward, and the board waiting for Bronson to come was offensive to the remaining members who had worked hard to put the plan together. He believes Bronson wants as minimal as possible in the plan and with zoning. Selectman Ambrose believes over 20 years ago Bronson was the Chair of the Planning Commission. He had submitted a town plan that was only one page long and he felt that was an adequate thing to do.

John McKenna brings up what is required by law to be in the plan, and there is no way it could only be one page. The importance of having a town plan is for grant projects, as well as without a town plan you can't have zoning. The town is also working on loosening up the zoning in town.

Marjorie Southard speaks on the way the procedure was done. On August 5th Carol (Geery) made a motion to present the town plan draft as presented by RRPC for the purpose of a public hearing. She is concerned as the RRPC notes show that the mayor of Rutland and CEDRR cater to Rutland City. She notes that the zoning commission wants to move forward with letting farmland be used for other things, when they should leave the farmland alone. Clarendon is known for its beauty.

Marjorie was also concerned with the publicity of posting meetings and hearings and feels it can be done better to reach more people to attend. She notes some public places for posting, and brings up the town website. Marjorie did go on after the last meeting and see that there was a highlighted town plan draft that showed the changes. This should have been done earlier for the public to be made aware of. Marjorie found a typo in the town plan, and John reviewed, and will correct. The biggest concern is that the towns input is not being taken into consideration. Marjorie believes the town plan should pass, and wanted to voice her concerns with the actual procedure to get to this point for the future.

Marjorie wanted to remind the selectboard that they voted that any changes to the zoning would go before the voters, and to keep that in mind. People need to be involved.

Selectman Ambrose wants Marjorie to know that her concerns were heard, and that they will work with the zoning commission. Selectman Menard also noted that he has had a problem with the zoning and questions not being answered.

Selectman Ambrose motions to approve the town plan. John McKenna reviews the changes made to the town plan again briefly. Selectman Congdon provides the second with correcting the typo. The motion was approved by all.

TOWN OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORT

N/A

SELECTBOARD MEMBER CONCERNS

Selectman Congdon wanted to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving and holiday.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Selectman Ruane motions to go into a 15-minute executive session at 7:20pm.

Selectman Congdon provides the second. The motion was approved by all.

Selectman Ambrose motioned to come out of executive session at 7:32pm.

Selectman Congdon provided the second. The motion was approved unanimously.

Session note-no action taken at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Klopchin adjourned the meeting at 7:32pm.

SIGNED:  Mike Klopchin, Chair

SIGNED:  George Ambrose, Clerk