

Town of Corinth  
Board of Selectmen  
PO Box 461  
Corinth, VT 05039

Unapproved Minutes of the Select Board Meeting  
October 12, 2020

Meeting conducted on Zoom.

Present for the Select Board: Chris Groschner, Steve Long, Rick Cawley  
Catherine Tudish, select board clerk

Others present: Lee Porter, road commissioner; Joe Blodgett, road foreman; Dick Kelley, Treasurer;  
Kenya Lazuli; Paula Lavallee; Michael Pittman, Fire Captain; Bill Bohnyak, Orange County Sheriff; Scott  
Clouatre, Orange County Deputy Sheriff

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Groschner read a notice authorizing this public meeting to be conducted by remote access, in  
accordance with a special provision of Vermont's Open Meeting Law.

Minutes of the regular Select Board meeting of September 14, 2020 and the financial meeting of  
October 6, 2020 were unanimously approved

Public Concerns

Kenya Lazuli requested that the history page of the town web site include an entry on Alexander  
Twilight, who was born in Corinth. A Middlebury graduate, Twilight was the first Black person to  
graduate from an American college.

Cawley said his only concern is that there is essentially no history on the site. He asked if the town  
should start building history on the site.

Groschner suggested contacting the historical society to ask about including more town history on the  
site.

Long agreed that going to the historical society would be the best approach. He said he was in favor of  
including Twilight.

Groschner said he would be happy to open the line of communication with the historical society.

Cawley noted that the town would have a valuable resource if the historical information were to be  
expanded.

Sheriff's Department Contract

Groschner said he wanted to touch base with the Sheriff's Department, particularly on the subject of  
ATVs. He noted that, in reviewing recent bills from the department, one was for an ATV patrol.

Bohnyak said he had received three recent ATV complaints.

Clouatre reported that on a three-hour patrol, he saw little to no ATV traffic.

Bohnyak said his department has issued 30 tickets in Corinth, mostly for speeding.

Bohnyak mentioned a Corinth resident, Laura Wilson, who is currently attending the police academy  
and said that when she graduates she will be patrolling the east side of the county. He stated that there  
would be a faster response time to ATV violations when she is on duty.

Groschner said he often gets complaints about speeders in town and is glad the department is issuing  
tickets. He said he hopes they will do a speed check in Cookeville.

Bohnyak said they could get a radar cart out.

Long recommended placement near Town Hall in Cookeville.

Long asked when Laura Wilson would be out of the academy.

Bohnyak replied mid- to late November.

Bohnyak added that they are working with the Fish and Game Department on ATV enforcement.

Long noted that there is a lot of ATV traffic from Topsham down to East Corinth General Store.

Lavallee said she has not seen a lot of ATVs on Jewell Lane this year.

Groschner said the select board does request that citizens call sheriff's dispatch to report ATV activity.

Bohnyak said they could bypass dispatch if calls or emails were sent directly to him.

Lazuli noted that she has seen a lot of ATV traffic, as well as loud motorbikes, on Bear Notch Road on weekends between 11 AM and 3 PM.

Kelley said he has seen and heard large groups of motorcyclists riding past Town Hall.

Bohnyak said those riders belong to a club and that their vehicles are all registered. He said they are a well-maintained group and don't cause problems.

Long noted that the annual contract with the Sheriff's Department has not yet been signed.

Cawley made a motion to sign the contract for the current fiscal year.

Long seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Groschner thanked Bohnyak and Clouatre for attending the meeting.

### Road Report

Porter said the problem of debris from residences moving into the roadway "seems to be increasing every year." He said he has been contacting residents, and people seem to be working on clearing the debris.

Long said there is now a U-Haul trailer attached to a pick-up at the old Martin Store property and that it is right in front of the church.

Porter said he would try to contact the people living at the property.

Blodgett said he has extra generators on hand at the town garage and asked if the select board wanted him to try to sell them.

Long advised him to go ahead and sell.

Blodgett noted that the highway department had received a request for a dead end sign on Jewell Lane.

Lavallee, who lives on Jewell Lane, said there has been an increasing amount of traffic on that road and that a lot of it ends up at Paula Jewell's house at the top of the road. "I think the dead end sign could help," she said. "It would help Mrs. Jewell feel more comfortable."

Groschner said they should give the sign a try.

Blodgett said he has a dead end sign on order, but the question is where to place it. He and Lavallee debated various spots near the beginning of Jewell Lane. "We'll make something work," Blodgett concluded.

Lazuli said she thought a speed limit sign on Hayward Road would be a good idea.

Blodgett said a speed study would have to be done first. It is possible, he said, but would have to be taken up with the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

Groschner thanked Blodgett for removing a large downed limb at Town Hall.

Blodgett said the limb was dead inside, and he wondered about the health of the tree.

### Corinth Community Coalition Internship Program

Cawley said he had received a phone message from Jeff Spiegel notifying him that Spiegel could not attend the meeting because his internet service was down.

Cawley said Spiegel asked if the town could pick up half the cost of background checks for adults who would be taking part in the program, noting that the cost for a background check is \$30.

Cawley raised the question of whether this would be a town program or a school program.

Lazuli said a school counselor is working to match students with mentors from town. Her understanding is that it is a town program.

Cawley said he was concerned about liability issues and not sure what the town's function would be.

Groschner said he shares the liability concerns.

Long asked if the Upper Valley Mentoring Project would be the one to take it on.

Cawley said this was a different type of program, one that matched students with mentors who were doing work the students were interested in.

Long said it was a great idea to encourage young people to enter the trades, adding that he was all in favor of the program if the liability issues could be covered.

Lazuli said it is possible that a tradesman's insurance could cover student participants.

Groschner said the select board needs to have Spiegel provide more information.

Cawley said he would put it on the agenda for the November meeting.

### EC Fiber Update

Kelley said he learned three days ago that Topsham Telephone has received a federal connectivity grant of \$1 million for Corinth and Topsham, but the money must be spent by the end of the year.

Kelley said the advisory board would meet on Thursday, October 15, to discuss. He is concerned that only households in the most densely populated areas of town show up on the map for connecting.

Kelley noted that Holly Groschner, chair of the advisory board, would be meeting with the Department of Public Service about the grant.

Kelley said it seems unlikely that the entire project could be completed by the deadline.

Lazuli commented that it is not easy to contact Topsham Telephone. She asked if the town could say "no thanks" to Topsham Telephone because they are already working with EC Fiber.

Kelley raised the possibility of putting a page on the town web site as a clearinghouse for broadband connectivity questions and issues.

Long said he has been trying to get a response from EC Fiber for months about connecting to his house.

Kelley said EC Fiber is currently working to reach households in Vershire.

Long noted that a neighbor a quarter mile away has an EC Fiber connection.

Lazuli said her understanding is that EC Fiber has more work than workers at this point.

Kelley said he has a major concern about "islands of non-service," because Topsham Telephone would connect only in the most populated areas.

Kelley said that EC Fiber might not want to take on more remote areas, either. He agreed to return to the November select board meeting to give an update.

Lazuli said Topsham Telephone's internet service is "astronomically priced for the service we're getting."

Kelley said he would develop a mock-up web page to present to the select board.

### Fire Station Update

Cawley reported that work on the fire station is complete.

Long noted that he needed to get the select board's approval for payment of Hazen Hill's final bill. He moved to approve payment, based on John Haney signing off on it.

Groschner asked about the amount, and Long said it would be in the \$190,000 range.

Groschner seconded Long's motion, and it passed unanimously.

Cawley said he had spoken with Efficiency Vermont in March, and they had just reached out on Monday to ask if the contractor had taken advantage of available incentives. Cawley said to his knowledge Hazen Hill had done so.

### Fire Department lease

The select board discussed a draft lease that had been circulated by Cawley.

Groschner said he had questions about what services would be provided by the fire department. He did not think the lease was specific enough.

Cawley replied that the draft lease stated "fire protection for town inhabitants in lieu of rent."

Groschner noted that there was nothing about medical emergencies or whether they even have to answer a call. He said he would like to see more work in that particular area of the lease.

Pittman noted that the Fast Squad rents space within the fire station.

Groschner asked if the Fast Squad would have its own separate insurance.

Pittman replied that it was more of a “gentleman’s agreement” that the Fast Squad could store their equipment in the fire station.

Cawley said he would add a provision that the Fast Squad must comply with all terms of the lease agreement.

Pittman said that in 20 years the Fast Squad and the Fire Department would probably be the same organization. He noted that about a third of calls are for medical assistance.

Cawley said he would revise the “services” section and send out the draft again.

Pittman said the Fire Department has small generators to set up for residents during long power outages, for elderly people on oxygen, for example.

Pittman said the department also assists the road crew in assessing road damage following storms.

#### Other business

Kelley sought approval of payment to New England Municipal Resource Center in the amount of \$5,000 for annual maintenance and support of the town IT services.

Groschner moved to approve the payment.

Long seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.