

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

Unapproved Minutes of the Select Board Meeting
November 9, 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; Dick Kelley, treasurer; Michael Pittman, fire captain; Norm Collette, cemetery commission; Jeff Spiegel

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 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 October 12, 2020 and the financial meeting of November 3, 2020 were unanimously approved

Road Report

Porter said he had looked into apparent discrepancies between the number of gallons of gasoline purchased at the East Corinth Store and the amount indicated on the charge slips. The problem, Porter discovered, is that the store's computer is not printing the first digit of the gallon number; so that, for instance, the charge slip says 0.32 gallons when the actual number is 30.32 gallons. He said the town is paying for the correct amount of gas.

Porter suggested that from now on the road crew write the correct number of gallons on the slip.

Porter said he had talked with a resident of Chicken Farm Road regarding boats and trailers in the roadway and that the owner assured him they would be moved before plowing starts.

Porter said he had also spoken with the owner of the property at the former Martins Store, who told him two vehicles at the edge of the roadway would soon be moved.

Spiegel noted that the No Dumping signs on Hayward Road were effective and asked if there were other signs around town.

Long said that a new No Dumping sign at the Meadow Meeting House seemed to be working.

Groschner asked Porter about the sand pile at the town garage and other preparations for winter.

Porter assured him that the road crew is "easily on track" with an adequate supply of sand and that they have switched to winter tires on vehicles.

Porter said that Joe Blodgett had received a call from the White Farm regarding delivery of a large tank by S.D. Ireland, asking if the town bucket loader could be used if needed to help with the unloading. Ireland will bring a crane, so the bucket loader would be on stand-by only.

Cawley said "I'm not opposed to being neighborly, and this is an unusual situation." He suggested approval of the request if Ireland would provide and sign a release form, to avoid liability for the town.

Long agreed that it should be left up to the company to provide a form and sign off on liability.

Cawley said it should contain a hold-harmless clause and indemnify the town against loss.

Groschner stated that the board approved use of the town's bucket loader, with the condition of company insurance for personnel and equipment, as well as the hold-harmless and indemnification provisions.

Corinth Community Coalition Internship Program

Jeff Spiegel addressed two concerns about the program: liability insurance for apprentice teachers and financing of required background checks.

He noted that the statewide organization Mentor Vermont helps mentoring programs with expenditures. Further, Mentor Vermont is connected with the organization CLIC, which provides mentoring around career exploration.

Spiegel said that Nancy Jones, director of the Upper Valley Mentoring Project, suggested that Spiegel's program could operate under the umbrella of her organization. She will bring the idea before the Mentoring Project's board for approval at their meeting on November 18.

Spiegel said he has been working with staff at the Waits River School and that 7th and 8th graders there are taking surveys about their career interests.

The program is not likely to launch in the spring, Spiegel said, but they were getting the groundwork in place.

Spiegel added that he would eventually ask town treasurer Dick Kelley about funding from the town and said they are looking for internship teachers.

Groschner noted that budget hearings are starting for the next fiscal year and suggested getting in a request for funds to the budget committee.

Referring to the rising COVID-19 numbers and increases in food insecurity, Groschner asked Spiegel about the CCC's use of food resources.

Spiegel reported that a new grant for the Farmers to Families program would enable families to sign up to receive 30 pounds of food in a drive-through delivery.

Spiegel said they had seen an increase in use of the West Topsham food shelf, but that the freezer space there is limited. He said they could get more food if they could increase freezer space.

Spiegel said that Willing Hands has been delivering food to the Waits River School for delivery to 10 families in need.

Spiegel also commended Renee Salomaa and her helpers for continuing to prepare and deliver meals through the Pay It Forward program.

Groschner encouraged Spiegel to continue conducting CCC meetings by Zoom.

Long pointed out that the number of COVID cases in Orange County is increasing, a good reason not to hold meetings indoors.

Cawley asked if liability insurance for the mentorship program would be covered by the umbrella organization.

Spiegel replied that it would.

EC Fiber Update

Kelley reported that the board of governors' meeting would take place the evening of November 10. He expected to have more information after that.

Fire Station Update

Cawley said that the building is finished, and the town has the certificate of occupancy in hand.

Pittman said he had talked with the builder, Jason Yehle, who has agreed to replace a door damaged by one of the construction crew and to repair a faulty door mechanism.

Long asked about the progress on paving.

Pittman it was supposed to have been done two weeks ago.

Groschner asked who was doing the work.

Pittman said the fire department had hired BlakTop, but added, "We do have a contingency plan."

Pittman noted that members of the department are painting interior doors. He said he would keep the select board updated on progress.

Fire Department lease

Cawley said he has documents ready for signing, a copy for the town and one for the fire department. He asked Pittman to let him know who would be signing for the department.

Groschner said he would sign for the town.

Kelley asked who is responsible for utilities.

Pittman said utilities are billed to the town, but paid by the fire department.

Kelley noted that insurance would be switched from builder's liability to the town.

Long said the town should have a key to the building.

Groschner said the key should be on the key rack in the safe at Town Hall.

Cawley suggested that Long have a key, too, in case of emergency when the Town Hall is closed.

Pittman said the department would install a keypad to keep track of who enters the building and when.

Other business

Collette said the cemetery commission's new bylaws have been posted on the town web site. These cover policies regarding single burial, shroud burial, and green burial. "We can accommodate everyone now," he said.

He reported that there had recently been a natural burial in Corinth Corner cemetery, and that the commission is making preparations for winter.

Collette brought up the opportunity to purchase three to six acres from Nelson Tillotson to add to the East Corinth Cemetery, noting that the addition would provide space primarily for vault burials but also some green burials.

Collette suggested that the select board view the property in question.

The board members agreed to visit the property on November 12.

Collette asked if someone from the planning commission should be there, too.

Kelley said he would ask Kerry DeWolfe to go.

Groschner said he would also ask Karen Galayda.

Kelley requested select board approval for payment of an invoice in the amount of \$83,444 for the renovation project at Blake Memorial Library once the town has received the funds from the state grant.

Groschner moved to approve the payment. Cawley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Annual meeting format

Cawley stated that in light of the pandemic worsening, he believed the meeting should be virtual. Groschner and Long agreed.

Cawley said the select board has the authority to conduct an Australian ballot vote, but that option requires a virtual information meeting. He asked if it was possible to hold a virtual meeting with 100 people.

Groschner said the board needed to do some research.

Long noted that the deadline for announcing the meeting format would be when the warning is due.

Cawley said deciding on an Australian ballot would change the warning significantly.

Long said the print deadline for the town report is important, too.

Treasurer's Office, financial assistant compensation

Groschner said that Karen Galayda has requested an increase in compensation from \$15/hour to \$20/hour, given her increased responsibilities as assistant treasurer.

Long asked Kelley if he and Galayda had worked out the division of responsibilities in the treasurer's office.

Kelley replied that he was seeking guidance from the select board. He said he would sit down to discuss with Galayda in terms of Susan Fortunati's job description.

Kelley said he supports Galayda's request for the increase.

Cawley asked about Suzanne Hansen's compensation as financial assistant to the select board.

Kelley said he believes that Hansen's compensation should be similar to Galayda's.

Long said he was impressed with the responsibilities both have taken on in the treasurer's office.

Long moved that compensation for Galayda as assistant treasurer and Hansen as financial assistant to the select board be increased to \$20/hour. Cawley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 PM.