

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

Unapproved Minutes of the Select Board Meeting
February 8, 2021

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; Gary Apfel, town moderator; Dick Kelley, town treasurer; Michael Pittman, fire department treasurer; Raymond Moulton, cemetery commission; Carl Demrow, Samantha Lefebvre

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 January 11, 2021 and the financial meeting of February 4, 2021 were unanimously approved

Road Report

Porter requested the select board's approval for posting roads between March 1 and March 15 limiting access during mud season.

Groschner made a motion to approve the request. Cawley seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Groschner said he has received emails about sending the town's mileage certificate to the state, noting that Blodgett has been copied on them.

Porter said he has not received the emails, and Groschner said he would forward them.

Cawley noted that the deadline for filing mileage certificates is in two weeks.

Porter said that Billy Eastman is now working part-time for the road crew and plans to retire on November 1.

Porter said they have been looking for a capable person to fill the vacancy and recommended that the new employee be offered a competitive wage.

Porter added that he and Blodgett have been gathering data on wages in towns around the state.

Groschner stated that the select board would schedule a special meeting to discuss the road crew's pay structure once Porter has the statewide information.

Cawley said the town clerk had forwarded an email to him from the spouse of a highway employee, asking for clarification about health insurance coverage.

Kelley said that this was in regard to an employee who recently got married and that Kelley has enrolled the spouse.

Porter confirmed that if a highway employee is married, the spouse is eligible for health insurance, unless they have coverage through their own employer.

Fire Station Update

Pittman reported that a number of small repairs have been completed by Hazen Hill Construction.

Pittman said that over a recent cold snap, multiple cold temperature alarms went off inside the station, although the inside temperature remained above freezing. He said that they might have to rework where sensors are placed in the ductwork and noted that he had to reset the supplemental heat controls.

Pittman said they are now keeping a log of outside and inside temperatures and that on cold nights the temperature in the bays has remained at 52 degrees.

Pittman said the electric bill is going to be a little higher for January and February.

"Fortunately, we've signed a contract to install photovoltaic panels on the roof," Cawley observed.

Pittman said he has completed work on the second bathroom and is still waiting for kitchen cabinets to arrive.

Groschner asked if the department had gone out on any fire calls.

Pittman said they have responded to a few carbon monoxide calls, a car accident, and as mutual aid on a Bradford garage fire. He said the department also rescued a person involved in a logging accident on Page Hill Road.

Long said the last Hazen Hill invoice has been paid, and he has sent a final accounting to the fire department.

Pittman noted that he has put a deposit on the security door, and Long said he should let the select board know the final cost because construction funds might cover it.

The board thanked Pittman for all the work he has done on the new station.

Annual Meeting Format

Cawley suggested that the select board post a formal notice of the May 25 outdoor meeting at the usual posting sites. Long agreed that it was important to get the word out, noting that town clerk Nancy Ertle sends town information to the Journal Opinion.

Groschner said the date will also be printed on the back of the town report.

Apfel suggested putting notices on the lrn, and Cawley agreed to do so.

The board discussed the feasibility of holding the annual meeting on the Academy grounds in Cookeville and determined that there would be more than enough space if they close off the road in front of the building and perhaps use a portion of the green as well.

Internet Coalition blog on town website

Kelley said he has reviewed what the select board had initially asked the Corinth Fiber Initiative to do and believes that those requests have been met. He asked the board for direction going forward, specifically about what the blog on the town web site should contain.

Kelley raised the question of whether the group should try to be balanced in terms of information about providers, or whether they should advocate for the provider they think is best.

Groschner said the select board is not in a position to advocate for one provider over another, noting that Topsham Telephone has not consulted with the board about their plans for fiber optic service and that EC Fiber plans to offer service to Corinth within the year.

Groschner said town residents should have the best information to make a decision for their own households.

The question of whether the Fiber Initiative has met its original charge from the select board will be taken up at a later meeting once Kelley has completed further review.

Appointment to fill select board vacancy

Long confirmed that he is resigning from the select board, adding that he will be available to answer questions going forward. He said he would pass along his fire department records to Cawley.

Groschner said he accepts Long's resignation "with regret and massive thanks for all of his work over the years."

Cawley said he was sorry to lose Long as a select board member, noting that he has done important work for the town.

Moulton also thanked Long for his time on the board, saying he appreciated his level-headed approach.

Groschner said the board must appoint a temporary successor and moved that Carl Demrow be appointed to finish Long's term until the May 25 meeting.

Cawley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Groschner welcomed Demrow with thanks for his willingness to step in and noted that he needs to be sworn in by the town clerk.

Other business

Groschner noted that Tudish will be stepping down as select board clerk within the next two months and said the board would need to advertise for a replacement.

Demrow said he would put a notice on the lrn, and Tudish said she would send him a job description.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.