

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

Unapproved Minutes of the Select Board Meeting  
March 8, 2021

Meeting conducted on Zoom.

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

Others present: Lee Porter, road commissioner; Joe Blodgett, road foreman; Gary Apfel, town moderator; Michael Pittman, fire department; Raymond Moulton, cemetery commission; Kerry DeWolfe, planning commission; Miranda Miller, interim library director

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 February 8, 2021 and the financial meeting of March 4, 2021 were unanimously approved

Public Hearing: Blake Memorial Library Grant

Cawley read aloud the Notice of Final Public Hearing re the Blake Memorial Library state grant in the amount of \$92,400. Grant funds have been expended for renovations to make the library building handicapped accessible and energy efficient. With no further comments, the hearing was closed.

Blake Memorial Library request for letter of support

Interim library director Miranda Miller submitted a draft letter of support from the select board for continued anti-racism programming.

Miller said the library was seeking support from the select board, looking ahead to further grant funding. She said that the library has been unable to carry out many of its normal fund-raising activities during the past year, which makes grant funding especially important now.

Demrow noted that he is currently a library trustee.

All board members had reviewed the draft letter and agreed to approve it as submitted.

Cawley moved that Groschner be authorized to sign the letter of support on behalf of the board. Demrow seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Road Report

In advance of hiring a fourth person, Blodgett presented information he has gathered so far on the pay structure for road crews in other Vermont towns.

Thetford pays the foreman \$24/hour, while the lowest paid employee earns \$20/hour, Blodgett reported. The Bradford foreman earns \$31/hour, but pays some of his own benefits. Bridgewater, which offers a very generous benefit package, has been advertising for a new employee at \$20/hour, but is having trouble finding candidates.

"If we want to get somebody halfway decent," Blodgett said, "we have to be prepared to pay more."

Groschner suggested bringing up the pay structure at Town Meeting, as well budget meetings.

Porter said it should definitely involve a discussion with the townspeople.

Porter said the road crew's part-time employee would be leaving November 1.

Blodgett noted that he has the equipment to keep four employees working.

Porter said that when Blodgett retires in six years, there should be someone in training to replace him.

Blodgett said he hopes to hire someone full-time to groom for his position.

Blodgett reported that the roads are posted and that he is working with loggers in town.

Blodgett said he had received a bill for \$20,721 for repair of the damaged town truck. Insurance will cover the cost, except for the \$1,000 deductible.

Apfel recommended a separate warrant article for the highway discussion at Town Meeting, because that would bring more attention to it.

Fire Station Update

Pittman reported that Hazen Hill has replaced a panel damaged during construction.

The heating issues are being addressed, Pittman said. One change is moving the thermostats down from a height of 15 feet to 4 feet.

There has been concern about the heat pumps shutting off in very cold weather, Pittman said, adding that the electric back-up heat will come on automatically if the heat pumps go off.

Cawley said the heat pumps should operate down to 13 below zero.

Pittman said the department, working with the contractors, is still fine-tuning the heating system.

Groschner asked if this was a solvable problem over time.

Pittman said it was, but required more research.

Cawley said the solar installer has configured the array and wants to get input from the department before setting an installation date.

Pittman said interior work at the station is proceeding, including installation of kitchen cabinets. He added that Bill Peberdy built a table for the meeting room.

Pittman told Miller the department wants to check out the alarm system and the elevator in the library. She agreed to arrange a time for that.

Finally, Pittman noted that a veterinarian would be present for a rabies clinic in the fire station parking lot on Wednesday. The board once again thanked Pittman for all the work he is doing on the new station.

#### Planning Commission request for in-person meetings

De Wolfe said the planning commission wants to resume in-person meetings at the Town Hall. She said stopping in-person meetings in November was a group decision based on increasing COVID numbers.

They have six members, De Wolfe said, and everyone would be masked and maintain distance.

She said they were concerned that not all townspeople have internet connectivity and that remote meetings presented other challenges, such as the use of maps.

Groschner asked if there would likely be more than 10 people attending a given meeting.

De Wolfe said no major issues were coming up that would draw a lot of people, noting that the next meeting was scheduled for April 1.

Cawley said he doesn't know where state guidelines stand regarding gatherings and suggested the change might be premature.

Groschner decided to table the request and look at the current state mandates before going ahead.

De Wolfe said she would study the governor's mandates and get back to the select board.

Cawley said he had no objection, if the in-person meetings would be in compliance.

#### Annual Meeting

Cawley reported that he had looked into tent sizes that would accommodate social distancing, and that he and Groschner had measured the space around the Academy building. That space may not be large enough, after all, but the Town Hall parking lot would be.

Cawley said the tent rental company would send someone out to look at the sites and advise.

Cawley noted that voting would take place inside Town Hall.

Groschner asked about the timing of the warning.

Cawley said the select board should start the process, because they have to sign the warning at their April meeting.

Moulton asked if the town has to use tabulating machines for local elections. If not, he suggested that voting booths could be set up in the fire station if the ball field becomes the meeting site.

Cawley said that town clerk Nancy Ertle, the election officer, would be at Town Hall.

Cawley asked Pittman if using the ball field would be a problem.

Pittman said the fire department wouldn't object, but the town would have to bring in port-a-pots.

#### Liquor license request from Crossmolina Farm

Groschner reported that Crossmolina Farm has requested a Class 2 liquor license to sell packaged beer at their farm store in Cookeville. It would be for take-out, not consumption on the premises.

Cawley moved to approve the license.

Groschner recused himself from the vote, because he is the farm store's landlord.

Demrow and Cawley voted to approve the license and authorized Groschner to sign for all select board members.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.