

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

Unapproved Minutes of the Select Board Meeting  
April 12, 2021

Meeting conducted on Zoom.

Present for the Select Board: Chris Groschner, Rick Cawley, Carl Demrow  
Catherine Tudish, outgoing select board clerk; Anne Rosten, incoming select board clerk  
Others present: Lee Porter, road commissioner; Joe Blodgett, road foreman; Dick Kelley, town treasurer; Gary Apfel, town moderator; Michael Pittman, fire department treasurer; Jeff Spiegel; Nick Kramer

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM.

Groschner summarized the 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 March 8, 2021 and the financial meeting of April 1, 2021 were unanimously approved

Update: Corinth Community Coalition

Jeff Spiegel, coalition coordinator, gave a report on the group's first year. He noted that the coalition meets every third Tuesday, with generally 8 or 9 people attending.

Among other activities, Spiegel noted the following:

Collaborating with the Little Rivers clinics to make food deliveries to their clients in need.

Calling seniors in Corinth to check on their well-being during the pandemic.

Collaborating with the Mentoring Project of the Upper Valley to organize an apprentice program for students at Waits River School. This program pairs talented apprentice teachers with students interested in acquiring such skills as making stained glass, baking, and logging. The Mentoring Project of the Upper Valley will fund background checks and insurance for the apprentice teachers. The program is slated to begin as a pilot project in the fall of 2021 with five teachers and five students. Spiegel said he has been working with 211 responders and that 211 trainings would be offered remotely.

Spiegel added that the coalition has been looking at the positions of town Health Officer and town Service Officer and is working on refining job descriptions to be presented to the select board.

Groschner said he had heard from Jen Brooks-Wooding, who would like to stay on in the position of Service Officer.

Groschner noted that the job description in an early draft presented by Spiegel "seems quite challenging" and also overlaps with the position of 211 coordinator.

Spiegel responded that each town should have a point person who can field various concerns, such as health and safety issues, when they come up. He said that Brian Carroll is working on a poster to identify available resources for particular issues.

Regarding the town Health Officer, Spiegel said state statutes are clear on the duties and authority of that position regarding issues of personal safety and environmental concerns. He noted that the Health Officer in Newbury is paid a stipend of \$1200 annually, and requested that the select board add stipends for both Health Officer and Service Officer to the next fiscal year budget.

Demrow pointed out that Corinth will get money from the CARES Act and that the only limitation would be that it not be used to lower taxes.

Kramer said the CARES money is intended for infrastructure investment.

Groschner asked when the town would receive that money.

Demrow said it would be sometime after July 1.

Spiegel asked if the select board was open to receiving job descriptions drafted by his group.

Groschner said the board would review them.

Blodgett said that looking forward, he believes more positions would have to be paid, rather than relying on volunteers. "If we want to keep up with the times, people will need to be paid for their work," he said.

Spiegel said upgrading town positions also raises issues of qualifications and supervision.

Cawley noted that the use of CCC for the coalition is confusing, as that acronym has been in use for many years by the Corinth Conservation Commission.

Spiegel said they would consider that at their next meeting.

### Road Report

Blodgett reported that the town roads are in good shape, given that mud season has been relatively mild this year. Blodgett said that state grant funds of \$44,000 must be spent by the end of the current budget year. He said he has given Karen Galayda the account numbers of where he wants the money to go. Most of it, he said, would be used to repave a section of Cookeville Road and the remainder for culverts, gravel, and other road materials. Blodgett noted that he had state forms for select board members to sign to confirm grant compliance. He said that one of the town trucks is temporarily out of commission and is being repaired. The cost of repairs will be covered by insurance.

### Fire Station Update

Pittman reported that Hazen Hill has hooked up thermostats for the Modine heaters and has also repaired the ceiling in the meeting room. Pittman said when the fire department responded to a recent brush fire on Flanders Brook Road, the larger tanker truck had a leak in the piping, which has since been repaired. Cawley said that Pittman had signed a letter on his behalf regarding the solar panels, which should be installed this spring. Pittman said Washington Electric has updated the meters in preparation for the solar installation. Pittman noted that the parts for the entry system have come in and that the job is scheduled for April 28.

### Office phone system

Kelley said he had received a quote from Key Communications of \$2,732 for installation of a new system that would include five handsets. Groschner asked if that included a phone in the kitchen. Kelley said no, but an extra handset would cost only \$156. Groschner said he believes it is necessary to have a phone in the kitchen in case of an emergency; other board members agreed. Cawley asked if the Key Communications system would work with broadband. Kelley said yes, the system would be compatible with high speed internet. Cawley asked if there was money in the budget for this. Groschner said there was an account for office equipment. Kelley added that they have been building up funds in both the computer reserve fund and the fund for general office equipment. Demrow noted that the cost of materials is going up rapidly and suggested making a decision soon. Kelley said the quote is good for 30 days. Groschner said he supports going ahead with the installation and asked Kelley to send an email to the select board about where the funds are coming from. Cawley said it would be the fund for infrastructure of the Town Hall. Demrow made a motion to fund the installation of a new system by Key Communications in the amount of \$2,888, which includes a phone for the kitchen. Cawley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

### Office cleaning

Groschner reported that the current cleaner is no longer able to work on weekends and will have to leave the position. Groschner said Nancy Ertle had suggested Olivia Sayers as a replacement. He noted that Olivia is 17 and wondered if she is too young to be hired by the town. Cawley said her age would not be a problem, but there may be a limit on the number of hours she would be allowed to work. Groschner said he would look into it further.

### Warning for 2021 Town Meeting/approval and publication

Groschner said that by state law, the select board could send out the warning with the town report, but it could also be posted instead. Cawley noted that the town report, which has already been printed, refers to an enclosed insert. Members of the select board and Gary Apfel agreed to share the work of folding and inserting the warning in the report. Cawley read aloud the wording of the articles of the warning. Groschner moved to accept the wording as presented. Demrow seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Groschner said he had asked the historical society if they wanted to serve lunch at this year's town meeting, but they declined, given COVID concerns. Cawley said he would print out the warning, to be signed by all members of the select board and the town clerk.

#### Annual Meeting: location and tent rental

Cawley reported that given the tent size, the meeting would be held in the main parking lot of Town Hall.

Apfel said he strongly recommends using a sound system for the meeting.

Cawley said he needed select board approval of the contract with Undercover Tent in the amount of \$1,675.

Cawley moved to approve the contract, with authorization for him to sign on behalf of all board members.

Demrow asked for confirmation of the tent size of 30'x75'.

Cawley said that was correct. He said chairs would be set up according to the social distancing guidelines in place on May 25.

Groschner seconded Cawley's motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Cawley then made a motion to reconsider item 6 on the select board meeting agenda, regarding the office phone system, so that Kelley could sign the phone contract on behalf of the board.

Groschner seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### Office dynamics

In light of a recent incident in the Town Hall, Cawley made a motion that the select board make it clear that there is to be no cursing, yelling, threatening, or similar behavior by town employees in Town Hall.

Groschner seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### Office access by town officers

Cawley said that although the Town Hall is closed to the public, town officers should have access in order to carry out their duties.

Groschner said that the town clerk is in a position to make appointments for anyone who needs to access records, as long as they comply with COVID guidelines.

Cawley emphasized that people in an official capacity are not the same as the general public.

#### Liquor license: East Corinth General Store, Crossmolina Farm (clarification)

Cawley requested approval for renewal of the class 2 liquor license for the East Corinth General Store. He noted that a class 2 license authorizes the sale of "malt and vinous beverages" (beer and wine).

Groschner said he was in favor of signing for the renewal.

Cawley made a motion to approve; Demrow seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Cawley clarified that the license approved at the March select board meeting for the Crossmolina Farm Store was also a class 2 license, but was described as a license for the sale of beer only. It should be stated that their license authorizes sale of both beer and wine.

Demrow moved to approve the clarified class 2 license for the Crossmolina Farm Store.

Groschner seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

#### Washington Electric Company (WEC) right of way request, Goose Green Road

Cawley reported that he had received a request from WEC to reroute lines in the right of way near the Bradford town line.

Groschner asked if trees would be removed, and if so, should the tree warden be involved?

Cawley said WEC would be responsible for getting easements if needed. He added that the work would involve four poles on the Corinth end.

Demrow asked Porter if he thought there would be a problem about tree removal.

Porter said if the lines crisscrossed the road, trees might have to be trimmed, but unlikely they would need to be cut down.

Groschner said he would consult with Corinth's tree warden, Ginny Barlow. He then made a motion to approve the WEC request conditionally if Barlow had no objection.

Cawley seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### Other business

Board members thanked Catherine Tudish for her service as select board clerk and welcomed Anne Rosten, who will take over that position.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.