

Town of Corinth Selectboard
PO Box 461
Corinth, VT 05039

Unapproved Minutes of Selectboard Meeting
Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Attending for the Board: Carl Demrow, Holly Groschner, and Stephen Devoto. Anne Rosten, Selectboard Clerk. Lee Porter, Road Commissioner: Joe Blodgett, Road Foreman; Mike Tagliavia, Jeremy Goodrich, Robert Tilden, and David Adams. Attending Via Zoom: KellyAnn Donahue, Head Lister; Gary Apfel, Town Meeting Moderator; Norm Collette, Town Hall Facilities Manager; Ed Childs, EC Fiber Delegate; Dina DuBois and Dan Wing.

Board member Groschner called the meeting to order at 7:11 PM. The delay was related to Zoom access issues.

Welcome –Board chair election; public meeting practice; 2024 - 25 Plan

The board welcomed Stephen Devoto; newly elected board member. Demrow made a motion to nominate Holly Groschner as the Selectboard Chair. Devoto seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Groschner iterated her goals for the next year: to have an annual calendar for the board's timeline of usual functions and duties, scheduling added issues as they come up, and initiatives for the year. She requested that board members consider annual objectives for discussion at the April meeting.

Minutes of March 4, 2024 financial meeting

Demrow made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 4, 2024 financial meeting minutes including the tax sale amendment. Groschner seconded and the motion passed. Devoto abstained.

Road Commissioner's report / Highway Dept. concerns (Porter/Blodgett)

Blodgett reported the town roads are firming and drying up. He then presented a list of phone numbers, codes, standards, and inventory to adopt and send to the State as yearly mandated. He asked and the board signed the grant administration form for financial aid from the State DOT. Blodgett said his work with FEMA is progressing.

Blodgett relayed his objections about the change of hours at the Transfer Station. First, he said the early open hour of 7:00 AM may put his crew on the roads an hour earlier in inclement weather to make them ready for travel and second, it will cost the town more for the extra hour to pay Cassella. The contract with Casella is month to month as it expired in July. Demrow made a motion to change the hours back to 8:00 am – 1:00 pm (from 7:00 – 1:00). Devoto seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Demrow stated that he received a complaint from a Pike Hill resident about trucks using Pike Hill Road in violation of the weight permit. Blodgett explained that the ordinance is presently not enforced against heating fuel trucks because households on those dirt roads need heat.

Groschner turned the conversation to the ARPA funds allocations. She said the funds must be committed by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026. She asked the board to plan for a deadline for fund commitment of December 1, 2024. She requested that the Road Foreman and Road Commissioner identify "big ticket" items that are approved within the existing budget so that ARPA funds can be committed to those allowed expenses, creating a surplus of tax dollars to use on the authorized ARPA projects (the Town Garage and Town Hall). Joe Blodgett indicated that he would bring a list of such possible expenditures by or before the next meeting. Demrow stated that the board has allocated \$200,000 for the Town Garage and \$150,000 for the Town Hall from the ARPA fund. There is an unallocated balance, approximately \$25,000, that is being held in reserve for cost overruns.. The Treasurer will be requested to verify the allocations, the expenditures to date, and the remaining ARPA funds at the next financial meeting.

Public Concerns

Tagliavia asked about the TRORC (Two Rivers Ottauquechee River Commission) presentation in February that included discussion about grant funding for an East Corinth wastewater project survey. Demrow explained that East Corinth Village has homes on the west side of Village Road adjacent to the Tabor Branch of the Waits River, creating a potential issue with wells and septic systems. Redstart Forestry conducted an initial survey of water runoff locations in the village. Demrow explained that the selectboard had considered applying to use grant money available to create a survey for a wastewater remediation project, but the survey is expensive, requires a match for the grant, and the resulting proposed project costs are prohibitive.

BRIC21 LHMP – grant completion

The board discussed a notice from the State Department of Public Safety about financial deficiencies that must be cured prior to approval of a grant application for Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMP) under the State's grant program called Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program <https://vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation>. TRORC will assist the town to apply for the grants. The selectboard's financial

clerk has addressed the state audit, which requires the selectboard to amend the procurement policy to conform with federal grant policy. Groschner presented the amendments. Demrow made a motion to approve the current amended policy. Devoto seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

FY 2025: Capital & Maintenance Expenditures / Town Hall & Garage

Groschner identified the additional funds budgeted for town hall maintenance by the voters in the amount of \$12,550 and asked the Town Hall Manager to explain the projects and timeline for those expenditures. Norm Collette provided a list of Town Hall maintenance projects. Groschner reiterated that the ARPA funds slated for the Town Hall project must be committed by December 31, 2024 and requested that Demrow, chair of the Town Hall Improvement Committee create a project timeline, so that the maintenance projects can be scheduled in context with that project. She asked that Collette come back with a plan and schedule to present at the next meeting. Collette agreed and pointed out that the maintenance budget regards projects with expenditures whose start date is July 1, 2024.

Appointments to Office - nominations

There was brief discussion regarding the potential overlap of the duties of the Administrative Officer and the Town Clerk. The board will ask the Administrative Officer to provide a scope of work, to consider the scope. Lister Donahue asked to see the final list once approved by the board.

The board discussed the need to fill the vacant position of Animal Control Officer. Currently, the responsibility of the ACO defaults to the selectboard. Devoto has agreed to undertake the necessary research to find an ACO nominee and a shelter facility recommendation. The Animal Control Officer is responsible for impounding animals in violation of town ordinances, and neglected animals, and arranging for care while impounded. The current annual budget is \$750. Devoto agreed to check with Central VT Humane Society, the former ACO, and the Bradford Veterinary clinics for kennel costs. Groschner reminded the board to follow the purchase policy as possible.

Groschner mentioned the selectboard's practice of reappointing town officers and committee members in good standing who wish to continue to serve in order to sustain continuity and encourage productivity. The board made the following nominations for open officer and committee member positions:

Building Safety Officer for one year: Katherine Lea

Budget Committee for one year: Elizabeth Davis, Raymond Moulton, Amy Peberdy, Mike Pittman, Lee Porter, Nick Kramer, John Melquist, and Mike Tagliavia.

Conservation Commission for four years: Ken Arkind

E - 11 Coordinator for four years: Kelly Ann Donahue

Emergency Management for one year: Kelly Ann Donahue, Director; Joe Blodgett, Carl Demrow, Mike Wolff, Tom King, Stephen Devoto, and Holly Groschner.

Green Up Day Coordinator: Anne McKinsey

NEKWMD Board of Supervisors for one year: Marian Cawley and Bob Sandberg.

Planning Commission & Zoning Board of Adjustment for three years: Kerry DeWolfe, Kenya Lazuli, and Anne Margolis.

Road Commissioner for three years: Lee Porter

Road Foreman for three years: Joe Blodgett

Surveyor of Wood and Timber for one year: Virginia Barlow

Tree Warden for one year: Virginia Barlow

Demrow made a motion to approve the slate of nominations. Devoto seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Postponed nominations: The board did not fill the following positions pending candidate review and inquiries - Fence Viewers, Upper Valley Ambulance Service Representative, Service Officer, Revolving Loan Fund Committee, and TRORC Commissioner. Demrow will contact Joe Truss, and Dick and Annie Dolan about the Ambulance Service, and Tom King about the Emergency Management Committee.

Model Investment Policy

The board read the new investment policy and noted some inadequacies. Groschner agreed to provide a redline of the VLCT model provided by Treasurer Kelley, and provide it to board members for review at April's Financial meeting. Devoto requested that it then be sent to VLCT's legal department to review.

ECFiber license agreement (Tom Cecere Groschner)

ECFiber sent a draft lease to the board. The form was not specific enough to address the issues of the town hall hub location. Groschner stated that if the lease requires legal review the town will have to hire a lawyer and noted that she is obligated to recuse herself from voting on the lease. The board discussed the scale of a new generator, splitting costs for propane, and offering electric power on an annual lump-sum basis. The board will do more research and come to a consensus for a new draft lease.

Demrow said that ECFiber needs to do a walk through and produce a site diagram. Groschner agreed.

March 27 Tax Sale Check In – Tax Collector Confirmation

Groschner reported that she had heard from Delinquent Tax Collector Susan Fortunati that she is anticipating a signed payment plan agreement from Creed Albrecht. The Albrecht property, scheduled for the March 27 sale, may be the subject of an abatement hearing if the application is received in time (Monday). The hearing before the Board of Abatement is scheduled for March 26 at 6:00 PM. The Tax Sale will take place on March 27 at 10:00 AM. Groschner also reported that there is a town lien for dilapidated building fines on the Walker property in East Corinth for \$3880, which is not satisfied by the tax sale.

ARPA Fund Allocations

Demrow stated that the summary report of ARPA allocations is due on April 30, 2024 which he is working on. He reiterated that the funds must be committed by Dec 31, 2024 and spent by Dec 31, 2026.

Correspondence

The East Corinth General Store applied for the renewal of 3 licenses to the VT Dept of Liquor and Lotteries: Second class liquor for beer and wine, license to sell tobacco, and license to sell tobacco substitutes. Demrow made a motion to approve all three renewal applications. Devoto seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The board also received a municipal calendar from VLCT and information on dry hydrants for the Fire Dept.

Other business to come before the board

David Adams asked if the February meeting minutes had been approved. Groschner said they will be approved at the April SB meeting. Adams expressed concern about the lack of an Animal Control Officer and noted that his daughter and grandchild do not feel safe leaving the house on Cross Road due to unleashed aggressive dogs. He brought a recent incident regarding unleashed dogs in Barnet to the board's attention.

Demrow made a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss the evaluation of a public officer or employee. Devoto seconded and the motion passed unanimously. No action was taken in the executive session.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.