Town of Corinth Selectboard
PO Box 461
Corinth, VT 05039

Unapproved Minutes of Selectboard Meeting
Tuesday July 2, 2024

Attending for the Board: Holly Groschner, Carl Demrow, and Stephen Devoto. Anne Rosten, Selectboard Clerk. Lee Porter, Road Commissioner: Joe Blodgett, Road Foreman; KellyAnn Donahue, Head Lister; Ruth Atkinson-Adams, lister; Martha Travis, Bob Fortunati, Mike Tagliavia, Gordon Kitteridge, Sue Parmenter, Dina DuBois, and Julie Guenther. Attending via Zoom: Chris Groschner, Gary Apfel, Town Meeting Moderator; and Korrine Harvey

Board Chair Groschner called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Welcome – Agenda Approval
Groschner stated that an amendment would be added to the selectboard minutes from June 4, 2024. Demrow made a motion to approve the agenda. Devoto seconded and the motion passed unanimously

Approval of Minutes from 5/13/24, 6/4/24, and 6/10/24
Demrow made a motion to approve the minutes from the financial meeting of May 13, 2024; the minutes from the SB meeting of June 4, 2024 with the amendment as read, (per legal counsel re; lease for Western Star truck), and financial minutes from June 10, 2024. Devoto seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Road Commissioner/Road Foreman Reports
Road Commissioner Porter reported that a trailer was in the right of way on White Road and he contacted the property owner three times before they moved it. He has noticed that since Green Up Day tires, trash, and junk has increased on Corinth roadsides. He and the road crew remove it when they see it. The board will revisit the dumping ordinance. Porter said Amber Vecchiarelli from Casella asked to attend Monday night's financial meeting to go over updates with the board on trash collection. He handed the board some information from Meyers Trash Disposal.

Foreman Blodgett updated the board on the Town Garage project; construction will begin next week. The foundation has been completed. Blodget then reported on the progress with the Better Back Roads projects. Hoots Road is done and work on other roads is in progress.

Blodgett stated that there's been confusion with FEMA due to workforce changes and little progress has been made. The three main FEMA projects are the Joe Lord Rd culvert, Turkey Hill culvert, and the Johnson Rd.

George Osgood has established a cow crossing sign on Chelsea Rd which has been approved by the state. The signs need to be moved further in as they are in the town right of way. Blodgett will talk with Osgood.

Porter said the new F600 town truck is ready for purchase at $143,889. Blodget suggested putting $25,000 down from budgeted expenditures to bring down the loan amount from $143,889 to $118,000. The bank-drafted a resolution to be signed July 2, did not reflect the down payment. Groschner will ask the treasurer to have the resolution changed to show the new principle amount for approval at the July 8 financial meeting. Interest rate quotes were received in writing by the Road Commissioner from Ford Credit Co. and Wells River Savings Bank; both interest rates came in higher than M–T Bank.

Public Concerns
Bob Fortunati is concerned about the amount of excess gravel that the town plows have pushed to the roadsides which form a berm so water can not run off into the ditches on Rollie Day Rd, Richardson Rd, Pike Hill Rd, and Coppermine Rd. He said the ditches need to be cleaned out. Blodgett stated that with the four mud seasons and two late snow storms, plowing has been difficult and accounts for the loose gravel. He said that they will find time to pull the gravel back and pick it up after other summer projects are done. Groschner asked Blodgett for an October deadline to attend to the ditch and gravel concerns.

Fortunati also stated that water has been running off Coppermine Rd and under his barn which is taking a toll on the foundation. Blodgett will investigate. Fortunati also stated the road crew uses topsoil on the class 4 road near Copper Mine Road. Blodgett replied that the class 4 roads are not a priority and more money for better materials is not an option. Fortunati said he uses the Coppermine Rd. Anne Rosten said her family uses it as well as others.

Gordon Kitteridge stated his concern about impacts on his property from the Hedgehog Bridge project due to begin August 17th. Kitteridge reported that retaining walls from the historic Bowen-Hunter Bobbin Mill are up against the project bridge abutments and vibrations from the project could cause the old cement to crumble and fall into the brook. He asked if the Town's contract ensures the contractor would be responsible for any damage;

Kitteridge warned the Town that he refuses to be liable to damage to his property from the project. He asked to see the contract for the bridge project. Blodgett will talk with the agency district head (DTA) of the project and provide Kitteridge a look at the contract.

Chris Groschner said the Center Rd is very dusty and noted increased use by heavy farm equipment. He asked if the road crew would put chloride on Center Rd from the Hutton Hill Bridge up to Cookeville Rd. Blodgett said that they are out of chloride right now but more will be delivered soon and they will attend to it.

FEMA buy out–Travis property

Martha Travis detailed all the damage done to her property due to last Summer's flooding. The driveway and lean- to were destroyed, the garage was badly damaged, and the property erosion extensive. It is a constant problem with any major rain storm. Travis has talked with Bill Ricker to plan an erosion barrier but there was no plan the state will approve. She requested that the board approve and assist her with the application for the buyout grant which is due August 16th. The property consists of 1.5 acres, a mobile home with water and sewer, the garage, and an outbuilding. Lister Donahue stated the value in the grand list at $89,100. Devoto said he would coordinate filing the grant, with Travis's assistance. The state would pay its determined value to Travis and the town would acquire the property.

Demrow made a motion for the town to acquire the Travis parcel at 82 South America Road, Parcel 067-00082, through the state flood buyout program, and to move forward on the buyout grant for Martha Travis. Devoto seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

New Open Meeting Law

The new law mandates recording of any town selectboard or committee meetings. The recordings must be posted on the website to show compliance. Tonight's meeting is being recorded on Zoom. Groschner said that the complaint form and process for appeal needs to be accessible to the public. Groschner agreed to be the receiver for complaints as chair of the select board and will talk with the committees about the procedures. Demrow will post the recording and draft a complaint form. Devoto asked how long the recordings need to be posted. Groschner thought the legislation required a year but will check.

OCSD Contract

Groschner has worked on a contract with the OCSD for 7 months, including monthly calls with 12 Orange County towns and representatives from OCSD, VLCT, and other law enforcement agencies to research what other communities are doing about law enforcement. The contract proposal by OCSD for FY25 would be for $18,000 for 12 months at a rate of $65/hour (roughly 5 hours/week) with service scope determined by the OCSD; the OCSD offers patrol service Monday thru Friday from 8:00AM to 4:00PM. Upon inquiry, the OCSD confirmed that it is not interested in discussing any changes or flexibility in hours or services given the size of the Corinth budget.

Groschner provided the board with a rundown of all the Corinth law enforcement calls for the past 13 months. Altogether there were 261 calls; 21 calls handled by OCSD and 240 by State Police (208) and Dept of Fish and Wildlife (32). Over 30% of the State Police calls were at night or on weekends. Only 28 of the State Police/ Fish & Wildlife calls were crime related and nearly half were "service" calls such as welfare check and citizen assistance; of the 21 OCSD responses, 6 were traffic stops and 12 were midday patrols. Groschner noted that other towns in Orange County were spending 6x - 8x more than Corinth per capita on law enforcement for more complete local service.

After discussion the board did not vote to renew the OCSD contract for now. The board concurred to keep an open discussion with the OCSD and work with them if service can be adjusted to the needs of the town. All residents are advised to follow OCSD and State Police advice by using "911" for **all** law enforcement assistance.

Dina DuBois asked if we could go back to having a Constable. Groschner said that VLCT and other law enforcement officials have advised that the Constable role, while often helpful to citizens, is risky due to a lack of radio or personnel backup, and noted that the town must manage Constable services and is liable for constable training and any injuries or damages. Groschner also noted that in one year the state police had responded to over 100 calls for citizen disputes and other services that were formerly associated with community law enforcement. DuBois brought up the speeding and ATV issues and how to address those. The board agreed to consider a response to traffic control which may include a speed monitor. Groschner noted that the Game Warden had responded to a call for ATV violations. Groschner will send Corinth's ATV ordinance to the Game Warden, Mr Lumsden, and a letter to the OCSD acknowledging the end of the contract.

EC Fiber Agreement

EC Fiber has sent a draft license agreement back for the hub. Demrow will send to counsel for review.

Upper Valley Ambulance

Zach Bryan, the UVA director, sent an email to clarify that the wording in the last UVA solicitation mailing was unacceptable and will change it. The UVA charges Corinth a per capita rate, and it does not charge the town per ambulance call. Thé selectboard discussed what action to take given that the Town did not budget the full amount charged by UVA in FY 2024 or 2025. The town owes UVA $2118.75 according to the UVA invoice. Demrow said he was ok with paying but this should not happen again, and instead the parties should come to terms in the budget process. Porter suggested having the UVA attend budget meetings and the board review the UVA service in November and also to talk to Joe Truss who is the UVA

town representative. He has not attended any meetings in the past year. Grochner made a motion to pay the UVA for the first two quarters of FY24 $2118.75. Demrow seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Animal Control Officer

Devoto visited the Boothe home on Hayward Rd a week ago to address agreed conditions of compliance. Devoto reported that an invisible dog fence has been installed to keep the dogs in. The dogs are not registered at this time and it is not known if they are vaccinated against Rabies. Devoto will ask them on Monday for the name of their veterinarian and pursue registration of all the Booth dogs.

He contacted VLCT for a job description for Animal Control Officer and has not heard back. He looked at the last two town appointments for information. He will post the opening on the LRN and town website and have a ACO report for the meeting in August.

Review of Grant Initiatives

The board discussed LHMP which Selectboard Financial Clerk Montagne has been working on. Demrow will call Harry Falconer from TRORC and EGS about the MERP schedule. MTAP grant from VT Preservation Trust will pay for the architect for the Town Hall project and once he has a plan that the committee approves, that plan will be eligible for further grants. Groschner will ask Montagne to start tracking surplus money from grants to enter on the Dashboard.

Correspondence and Other Business

Ben Machin from Redstart informed the board that the East Corinth Water Study is not complete yet. He will attend the August selectboard meeting with an update.

Brad Wheeler's term as Health Officer is up at the end of July but Groschner reported he is willing to be re-appointed. Demrow made a motion to re-appoint Brad Wheeler for another 5 year term as Health Officer. Devoto seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Gary Apfel asked if the town could save the recorded meetings in perpetuity as he thinks they may have historical significance. Groschner suggested he research what other towns do and to especially look into Charlotte as they have a 3rd party handle that.

Donahue said that VT Alert is providing training for having a public notification system that will show up on landlines, cellphones, and/or emails. She asked if one of the board members would like to have the training as VEM suggests having two people. Groschner said to ask the Town Clerk if she will do it.

Dina DuBois said there is a car parked at the Old Village Store in East Corinth again. Donahue said there are relatives of the property owner living in the car.

Confirmation of July /August meeting dates

Financial meeting is scheduled for Monday 7/8/24 and the next selectboard meeting is scheduled for 8/6/24.

Executive Session

Groschner made a motion to go into Executive Session; 1 VSA 313 (3). Devoto seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Devoto made a motion to adjourn. Groschner seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.