Town of Corinth Selectboard
PO Box 461 Corinth, VT 05039

Approved Minutes of Selectboard Meeting
Tuesday August 6, 2024

Attending for the board: Holly Groschner and Stephen Devoto. Carl Demrow absent. Anne Rosten Selectboard Clerk; Lee Porter, Road Commissioner; Joe Blodgett, Road Foreman; Kelly Ann Donahue, Head Lister; Brad Wheeler, Town Health Officer; Mike Tagliavia, Jon Ruggles, Anne McKinsey, and Martha Travis. Attending via Zoom: Town Meeting Moderator Gary Apfel; Dick Kelley, Treasurer; Rick Moore, and Alex-Nuti de Biasi, Journal Opinion Editor.

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

Road Commissioner/Road Foreman Reports

Commissioner Porter noted that there have been washouts but nothing extreme. Road Foreman Blodgett said that there has been a problem with dumping debris at the Rte 25 Park and Ride in East Corinth. He offered a couple of suggestions for possible solutions. One is to cut some trees down to make the area more visible from the road and another option is to mount a camera high up on the light pole. Groschner said she would ask the State Police to patrol the area. Blodgett will speak with Treasurer Kelley about setting up a line item for purchasing a camera. Groschner asked that Kelley and Blodgett come back with a plan and proposed expenses at next month's SB meeting.

Porter stated that there is an ongoing illegal dumping problem in town. He and Blodgett, with the help of the road crew, pick junk up along the road as possible. Groschner said she is noticing more trash. Porter agreed and indicated that trash is being left with "Free" signs on other property owners' land. Blodgett noted that this is a perennial problem.

Porter met with Casella Waste Management at the Transfer Station to go over details of their proposal. Casella would like to set a target date of December 1, 2024 for completion of the work required at the transfer station for two new compacting units.. The change in pricing in the Casella proposal would apply only to recyclables.Groschner asked that Porter send the board the proposed contract for review, and a list of the names and responses of the solid waste haulers that Porter contacted for bids. Further discussion will take place at Monday's financial meeting.

Blodgett said that the Hedgehog Brook Bridge project is on hold due to the catastrophic flooding a few weeks ago in St. Johnsbury and Lyndonville. The contractor may still get to it this year but more than likely will wait until next Spring. Blodgett noted that he will get a two week heads up before work begins on the project.

Blodgett presented a document from WEC (Washington Electric Coop) for board approval to put up 3 new electric poles up to the coppermine off Richardson Rd. which the board signed. Groschner said that the EPA has scheduled a public meeting for August 20th. Porter stated that the EPA plans to start work either this week or next.

Porter reported that the work on the new Town Garage Building is proceeding well. Groschner requested that Blodgett complete the bid records for the project. Blodgett explained that the town has purchased a new type of sand for the coming winter season. It is called "Black Sand" and is manufactured from staypak material with no new chemicals and is locally sourced.

Devoto asked about progress on the "Cow Crossing" signs on Chelsea Rd by George Osgood's farm. The board needs information about liability from the VLCT who has not responded as yet.

Public Concerns

None

Approval of Town Tax Rate

Kelley stated the proposed new tax rates for the town: 2.0780 for residential which is 2.3% less than last year's rate of 2.1272 and 2.4968 for non-residential which is up 6.4% from last year's rate of 2.3460. Devoto made a motion to approve

the new residential rate of 2.0780 and non residential rate of 2.4968. Groschner seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Groschner acknowledged Demrow's review of the numbers.

Solid Waste Complaint - 625 Young Rd

Health Officer Brad Wheeler received a phone call from a neighbor near 625 Young Rd complaining of rats migrating from the built up trash. Wheeler investigated and contacted the owners who had been storing trash outside the home at that address, and was told that the owners have no resources to clean up the trash. Wheeler contacted Jeff Spiegel, of the Corinth Community Coalition (CCC), who asked the solid waste district and hauler, Casella if either could make a dumpster available. Spiegel reported the answer was negative. Groschner discussed clean up using town equipment from the road foreman, Blodgett. Liability concerns keep the town from using its equipment. Blodgett suggested changing the ordinance to create a lien for the cost of cleanup. Groschner suggested contacting the bank holding the mortgage to clean it up. Lister Donahue reported that the East Corinth Church handles trash from the 4th of July Chicken Barbecue by renting a dumpster from Casella that handles 1500 yards of trash and costs $500 plus $149 a ton for tipping fees, which amounts to about $1000. Groschner said that this issue requires all three board member's attention before a decision could be made, given the ramifications for other properties as well, and therefore deferred action to the next meeting. The owner disclosed to Wheeler that they received the bank's foreclosure notice on the property, and Wheeler agreed to ask that a copy be sent to the SB. . Devoto said he would send a letter to the homeowner describing the violation and the penalty. Groschner agreed to check the solid waste statute in Newbury. Wheeler will draft a health violation and work with the selectboard as the town Board of Health. Groschner offered that the SB would meet separately in a public meeting as the Board of Health.

Open Meeting Law

Groschner noted that the VLCT has not yet issued guidelines on the revised Open Meeting Law (OML). Town committees are required to post, in the designated public places and on the website, minutes 5 days from a meeting, agendas two days before a meeting, and on the website, audio recording of committee meetings (with the minutes). Anne McKinsey suggested having a YouTube channel for town proceedings. Groschner advised that exceptions may apply, and the Town's advisory committees, like the Corinth Community Coalition, are not obligated to follow the OML.

FEMA buyout/Travis property

Devoto reported that he submitted an application on behalf of the Town, as agreed, prior to the deadline for the state-funded buyout program for flood-prone properties asking for funding for the town's purchase of the Travis property on South America Rd. Waiting for approval from the state.

Building Safety Order - 657 Village Rd

On June 29,2024 a building safety order was sent to Michelle Walker of Largo, FL owner of 657 Village Rd in East Corinth, also formerly known as the Olde Village Store. The safety order cited failing structural integrity, with buildings sliding towards the Tabor Branch of the Waits River. With flooding conditions the safety order found that collapsing sheds create a hazard for downstream properties and that there are also fire hazards concerning abutting properties. The homeowner has been served one violation already for the conditions, and assessed penalties which have not been paid. As of the date of the meeting no notice of appeal has been received by the SB. Devoto made a motion to set the daily penalty at $75. Groschner seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Groschner offered to send a letter regarding the penalty rate to the owners and to arrange for a lien in the amount of the total penalties to date.

Animal Control Officer

Devoto modified a job description for an Animal Control Officer from the town of Underhill, VT. Groschner and Demrow will read it. Groschner asked Devoto to reach out to the ACO in Topsham to confirm interest in the position..

Review of Grant Initiatives

The open grants were reviewed. The board needs the status of the LHMP RFP from Selectboard Financial Clerk Shirley Montagne and an update on MERP from board member Carl Demrow..

Correspondence

None

Confirmation of Meeting Dates: 8/12 Financial and 9/3 Regular
The board approved the meeting dates of financial 8/12 and regular 9/3.

Devoto made a motion to adjourn. Groschner seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Due to a technical failure the meeting was not recorded.

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