

Minutes of the March 26, 2007 Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Present: Neal Fox, Bill Richards, Eric Benson, Delbert Cloud, Geneva Gaiko, Michael Petraccione, Mike Hedges and Martha Mongeon of the Vermont Agency of Transportation, James Bennett and Chris Costanzo for the "Herald of Randolph."

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Neal Fox, the Board first reviewing and approving the weekly payroll and payables. The Constable's reports of March 18 and 25, 2007 were reviewed and placed on file.

Chairman Fox said he wished to set in place a format by which Selectboard meetings would henceforth be conducted in the interests of minimizing disruptions, providing a better opportunity for members of the public to present thoughts to the Board without interruptions, and enabling Board members to more clearly focus on matters of business. To eliminate the need for use of the photocopier periodically through the meeting, he offered Chris Costanzo, as "Herald of Randolph" reporter, a packet of information relating to business on the evening's agenda. Mr. Costanzo considered that the rules of procedure being set forth were an affront to his own participation at Selectboard meetings, expressed that he would no longer serve as reporter, and left at this time.

Chairman Fox then welcomed Michael Petraccione who had just arrived at the meeting, and asked if he had particular matters he wished to discuss with the Board before other business were taken up. Mr. Petraccione said he was displeased with the response from the Town Manager when he had recently called the Town Office to complain about mud conditions on Darrt Hill Road. He asked if there were a Town policy regarding what response should be made to such complaints, and was advised that there is not a policy. Mr. Petraccione then asked for a letter of apology from the Selectboard. This was denied; Mr. Petraccione departed at approximately 6:15 PM.

Per appointment, Mike Hedges and Martha Mungeon of the Vermont Agency of Transportation were in attendance to inform the Board of the present plans for replacement of the River Street Bridge, this being a State-owned structure. Ms. Mungeon explained that the multi-faceted project earlier considered would be too expensive for the State to undertake at this time. The present plan is to replace the bridge without addressing matters such as widening the railroad underpass, making improvements along River Street, or re-configuring the intersection of Routes 12 and 107. The project would encompass two construction seasons, and would include placing a temporary bridge immediately downstream of the present structure. It is envisioned that the project will be started in 2012, with necessary monitoring and repair of the present structure until then. Eric Benson asked if any thought had been given to putting in a new river crossing as had been approved by the Town previously; Ms. Mungeon cited costs and permitting problems as precluding such an option. Neal Fox asked if there might be a possibility of doing some repairs on the present structure, and looking at a better long-term solution for the future. Mike Hedges said there did not seem to be any support for putting money into temporary fixes on the present structure because it would not be justifiable economically. He added that the project is going back to the "project definition phase" and Town officials would be invited to attend the involved hearing. Neal Fox asked if there were any plans to make other improvements along the 107 corridor in the near future, the answer from Mr. Hedges being that no such plans were contemplated. Mr. Hedges added that the State's emphasis at this time is toward fixing present infrastructure. The replacement of a bridge in Woodstock and the re-direction of truck traffic from the Route 4 corridor to the 107 corridor was discussed in light of the present condition of the River Street Bridge, but Mr. Hedges believed the present structure would be adequate for the term, the Route 4 detour only being for about a six week interval. The Board suggested that the plans for the replacement of River Street Bridge should include consideration of adequate signage for nearby intersections, crosswalks, adequate lighting for both the temporary and the permanent structure, and the land area necessary for "staging." With discussion completed, Ms. Mungeon and Mr. Hedges departed at approximately 7:20 PM.

The minutes of the March 12, 2007 meeting of the Board of Selectmen were then approved by motion of Eric Benson, seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried. The minutes of the regional planning commission for February 28, 2007 and January 10, 2007 were reviewed and placed on file.

First Constable James Bennett was then present, and informed the Board that he hoped to apply for a grant to help do safety awareness programs as had been done in the previous year. He asked if the Town did have two required policies in place, these being a "Zero Tolerance" enforcement policy and a "Restraint Use" policy. Delbert Cloud will ascertain and report back to Mr. Bennett and the Board. A brief look was then taken at a police vehicle Mr. Bennett had brought with him, it being a vehicle the Town of Rochester is interested in selling. After viewing it, the Board asked Delbert Cloud to do an evaluation of the financial

aspects associated with acquiring a different vehicle at this time. Mr. Bennett left the meeting at approximately 7:40 PM.

The “Annual Financial Plan for Town Highways” has been reviewed by the District AOT Administrator and is found to be acceptable for purpose of State financial assistance. The Plan was unanimously endorsed by the Board members for return to the District Office. A proposal for street sweeping services was reviewed, this being from A.C. Sweeping. It was agreed that the company had been doing a good job in the past and that a two year commitment should be made in order to obtain a more favorable pricing.

A request from the Bethel Fire Department to utilize the “Fire Department Building and Equipment Trust Fund” to purchase fire fighting safety gear was considered next. Motion to approve the request in the amount of \$2,383.44 was made by Neal Fox, seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried.

A proposal from Spencer Lewis to make repairs to the stone wall at Cherry Hill Cemetery was then discussed. Mr. Lewis had provided pictures and a written explanation of the scope of work involved. It was agreed that Delbert Cloud should invite Mr. Lewis to a forthcoming meeting wherein the Board could have Mr. Lewis show the envisioned work at the site itself.

The Board then reviewed plans submitted by Marvin Harvey showing how “Harvey’s Peavine Pit” would be restored in areas where no gravel extraction is possible by use of tree stumps, grading and re-seeding. Although the pit is in Stockbridge, both the Royalton and Bethel Selectboards are asked to approve the plans since Stockbridge utilizes the Bethel/Royalton solid waste program and the proposed activity is regarded by the State of Vermont as a solid waste facility within Bethel/Royalton’s service area. The project was approved by motion of Bill Richards, seconded by Eric Benson and unanimously carried.

A proposal to construct a new visitor center at the White River National Fish Hatchery was next discussed. It was agreed that the project would be a good addition to the hatchery facility and would benefit the area as a whole given the educational component and the tourism draw. A letter in support of the project was approved for submittal to Senators Leahy and Sanders, and Representative Welch.

A scope of work is now available for bidding to provide for accessibility modifications at the Town Office, this being funded in part by a grant from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development program. The Board members concurred that the bid packet is appropriate for release to bidders as a first phase of the accessibility project.

The following communications were then reviewed by the Board: (1) a 3-22-07 letter from Henry Holmes re. the vacancy on the Bethel Planning Commission, (2) a list of the conditions proposed by Rock of Ages Corporation for potential inclusion in a permit for crushing of waste stone at its Christian Hill quarry, and (3) a 3-26-07 letter from Jim Giberti re. treatment of class 4 rights-of-way.

The motion was then made by Bill Richards to enter executive session to discuss litigation in which the Town is a party, this being seconded by Eric Benson and unanimously carried. The time was 10:15 PM. Delbert Cloud was the only person remaining with the Board during the executive session. No minutes were kept. Upon return to open meeting at 10:20 PM the only motion was that to adjourn, this being made by Bill Richards, seconded by Eric Benson and unanimously carried.

Neal Fox

Bill Richards

Eric Benson