

Minutes of the August 11, 2008 Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Present: Neal Fox, Bill Richards, Joe De Freitas, Delbert Cloud, First Constable James Bennett, Geneva Gaiko, Henry Holmes, Donald Phillips, and Joe Duncan.

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. Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Board members had briefly looked at a potential replacement vehicle which Constable Bennett had brought to the Town Office; the present cruiser is in need of a considerable amount of repair if it is to be inspected again. The costs of equipping a replacement vehicle were discussed, and it was ultimately agreed that Mr. Bennett should have a mechanical evaluation done of the proffered vehicle before any final decisions are made regarding acquisition. Constable Bennett then departed at approximately 6:20 PM.

The Board then reviewed the minutes of the July 21, 2008 meeting of the Board of Selectmen, these being approved by motion of Bill Richards, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried. With respect to prior business, the Board members endorsed renewal documents for a Line of Credit on behalf of the Water Department, this being at a face value not to exceed \$50,000.00, written for a term ending December 31, 2008 at the rate of 2.60%; the Note is held by Mascoma Savings Bank.

Also with respect to business associated with the Water Department, Chairman Fox welcomed Donald Phillips and Joe Duncan from the engineering firm of Forcier Aldrich & Associates, they being present per appointment at 6:30 PM. The subject of discussion was the need to relocate the water main from the River Street Bridge in anticipation of the bridge replacement being planned by the Vermont Agency of Transportation. Since the project has already been approved for financial assistance by the Vermont Water Supply Division, the discussion focused around various objectives to actually be provided for within the project plans. Ultimately the motion to approve an engineering services agreement with Forcier Aldrich & Associates for preliminary engineering services with a lump sum consideration of \$4,900.00 was made by Bill Richards, seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried. Mr. Phillips and Mr. Duncan then departed, the time being approximately 7:30 PM.

Chairman Fox then welcomed Henry Holmes and asked if he had particular matters he wished to discuss with the Board. Mr. Holmes said he has concern over the cost of energy and the resulting impact this may have on citizens during the forthcoming winter heating season. Although familiar with various State of Vermont agencies/programs which can be called upon, Mr. Holmes suggested that the Town as a local entity should be prepared to respond in a more timely fashion in the event of needs. The Board noted that gifts cannot be made of public tax dollars, and there is thus no fund available to draw from; however, the Town Service Officer is the local officer authorized to issue vouchers for emergency assistance when State officials/programs cannot be accessed. It was agreed that Delbert Cloud would consult with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns re. "hotline" references, and that a meeting should be scheduled for the Board to discuss

matters of preparedness with the Town Service Officer, David Allen. Mr. Holmes departed at this time, and the Board returned to the order of the Agenda.

The Board read the notice of a Public Hearing being called by the Bethel Planning Commission to receive comments on proposed amendments to the Bethel Zoning Ordinance, said Hearing to be on August 20, 2008 at 7:00 PM at the Town Office. The Board discussed the matters addressed by the proposed amendments, the primary subject areas being (1) regulation of outdoor wood boilers, (2) combining the “Highway Residential” and “Highway Commercial” zoning districts, and (3) more permissive treatment of “Multiple Family Dwellings.” Concern was voiced that regulation of outdoor boilers should not serve to be overly-restrictive given the energy plight facing citizens today, and the review procedures were examined closely.

By motion of Neal Fox, seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried, Delbert Cloud was designated as the Town’s “voting delegate” to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns annual business meeting.

Joe De Freitas gave a brief report on the recent work of the Town Hall Committee, and the meeting with the architect and the Historic Preservation consultant. He also spoke of his plan to research the potential value to others of the old windows/glass in the building which may well be disposed of when rehabilitation is done. The need for a realistic business plan was spoken of again in light of the fact that the public will have to be asked for support of the project by bond approval in the near future. Geneva Gaiko commented that some things take time to happen, like the creation of a part-time overseer such as the Town of Royalton has hired for the Academy Building, an office she did not believe would be needed initially. She added that it is difficult to get people interested in using the building when it is impossible to tell them when it will be available. With respect to the timing for a public “bond vote,” the Board members tentatively agreed that it might be good to present the question in the November election interval.

A July 24, 2008 letter from Mark McEathron, Central Vermont Director for the Vermont Land Trust, was next discussed. Purchase of development rights on 150 acres of land along Abbott Road is being considered. The matter was tabled until the next meeting at which time the Board will consider its response; Delbert Cloud will construct a draft of thoughts for the Board to work from.

The Board reviewed a 7-28-08 letter from Mark Gerrish of the Vermont Agency of Transportation’s Operations Division, this requesting permission for placement of electrical apparatus within the right-of-way of Perham Road. Plans were included with the letter showing the extent of installations involved, which are necessary to put in place a “Roadway Weather Information Station” on adjacent Interstate 89. After due consideration, motion was made by Joe De Freitas, seconded by Bill Richards and unanimously carried, to grant permission for the installations as requested.

The following communications were then reviewed and placed on file: (1) notification from the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank of the recently completed bond sale, (2) a letter of inquiry about class 4 roads from the Vermont Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Association, (3) an 8-1-08 letter from the Vermont Water Supply Division re. water sampling within the Bethel water system, (4) the most recent report re. river water quality received from the White River Partnership, (5) 7-28-08 findings and conclusions from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns re. a road salt buying collaborative, (6) documents from both the regional planning commission and FEMA re. the 2004 "Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan: Bethel Annex (which has been supplanted by the 2008 PDM), and (7) various notifications of permit reviews/actions from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, these being informational only.

With no further business to attend, the motion to adjourn was made by Bill Richards at 10:15 PM, this being seconded by Joe De Freitas and unanimously carried.

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Neal Fox

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Bill Richards

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Joe De Freitas