

Approved Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard
Wednesday, July 17, 2019, 6:30 PM

Present:

Selectboard: David Jones (Chair), Gwen Tanza, Joseph Dutton, Bruce Mello

Members of the Public: Guy Tanza (Town Clerk, Videographer), Peter Barus (Recorder)

Call the meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Review changes to agenda if any

During correspondence, tax rate question and solar field property question.

Table end of year budget review until the 7th, and SLP Water System discussion pending data from the state.

Scheduled members of the public

Unscheduled members of the public

Approve Minutes

Minutes from June 19, 2019 Regular Meeting

Mr. Dutton moved to approve the minutes for June 19, 2019. Second by Mr. Mello. All in Favor.

Minutes from July 3, 2019 Emergency Meeting

Mr. Jones moved to approve the minutes for the Emergency Meeting July 3, 2019. Second by Ms. Tanza. **Passed with one abstention.**

New Business

Discuss and adopt 2019 Town Road & Bridge Standards

Mr. Jones provided copies of the standards. Mr. Tanza explained the original 2001 purpose, to ensure that FEMA would reimburse towns for bridges roads and culverts; without standards the reimbursement would be based on the original condition of infrastructure before the disaster.

Mr. Tanza noted that the Town is in compliance, so that FEMA will reimburse at the highest possible rate; otherwise it will only be to the original condition, as happened in Bellows Falls and Townshend, resulting in court (successful) cases.

Mr. Tanza had highlighted those items requiring signature; and noted that properties are divided into 28-foot segments of road frontage, denoting connection to a watercourse; and recommended signing off on these standards, explaining that the new version arrived last week; and provided the copy for signature.

Mr. Jones moved that the Selectboard sign the document. Second by Mr. Dutton.

In discussion it was noted that WRC recommends that every municipality sign these standards; there had been some changes related to legislation; and that signature would result in at least 85% funding in the event of a disaster.

On the Motion, **All in Favor.**

End of fiscal year budget review – Tabled

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Old Business

Bear Issue

Mr. Mello discussed the recent incidents, noting that solutions have not been effective; Mr. Bloom had called him and discussed the bear, the overhanging limbs and the pines by the playground; further action on the bear situation was suspended until the area can be dug out and detritus cleaned away, noting the health issue and protection of the watercourse; and suggesting waiting until Fall so that the terrain can be clearly seen.

There was discussion; Mr. Dutton had spoken with the Game Warden, who noted that this is a local problem, and is normal bear behavior; Mr. Dutton suggested that bears have become more familiar; that as a local problem it is everyone's duty to control their waste themselves. It was noted that the parties involved have shown a positive attitude and made earnest efforts.

Mr. Mello offered a sheet of 3/4-in plywood, now stored at his home, to strap down across the dumpster as suggested by the Game Warden; Mr. Dutton offered to assist in the installation of the plywood; he and Mr. Mello will cooperate on this as volunteers.

Town Building Update

Mr. Mello discussed his conversation with Mr. Bloom, noting that he is a supporter of the Town; they had discussed fallen limbs and potential falling limbs, as to what needs to be done; that the first work had cost \$150.00; that the rest of the work needed would cost about \$500.00; and that a large limb threatens a children's space in the building. There was consensus that the work should be done as soon as possible. Mr. Mello noted that the tenant has already made a plan to extend the play area away from the overhanging limbs.

Mr. Mello discussed local residents that own an antique store in Newfane with regard to expressing the Town's thanks for their financial contributions; and also expressing thanks to Mr. Bovat, for his excellent and timely work with the water system, which included pro bono work.

Mr. Mello noted that wood chips had been delivered to SLP; Mr. Tanza had suggested that the tenant purchase chips and bill the Town, as this was a safety issue with legal exposure for the Town.

Mr. Mello discussed a plan based on analysis of the work needed at SLP, anticipating cost of \$1,500.00. He noted that the Selectboard had previously agreed to move ahead with a list, now over two-thirds completed; provided photographs of the areas involved; and recommended that Dave Zelesko be hired to work on the building exterior, then to replace rotted 1x4 trim around the windows, then to repair a door to the basement which doesn't close. He noted that these are small projects that would allow painting to be completed. There was discussion about cost being less than \$1,000.00 for these projects.

Mr. Mello recommended scraping the front of the building, and provided pictures; and recommended removing mold (wipe with bleach and paint); and staining the building exterior; after which, in about six weeks, scheduling the permanent removal of bats from BMH.

It was noted that the bat remediation must be separated from the school building work and would require the BMH Committee's participation.

It was noted that no decisions could be made in this meeting.

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Mr. Mello suggested renting a lift for a week; part of the use would be for the bat removal around the steeple and painting, and part for school building mold removal, exterior staining, etc.

Mr. Mello noted a balance of \$23,264.31 and discussed anticipated revenues, noting YTD expenditures at about \$1,280.00 on the buildings; and discussed further estimates on into December. There was discussion of whether to retain some funds for emergencies; it was noted that the building is insured, and the furnace could cost \$20,000.00 – \$30,000.00 to replace; other Town-owned buildings were discussed.

It was noted that water system issues have not been completely resolved.

Mr. Mello discussed lift rental to get the school building ready for paint by end of August. There was discussion of the water system, unknown costs of design and installation; Mr. Jones anticipated receiving more information by the 7th.

Mr. Mello suggested that after the steeple and the school building work, the windows could be addressed; but that no further expenditures should be made on the school building, as the lease payments should cover future costs; and suggested that the \$4,300.00 capital improvement fund should be combined with \$2,700.00 from the church funds, to remove the bats, removing their guano the following year; and suggested that there will be funds from the lease that will be available for work on the church building; and discussed future funding, matching grants, etc.

Mr. Jones asked why the church funds would not be used for bat/guano removal; Mr. Mello explained that approximately \$10,000.00 would be spent on school building projects. There was discussion of the necessity for shuffling funds; it was suggested that money designated for a specific building should be used for expenditures on that building, and not moved around for use with other projects; that further discussions would be necessary.

Mr. Jones polled the members on whether the projects Mr. Mello suggested should proceed; Mr. Dutton suggested that adding the window project brings the balance lower than is desirable, and that this could wait until next year; Ms. Tanza expressed appreciation for Mr. Mello's work and dedication. Mr. Mello noted that he has determined that the windows should be repaired and not replaced, as the quality of the wood is superior.

SLP Water System – Tabled

EMP compliance for SLP Building – Tabled

Road Equipment Purchase Committee Update

Mr. Dutton reported that Sam Bourne had raised concerns that the Town is too small to own such equipment, that the Town would do better to contract out such work; that for next Tuesday's meeting he will compile materials for discussion, with a view toward setting a date for coming to the Selectboard with Committee recommendations; and that he shared Mr. Wellman's opinion that after making a decision the Selectboard should bring it before Town Meeting.

Mr. Tanza noted that it is not legally necessary to bring the issue to Town Meeting as (under statute) the note is for less than five years for used equipment; and noted as Road Commissioner that every town has at least a backhoe and a dump truck. There was discussion of the specific numbers being shared with the Committee; and that Mr. Bourne's opinion is valid, his potential interest as vendor notwithstanding; Mr. Dutton suggested that the high profile of this issue warrants the involvement of Town Meeting.

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Summary / Update / Reports

Guy Tanza – Town Clerk Report

Mr. Tanza reported that the office has been very busy with changes brought about by the legislature July 1; records, marriage licenses, rate structures were all changed entirely; the Town is in total compliance despite much confusing software, etc.; that there was a third vote in which two towns opposed Windham's departure from the new school district; that Ms. Tanza has continued her work on the Town Records so that they can be online in the event of disaster, going back fifteen years; that Ms. Maggio has four or five people on her list for dog licensing; that tax collection is down to about six thousand dollars; that the Town is in good financial condition.

Highways & Roads

Guy Tanza – Road Commissioner Report

Mr. Tanza reported that the Highway Fund has about \$150,000.00, much earmarked for grants, etc.; that the Salt Shed meeting would be held Friday morning (7/19), with Ms. Majors, Mr. Bell attending; that two days of crack-seal work will commence in the next ten days, noting that the results of previous sealing by this vendor have been good; that no paving was scheduled this year, anticipating doing portions of Hill Road next year, noting that oil prices are up significantly.

Mark Bills – Road Supervisor

Mr. Tanza reported that he had no communication with Mr. Bills. There was discussion; it was noted that Mr. Bills works well and efficiently, and the roads look good.

Communications

Email

- Ms. Birch, following up from last meeting with clarifications;
- Ms. Maggio (read aloud by the Chair) about the Newfane solar field; there was discussion of the legal notice from the Brookline and Newfane school districts; Mr. Jones suggested that this is a matter the school boards had decided, to have the land and the lease payments transferred to Newfane; there was discussion of the issues with reference to school board minutes on the property transfer question.
- Re: tax rate, from a resident; it was noted that the treasurer(s) are meeting on this; it is not known whether the tax bills mailed were correct; Mr. Tanza suggested that the numbers on the tax bill seem correct, and it will be resolved in review.

Regular Mail

- Letter and check for \$5,000.00 from Penny Massey toward the Austen Cemetery work (read aloud by the Chair).
- State of Vermont Dept of Taxes notice of education rates for FY 2020
- Valley Cares
- Brattleboro Development Credit Corp
- VLCT News
- Veridesk (catalog)
- BDCC re: programs, annual report

Pay Orders

Accounts Payable

Mr. Jones moved to approve A/P Warrant 2020-02 dated July 15, 2019 in the amount of \$12,691.56. Second by Ms. Tanza. All in Favor.

Payroll

Mr. Jones moved to approve Payroll Warrant 2020-03 dated July 12, 2019 in the amount of \$1,710.68. Second by Mr. Dutton. All in Favor.

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Set agenda for the next meeting – Wednesday August 7, 2019

- BMH discussion: bat remediation, organization
- Water System
- Building Update
- Road Purchase Committee update
- EMP Compliance
- Financial reports
- Road Safety discussion

Adjournment

Mr. Mello moved to Adjourn. Second by Mr. Dutton. All in Favor.

The meeting was Adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, Recording Clerk, July 19th, 2019