

Minutes of West Fairlee Selectboard October 18, 2010 Meeting

Present for the Selectboard: Bonnie Cray, Jim Brigham, Sharon Petersen, Nate Pero

Visitors: Charlie Buchnam, Jonathan Blake, Corey Paye, John Benjamin, Cris Aquino

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by Bonnie Cray

- **Visitors**

Charlie Bucknam is running for the State Senate, he is an Air Force veteran, retired banker, and community leader from Walden, Vermont. The issues he believes are important to you are Economic Growth/Jobs, Budget Discipline, Education Renewal, Simpler Government, and Affordable Energy. Charlie has never been a politician but has learned from and been inspired by the incredible dedication, goodness, self reliance, and common sense of Vermonters. As Senator, I hope to bring those values to Montpelier.

Benjamin felt that it was a conflict of interest for any of the Selectboard who had also been on the Historical Committee to make a biased opinion on the matter of Bean Hall and what happens with it.

- **Approve minutes of October 4, 2010 regular board meeting and October 5, 2010 special Selectboard meeting.**

After making spelling edits to the minutes, Petersen makes a motion to accept the minutes for the October 4th regular scheduled meeting and the minutes of the October 5th Beebe Road Meeting, Brigham seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimous.

- **Hear and Act on the Reports of Town Officers and Committees**

Corey Paye – Conservation Commission about Brushwood Forest

Wants to bring to attention to the board a couple things:

First Item: The Commission brought in a Forester to come in and do a “cut and treat.”

Second Item: Parking signs. There were a couple complaints that people were parking on the side of the road where it is steep, as well as parking in front of people’s driveways.

Corey requested that the Selectboard make a motion to pull money out of the Brushwood fund, whereas, they are currently using Conservation Commission funds to pay for the foresters to come in and maintain the Brushwood Forest, just to make it easier, but as it is for the Brushwood Forest that they are doing work for they would like to get reimbursed.

At 6:18 Nate Pero arrived for the meeting.

Brigham makes a motion to reimburse the conservation commission for the funds used to maintain the Brushwood Forest, Pero seconds the motion, and the motion was unanimous.

- *Roads*

- Inventory of road signs (speed limit, road names, etc.) will be needed

Petersen and Cray did a partial inventory of the Town Roads, Brigham and Pero to complete the inventory. Cray heard from the Orange County Police that in 3 years all signs will need to be updated.

- Beebe Road

It was discussed that the Road be downgraded from a Class 3 to a Class 4 so that while the Landowners would maintain the road, the Town would only have to maintain the culvert and ditches. It was also discussed of what use the road serves to the Town.

Petersen makes a motion that we discontinue Beebe Road, Brigham seconds, motion passed, Pero opposes the motion.

A letter stating the decision and the reason for the decision made will be written up and sent out within 60 days of the hearing date.

- Guard rails on Middlebrook Road

Blake does have an estimate for new guardrails; however, the state does not necessarily require them. A call will be placed into Trevor to get a Car Counter in order to have a more informational answer before making a decision.

- Beaver Meadow Road Update

There is still a little more prep work to go before the guardrails go in.

- *Old business*

- Putting up the Neighborhood Watch signs

The large Neighborhood Watch signs have been put up, however, the small signs are still in the process of being put up.

➤ Building Committee - Appointments

The Building Committee meeting was held the other night, there were four people interested in participating on the Committee. The Selectboard would like a Carpenter to be on the Committee so that they can be there for when the Architects come in to access the building, it was suggested that Nate Pero be that Carpenter. Delsie Hoyt, Frank Stevens, Andy Petersen, and Jim McDade are the other persons interested in being on the committee.

Cray makes a motion to appoint Delsie Hoyt, Frank Stevens, Andy Petersen, and Jim McDade, to the Building Committee, Brigham seconds the motion, and the motion is unanimous.

Cray makes a motion that all building committee meetings will be warned as an open meeting so that the Selectboard can attend the meetings but will not make any decisions, Petersen seconds, and the motion is unanimous.

➤ Bean Hall

Benjamin made the suggestion that the Bean Hall meeting go public as opposed to a closed session.

Petersen makes a motion to make the November 3rd Executive Meeting to become an Open meeting, Pero seconds the motion, and the motion is unanimous.

• *New Business*

➤ Butch Moore Resignation – Selectboard

Pero moves to accept, with great regret, Moore's letter to resign from the Selectboard, Cray seconds the motion, and the motion is unanimous.

We greatly appreciate Butch's service to the Town.

➤ Doug Sonsalla Resignation – CDC

Brigham makes a motion to accept, with great regret, Doug's Resignation, Petersen seconds the motion, motion is unanimous.

We greatly appreciate Doug's service to the Town.

➤ Town Officials Vacancies

- Auditor

It was discussed of getting another Auditor for the Town or to have the mandated outside auditor come in and review the town records every month. It was suggested that we talk to the outside auditor about doing monthly bank reconciliation (independently of the reconciliation done by the treasurer.)

- Lister

Any persons interested in becoming a Lister for the Town to please contact a member of the Selectboard.

The lister plays an important role in town government since it is this official who is charged with determining the value of the real and personal property in the town on which the selectboard will set a tax rate necessary to raise the money to pay for town services, the maintenance of town highways and the schools.

- ❖ Each town must have three listers, one of whom is elected each year for staggered three-year terms. 17 V.S.A. § 2646(5). At annual or special town meeting, a town may vote to elect two additional listers for terms of one year each. 17 V.S.A. § 2650(a).
- ❖ A lister may not also be a member of the selectboard. 17 V.S.A. § 2647. The selectboard sets the lister's compensation unless it is set by the electorate. 24 V.S.A. § 933.
- ❖ Listers are directed to appraise all taxable property in the town at 100 percent of the fair market value. 32 V.S.A § 3431. The estimated fair market value is the price that the property will bring in the open market when offered for sale and purchased by another, taking into consideration all the elements of the availability of the property, its use both potential and prospective, any functional deficiencies, and all other elements such as age and condition, which combine to give property a market value. See 32 V.S.A. § 3481.
- ❖ Agricultural and forest properties that are of the use value program must be appraised at their use value accordance with 32 V.S.A Chapter 24, subchapter 1.
- ❖ Listers must set all real and personal property in the grand list at one percent of its listed value on April 1 of the year of its appraisal. 32 V.S.A. § 3482.

- ❖ Listers must provide an annual abstract of the grand list to the town clerk for forwarding to the Vermont Department of Taxes' Division of Property Valuation and Review. 32 V.S.A. § 4181. Timely filing is necessary for the receipt of state highway and education aid. 32 V.S.A. § 4185.
- ❖ Listers hold grievance hearings for those taxpayers who wish to contest their appraisals. 32 V.S.A. § 4221. Decisions of the listers may be appealed to the board of civil authority, and the listers may appear before the board to defend the appraisals in questions. 32 V.S.A. § 4404
- ❖ The listers sit as part of the board of tax abatement to determine whether a taxpayer may have his or her taxes abated. 24 V.S.A §1533.

For more information about the lister's roles and responsibilities, please consult the *Vermont Lister's Handbook* or the *Act 60 Municipal Officers' Handbook*, both available from the Vermont Department of Taxes, 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05609-1401 (802-828-5860).

- Animal Control Officer

Rosalie Towle resigned as Animal Control Officer.

Any persons interested in becoming the Animal Control Officer to please contact a member of the Selectboard.

- Selectboard Position

Any persons interested in becoming a Selectboard member to please come to the next scheduled meeting on November 1st at 6PM and we will hold interviews then.

- Sign orders

Cray makes a motion to sign the orders, Brigham seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimous.

- Review Correspondence

“Dear Mr. McCartney,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the West Fairlee Selectboard and the citizens of West Fairlee. As you know, we “temporarily” lost Post Office about three years ago when

Bean Hall, which contained our Town Offices and the Post Office, was vacated for code violations.

This was literally the social center of West Fairlee where our citizens could pick up their mail and chat with one another. The loss of this critical gathering space has had a significant negative impact on our citizens.

Several of our families cannot utilize rural route delivery because of vandalism and theft from roadside mailboxes so we have had to resort to PO Box addresses for security of our mail. It is approximately a seven mile drive, 14 miles round trip, for many of us to get our mail. Not only is this inconvenient and time consuming, it is also costly due to the current cost of gas.

As per our recent discussion at the Post Office at Thetford Hill, you are aware that recently we permanently located our Town Offices in the Community Building next to the Bean Hall location. We realize that finding a suitable location for a new Post office in West Fairlee would be very difficult, at best.

However, we feel strongly that we have lost a major part of the towns identity without some kind of a postal service secure mailbox system. There are several areas within the community building that would accommodate a kiosk of lockable mailboxes that could be serviced by our rural route driver. While this is not our first, it is a workable solution that would produce minimal expense to the Post Office while generating income through mail box rentals. It provides a win-win situation for the Post Office and our citizens.

With the kiosk located adjacent to our Town Offices, this will also restore a meeting place for greetings and good conversations for our townspeople, in effect, a restoration of the town center and the bonds that tie small Vermont towns together.

We sincerely hope that you will seriously consider this proposal and that we can work together to restore our towns identity. Thank you for your time and consideration on this very important matter.

West Fairlee Selectboard”

Cray makes a motion to send the letter to the Postal Service regarding a new area for the Post Office, Petersen seconds the motion, and the motion was unanimous.

- Review Town Financial Statements

The Financial statements were reviewed by the Selectboard.

- Action-items and Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Beaver Road Update
- Building Committee
- Town Officials Vacancies
- Interviews for Selectboard
- Up Coming Events
 - November 17th 6:30 to 8:30 there will be a “Button Up” Energy Saving Workshop at the Westshire Elementary School
 - Open to the Public Meeting regarding Bean Hall on November 3rd at 6PM
- Adjourn

Petersen makes a motion to adjourn at 8:16, Brigham seconds the motion, and the motion was unanimous.

Respectively submitted by,

Meredith Hartshorn, Selectboard Clerk