

Minutes
West Fairlee Selectboard Meeting
Monday May 13, 2013

Present: Beverly Ash, Cory Austin, Fred Cook, Delsie Hoyt

Visitors: Janet Austin, Lister; Rhonda Cook, Town Clerk; Catherine Spaulding

The meeting was called to order at 6pm.

Minutes: Fred Cook moved to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2013 regular meeting as presented; Cory Austin seconded; approved.

Visitors/ Reports of Town Officers and Committees:

Town Clerk, Rhonda Cook informed the Selectboard that the Town is ready to go “live” with computerized land records. She described the COTTS system which is compatible with the existing municipal computer system, NEMRC and will become the State-wide standard. West Fairlee will be one of the first Towns in the State to fully achieve internet land search capability with over 50 years of records on line. Attorneys and others searching land records will sign on remotely and pay via credit card. Other Towns are paying outside consultants to scan and index previously recorded land records a decade at a time, but Hoyt emphasized that Town Clerk Cook has saved the Town tens of thousands of dollars by scanning the land records onto the computer herself as time allowed and indexing on her own time. Replacement of the Town Clerk’s aging computer server was included in the current budget; the old one will be re-used as a work station. Fred Cook moved that the Selectboard endorse the Town Clerk’s recommendation by signing portal and subscription agreements with COTTS, and approve purchase of the computer upgrades already included in the annual budget; Cory Austin seconded; approved.

Lister Janet Austin reported that the Town-wide reappraisal is nearly complete, but the Listers are seeking a routine 30-day extension from Property Valuation and Review before “lodging” the Grand List with the Town Clerk. The Selectboard co-signed the extension request. J. Austin also turned over to the Selectboard and Health Officer a list of properties for which required septic permits are either missing or incomplete. They include one house constructed after 2007 and several renovations which increased the number of bedrooms which require additional septic permitting. Hoyt announced her conflict of interest in the matter due to a pending septic permit, but as Health Officer will seek guidance from PVR’s regional permit specialist about how to proceed.

Catherine Spaulding expressed interest in the Selectboard Clerk position. Her resume and experience, previously circulated via email, were discussed and the Selectboard provided additional information about the Clerk’s duties and responsibilities. Ash moved to employ Catherine Spaulding as Selectboard Clerk; C. Austin seconded; approved. Spaulding remained in the meeting to observe.

Financial Statements: The year-to-date financials, previously circulated via email, were reviewed. Thus far, revenues and expenses appear to be on target.

Roads

New Town Highway Maintenance Contract: A draft of the new contract, which included comments and suggestions provided by VT Local Roads, was reviewed. Much discussion centered around VLR's suggestion that the Town consider one year contracts with the option to extend the contract for multiple years rather than the current practice of a multi-year contract. VLR also suggested hourly reimbursement on the winter roads section of the contract rather than a lump sum for the season. Pros and cons of both were discussed. Fred Cook noted that the seasonal contract for winter roads seems to have worked well for the Town and makes the budget more predictable. Hoyt added that most plow contractors have private work and the season price removes question that private work is being done on Town time. There was consensus that the contract will offer a one-year contract with an option to extend for up to four years. In addition, bidders will be required to quote hourly rates by equipment type for summer roads maintenance but winter road maintenance will continue to be quoted as a lump sum for the entire winter season. There was agreement that additional requirements and clarification of contractor responsibilities suggested by VLR should be included. Hoyt will incorporate the new information into a subsequent draft for review.

Paving: Preliminary development of an RFP for the Class II Road grant for paving Beanville Road and portions of Wild Hill was discussed. To prepare for bidding by paving contractors, members of the Selectboard will make site visits Tuesday May 21st to review the engineers recommendations for reclamation versus overlay.

Driveway Access: An application requesting driveway access was received for a property on King Hill Road. C. Austin will contact the homeowner and Jonathan Blake to arrange a site visit.

Old Business

Relocation of recycling: Fred Cook reported that the new recycling location ran smoothly, however, bags of household trash were dumped later in the day. Letters and magazines appeared to provide evidence of the source, and Cook will follow up with a telephone call. A gate has been erected, and a combination lock is being purchased but it will be difficult to consistently secure the site until after Pike has finished paving on Rt 113. Significant "contamination" of collected recycling could mean added expense for the Town. Hoyt will contact NRRRA about covers for the containers and the Selectboard will continue to provide education to the community through emails and other notices.

Community Building Renovations: Maintenance man Joe Sampson and Key Communications are scheduled to move the Town Clerk's office furniture, computer system, and other wiring this week. Architect Jay Barrett is working on the elevation views of the office partition which will subdivide the multi-purpose room. The 8-10' wall will provide security for the office while still allowing air circulation and light distribution throughout the room. There will be no need to modify the existing heating ductwork; and a permanent air conditioning unit, installed at the rear of the building, will replace the window units which are seasonally installed and removed.

New Business

Tri-Town Lake Fairlee Study Committee: Via an email from Skip Brown, the Selectboard learned that Gordon Kerr is interested in serving on the committee; a vacancy created by the resignation of Mike Fanizzi. Ash moved that Gordon Kerr be appointed to fill the vacancy on Tri-Town Lake Fairlee Study Committee; F. Cook seconded; approved.

As C. Austin had to leave the meeting, review and update Basic Emergency Operations Plan was tabled until the next meeting.

Other Business:

Hoyt reported on the workshop for the Red Cross Small Shelter Initiative. Both the Towns of Orford and Fairlee are collaborating with the Rivendell School District to make the Academy and Samuel Morey Schools into approved shelters. Hoyt also provided information about the VLCT Tax Appeal Workshop. The Town Clerk and Listers also attended.

Ash reported that the Library is planning a Christmas in July fundraising event. Activities will include vendors, bounce house, bread-baking in the community oven and more.

Hoyt reminded members of the upcoming site visit and accessibility survey of the Community Building to be conducted by a coalition of Fire and Safety; Help Americans Vote; and the Red Cross.

Ash moved to sign the orders; Cook seconded; approved

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.