

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 4, 2022, 5:30 p.m, Old Schoolhouse Common and Zoom

Present: Selectboard members Christopher Martin and Michele Gonzales; Town Clerk Bobbi Brimblecombe; Visitors: Scott Ciampi (Road Crew); Nancy Everhart (Stranahan Stewardship Committee); Will Schwarz (Fire Chief); Adelaide Dumm (Washington Natural Resources Conservation District); Michele Braun (Friends of the Winooski)

At 5:40 p.m. the meeting was called to order by Chair Chris Martin

Changes or additions to the agenda: Health Insurance

Public Comment: none

Minutes: tabled

Culverts: Adelaide Dumm, Conservation Specialist from WNRCD attended the meeting to explain that she is working on a grant with US Fish and Wildlife Service to restore 50 miles of habitat and remove 8 barriers. They look at culverts that are perched, making them impassable. They are looking for the Selectboard's support for removal/replacement. If the Board is in favor, they will apply for grants for design and implementation. It would be helpful if the Town would contribute matching funds but it is not necessary – what is most important is a letter of support.

Steve Fiske has voiced concern that work that is proposed will bring exotic Brown and Rainbow Trout into native Brook Trout habitat. VT Fish and Wildlife data shows that all three species are already there, but VT F&W would be happy to resurvey. Historically it was believed that these species outcompete Brook Trout but new data suggests that environmental factors are more to blame for Brook Trout decline. Rainbow Trout can survive in warmer waters than Brook Trout, and removing these barriers will create more Brook Trout habitat.

Adelaide reviewed 4 culverts. One is on an unnamed tributary on Maple Hill Road, one is on Nasmith Brook on Holt Road, one is on Lye Brook on Laird Pond Road, and one is on Wells Brook on Hollister Hill Road. The benefits and challenges of each project were discussed.

The 4-sided box culvert on Holt Road would be best replaced with a bridge. This would be an expensive project but the State has funded other similar projects, and this would open up the largest area of habitat. A project on Lye Brook may be problematic because of the beavers at Laird Pond. The Wells Brook may not currently have trout but as the Winooski River warms, it will be even more important to have cooler water areas for trout. This culvert is old and undersized for current conditions. Some of the work in this area might include riparian plantings.

Michele Braun explained that the Friends of the Winooski are interested in a culvert on Guernsey Brook at the Jake Martin Road. If the Town is supportive, the Friends would also be applying for grants for this project.

Chris moved to support the further exploration of the projects that have been presented by the Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District and Friends of the Winooski, recognizing that Adelaide will do more research on the issues that were discussed. Michele seconded – all in favor. Adelaide will come to the next meeting with more information.

Stranahan: Nancy Everhart brought a request for the Stranahan Stewardship Committee to spend some of their funds for rebuilding the boardwalk on the Old Mill road trail. Michele moved to approve the request. Chris seconded – all in favor. She asked if the road crew could do something with the entrance to the parking area on the Jake Martin Road to prevent cars from hitting bottom.

Fire Station Addition: Will Schwarz had Black River Design draw up plans for an addition of a new bay and radio area to the Fire Station. The drawings are stamped and ready for permitting. He explained that the Fire Department has met their goal of having a brush/utility truck. His next goal is to extend the station so that there is room for all of the trucks and a training area. His next step will be to come up with a cost estimate. The Selectboard discussed possibly using ARPA funds.

Highway Equipment: Scott presented three quotes for excavators: \$79,537 for a Sany, \$101,500 for a Komatsu, and \$91,544 for a John Deere. The Town had planned \$130,000 for an excavator to be paid out of the equipment fund. Scott also reported that the roadside mower will need to be replaced soon. He feels that the excavator is a much higher priority. The Selectboard discussed the three quotes. They prefer to stick with the John Deere but suggested that the road crew try one out and let the Board know what they think of it at the next meeting.

Chris asked the Road Crew about a machine that Northfield rented to trim overhead trees along a road. Scott reported that the rental fee is \$1,500 per day or \$4,500 per week. This would allow the road crew to cut brush and higher branches that they can't reach with a pole saw or roadside mower. This is something that the Board will consider for next year's budget.

Park & Ride Grant: Bobbi asked the Board how to proceed. The Board suggested finding out how other towns have designed their project. When we have a design we can decide whether to have the Road Crew install them, or hire a contractor.

Health Insurance: The Selectboard signed a letter authorizing Health Equity, the administrator of the town's health reimbursement account, to correct their errors in claims processing.

Cemeteries: Cemetery Sexton Joe Mangan reported to Chris that part of the stone wall at Dwinell Cemetery has tipped over.

Expenses, Permits & Payroll: Selectboard members read and approved reports for General Expenses and Payroll.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Bobbi Brimblecombe, Town Clerk

The foregoing is a true copy of the Minutes of the October 4, 2022 Selectboard Meeting.
A True Record. Attest, _____, Town Clerk
