

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

April 12, 2021

7:00 PM Meeting called to order by Selectboard Chairman, John Esposito. Also in attendance were Selectmen Kim Roberge and Tim Berry and minute taker, Joan Cleary.

Esposito led the meeting in a moment of silence.

Esposito spoke of the DOL Safety Audit findings. He said that Mont Vernon Electric has already fixed all of the electrical issues, Crosby is working on the railing and stairs at the McCollom Building and Yeaton is cleaning out both closets to make sure there is clearance for the electrical panels in the McCollom Building. The only thing we are waiting for is Chief Wilson to take care of inspecting/purchasing the fire extinguishers. He then asked Crosby what else needs to be done.

Crosby said that they have to figure out a solid rail system that is removable for the mezzanine in the highway garage, he is waiting for the Exit signs to come in.

Roberge asked about the Exit signs needing to be illuminated.

Crosby said that the inspector told him they do not need to be electrically illuminated; they just need to be glow in the dark or retro reflective.

7:15 PM Department Head Meeting

Bonnie Angulas – Library Director

The library has received their \$500 grant to build the welcome to MV bags with. Chief Furlong gave us a great welcome to MV letter to include, the Historical Society gave coloring books and cookbooks, the emergency phone list was laminated, Toadstool gave us bookmarks and Dan at the General Store added mugs with menus. I am hoping to get something from the FD and Recreation. The deadline is April 29th to include something.

The Friends of the Library got a \$5000 donation; \$1000 toward Children's programming, and \$4000 to use at our discretion. The Library Trustees have approved the purchase of a 20 x 30 tent to be erected behind the library from May through August. Brown has checked with our insurance carrier, and it is covered. The Friends will develop a policy for its use.

The Trustees are meeting with DSK tomorrow and there is a site walk this Saturday morning.

Beginning on April 20th the Trustees are opening the library to no more than 3 patrons at a time, and will observe all of the other Covid protocols.

Roberge asked for the link to tomorrow's meeting with DSK.

Kevin Furlong – Police Chief

There has been a significant increase in Covid-19 cases. We now have 15 active cases with 130 overall. MV has more cases than Wilton and Lyndeborough combined. Everyone over 16 is now eligible for the vaccine.

We had the 4th meeting of the Hazzard Mitigation committee, and will be submitting the plan to Homeland Security for review.

He would like the Selectmen's input on the drafted Traffic Ordinance and he will also seek input from the Fire Department and DPW.

With people at home more there has been an increase in identity theft and scams. Sargent Slavin is working on these telephone scams.

There has also been an increase in domestic violence and child custody cases. There was a lockdown at MVVS due to a custody case, after which we held a de-briefing.

The officers have undergone online training for: deescalating training, interacting with the mentally ill, and emotional and psychological disorders.

Had a suspicious motor vehicle call that ended in a DWI and Heroin arrest.

Esposito said that he had looked over the ordinance and wanted to know who we inform of the new ordinance.

Furlong said that every company that does that type of business in MV will get a copy, there will be a copy in each cruiser, and it will be on our website.

Esposito asked about paving companies.

Furlong said that they will all get a copy. They will probably call in to see if it is necessary for their particular job.

Roberge stated that the Library Trustees voted to reopen the library. Is it too soon?

Furlong suggested involving the Public Health Officer in this. As long as they are following all the protocols, it may be ok.

Ben Crosby – DPW Director

We have started the spring grading of roads on the east side of Town, and are working hand-in-hand with the Town of New Boston. They are going to grade Joe English Rd. and we are going to grade Salisbury to the end.

Roberge feels that New Boston is getting the better end of that stick.

Crosby explained that if Salisbury needs material, rolling or dust control, New Boston will do that.

Crosby said that he is getting help building an RFP for the Brook Road culvert project, and has a few companies in mind to send it out to.

There has been some talk about Federal money for infrastructure. I need to get some numbers to put in a warrant article this year.

Crosby has a list of roads and candidates for reclaiming and repaving. He is looking at Beech Hill from Margaret Circle to Purgatory Brook crossing. There are a couple sections of Francestown Tnpk, a section of Old Wilton from Hutchinson to Old Milford. Also has a quote to finish paving the highway garage parking lot for \$30,000; this year was the worst for mud.

Berry said that the State does not tell us much regarding the status of funds we will get. I heard that the Block Grant money will be 20% less than last year. Is your strategy to get a quote on everything that needs doing or are you looking at less work?

Crosby explained that if he can keep the work within a general area, it will cost less because of the cost to move equipment.

Berry asked if there was any overlay work he wanted to do this year.

Crosby cited Levesque Lane and Kendall Hill.

Berry asked if he had considered chip sealing.

Crosby said that chip seal costs 2.5 times what overlay costs.

Roberge remembered that 4 years ago we had a prioritized road list. She also suggested that Taschereau and Westgate need attention.

She also said that the cost of maintaining the dirt roads kills us every year. We need to prioritize small sections of them that should be paved. This should be part of the plan for taking care of the roads.

Esposito offered that Hillcrest is in terrible shape, and the culvert on Brook Rd needs to be done. Maybe, if Milford doesn't need the plates back, we could wait until next year. We might be able to get some help from the Federal or State government.

Crosby said that he thought of encompassing the culvert with doing the whole section of road from Kendall Hill to the culvert. Normally we would have had Town Meeting already, but we have just now gotten the wetland permit. The timing is not ideal.

Esposito let everyone know that Crosby is now a Senior Roads Scholar and said how proud we are of him.

Berry said that the American Recovery Act will bring \$246K to Mont Vernon.

Crosby said that Hillcrest is not on his list because it needs to be engineered for drainage issues. He also let the Board know that he would like to share the rental of a 10-ton roller with Lyndeborough (Lyndeborough has a trailer). If we rent one for 6 months, our half would be \$3,570.

Esposito asked when he needs an answer on that and was told the end of the month.

Roberge asked if there are any other places to rent.

Crosby rented from Balcom Bros. last year and the roller was old and had some issues.

Roberge brought up the DPW Hiring Policy.

Brown said that the DOT physicals would cost \$85.00.

Roberge asked if the Board thought people should have to go for a physical every 5 years or 2 years.

Crosby said that it would have to be every 2 years if you required retesting.

Esposito agreed to the new hire physical.

Wilson asked what the weight limit is on the Brook Road culvert and was told 6 tons/axle. He said that 1/3 of our mutual aide comes in from Amherst, and they won't drive over it. We could be extending response time.

Crosby said that it is plated, and we drive over it.

Wilson feels it is too much of a hazard.

Berry said, as a stop gap, we could excavate and fill in with concrete.

Heather Kennedy – Recreation Director

The Bunny Hop drive through was a success. We had 69 families with 130 kids sign up. Everyone wore masks – it went very smoothly. We had 24 golden eggs. Thank you to the Library and the PD for putting baskets together. Earle took a few photos.

I am working on the Library's new welcome bag and will contribute copies of the booklet that they coordinated with the Conservation Commission on.

May 11th is a meeting to discuss having Gala at a later date.

She asked if the Board is going to have to rent a stage for Town Meeting.

Esposito said that it will be held at the baseball field, and that he would like to have some sort of riser for the Moderator, Selectmen and Town Clerk.

Kennedy asked about power at the field and was told that there is power there already.

Roberge asked Kennedy if she would look into getting the stage. Kennedy agreed.

Angulas reminded everyone that we would be competing against weddings and graduations that weekend.

Jay Wilson – Fire Chief

We are starting the annual maintenance on the trucks.

Roberge said that the Board is meeting with the Milford BOS and the Wilton BOS, and if Milford is not willing to negotiate a 5+ year IMA, it won't be worth our while.

Wilson thinks Milford will come in and say that they would love to have us as customers. That is the only thing that makes sense to them.

Roberge said that we should be pushing for a 5 – 7 year contract. She asked the Board if anyone was thinking that being a customer of Milford was the way to go.

Esposito said that he is not interested in being a customer but would like to be a partner.

Wilson said that he has asked the MACC director to find out what the cost would be to run MACC with just us and Wilton and Lyndeborough as a customer for 6 months till we can figure out what to do in the event Milford pulls out.

Esposito then asked Wilson about the DOL safety audit and the findings on the fire extinguishers.

Wilson said that he would get to that in the 3rd week of April.

Crosby brought up that Beltronics has installed a high-band antenna and repeater. There was one forgotten cost: \$2500 to have the repeater talk with MACC. Jason Johnson is trying to figure out something with Beltronics, but Lyndeborough said that they may be able to help with that.

8:30 PM End of Department Head Meeting

Brown said that Direct Deposit will cost the Town approximately \$2,660.00 between what QuickBooks charges and what Citizen's Bank will charge.

Berry said that we want to keep our employees happy. I think we should put it in the budget and let the people decide.

Roberge likes that strategy; a lot more than ½ the employees said that they would like it.

Esposito asked if everyone has to participate.

Brown said she didn't think so, but it may cause more labor for the office.

Berry agreed that this was not a labor-saving proposition – just another benefit for our employees.

Roberge asked if an outside vendor would cost more and was told yes.

Esposito instructed Brown to add it to the budget.

Brown brought up the search for a vendor to re-do the Town website. She explained that she has one more quote coming in, but that she has chosen her top two so far. The others were either too expensive, wouldn't commit to having all the info we have now, or used a proprietary content management system that would prohibit us from having someone else work on the site.

Berry said that with both of those quotes, we could still work with adding \$10,000 to the budget.

Esposito agreed with that.

Berry said that he is counting on interviewing them and that they will have a presentation geared to Selectmen. It would be good to have someone else attend that would be able to ask pertinent questions.

Roberge agreed with the \$10,000 and stated that ease and accessibility are very important. She also suggested Paul Branscombe of Wilton since he just searched for the same thing.

Berry said that when we set up our old website everyone was trained to do their own maintenance and uploads. Since then, people have changed and some have decided it is easier to have the office do it. We don't want it to be Joan and Laurie's job going forward.

Roberge said that she would like to interview them ASAP and move on it now.

Brown talked about a new IT vendor. She recommended Twin Bridges, and stated that Lyndeborough, Wilton and MACC all rave about the service they get from them.

Roberge said that we have to move forward anyway; add it to the budget.

Esposito asked Roberge what is going on with the Town Hall Renovation Plan Committee.

Roberge said that they are reaching out to the stakeholders to get input on the floor plans. April 22nd is the next meeting. She would like to get the 2 drawings put on MV Chatter and the Website. Annette Immorlica will take care of putting up the drawings at the library, town hall, and the post office along with putting it in the Flyer and the Amherst Citizen.

Esposito reminded Roberge that they are waiting for a number from DEW.

Roberge said that she should have it tomorrow.

Berry said that the warrant article to restore the windows should be for \$70,000. That is to restore the windows and to purchase and install historically accurate storm windows.

Wilson spoke about a \$15,000 article to upgrade communication equipment in case we have to integrate with someone in a hurry.

Brown asked if that should be a capital reserve instead of a non-lapsing warrant article.

Esposito feels a capital reserve article would be better.

Wilson said that would be ok as long as the Selectmen would be allowed to expend without another vote at Town Meeting.

Roberge said that the wording of the article will be very important.

Esposito brought up the Emergency Closing Policy that Roberge had drafted.

Berry cited the Village School, where the teachers are paid for snow days. He said that he doesn't see the need for a separate policy; this only happened one-time last winter. We may want to pay the transfer station attendants or the Deputy Town Clerk also, although the Selectmen are not the ones who close those entities. He does not want to change the policy that we have in place right now.

Angulas asked who is responsible for closing the office and was told the Selectmen.

Esposito said that he would like to include the transfer station attendants.

Roberge said that the policy will have to be reworded. The teachers are salaried and part of a union. The paraprofessionals and lunch people do not get paid. I was looking to cover the employees across the board.

Esposito said that the Board has been at this for 2 months. There is only 1 or 2 time a year that this happens.

Roberge said to change the wording and bring it back for another read.

Berry agreed and said that it does need to be rewritten.

Esposito asked about the repairs to the gazebo.

Brown stated that Crosby said that the railings need replacing.

Roberge feels that more than the railings need fixing.

Esposito brought up the Electric Aggregation contract.

Berry said he was ok with it.

Roberge asked if they look at other vendors.

Esposito said that they do shop around, and that he will sign the contract.

Board started reviewing the minutes of April 5th.

Roberge said that she has extensive changes, and asked to table the minutes until next week.

Berry told her to send her revisions to Brown so she could get a start on the changes.

Roberge said she would.

Brown brought up the new resident inquiry on the junk yards.

Roberge said that nothing more has been done on the left-hand side of Weston Hill.

Berry stated that this resident is the only one who complains; we are making efforts, we are sending letters but haven't heard back from all of them. We don't want to leave her hanging; we should sit down and draft a letter.

Maybe we should send another letter to the offending property owners.

Roberge brought up the letter from the Health Officer regarding a resident that says the Town road maintenance has caused unfavorable water test results in her well. How can they tell this is coming from the road?

Berry looked at the results and says that they are not believable.

Roberge feels they should have it tested again before coming to the Board. We need to disabuse her of the idea that it is a drainage issue. It is on the wrong side of the road and the drainage as is should make her well better.

Board decides that the Town Meeting will be held at 10:00 AM at the McCollom Field (baseball field).

Roberge motions, seconded by Berry to appoint Steve O'Keefe to the Zoning Board with a term of 2023. Berry; yes, Roberge; yes, Esposito; yes.

Roberge asked what could be done regarding Tom Quinn's request to search for any information regarding Mr. and Mrs. Ober or their heirs.

Brown will send a letter in everybody's paycheck this week and send letters to the neighbors on Weston Hill Rd.

9:55 PM As there was no further business before the Board, Berry motioned seconded by Roberge to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Brown