

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

June 7, 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, Laurie Brown.

Esposito led the meeting in a moment of silence.

Fire Chief, Jay Wilson, went over the questions he had sent over for the Board to answer regarding MACC.

1. If issues can be resolved and a long-term agreement worked, does Mont Vernon want to stay part of MACC with Milford and Wilton if a new governing system/IMA was in place that had different voting structure for more representation.

Board consensus was: yes, as long as we are a partner, not a customer.

1. Is Mont Vernon in favor of owning its radio site infrastructure; such as the MVFD tower and radio equipment/antennas would be Mont Vernon's to maintain

Board consensus was: yes

1. Is Mont Vernon in favor of MACC owning the dispatch consoles and related equipment

Board consensus was: yes

1. Is Mont Vernon in favor of MACC holding the leases for rental radio sites to provide proper security and no loss of a site because a town pulls out

Board was split on this; Esposito and Berry were yes and Roberge was no

1. Is Mont Vernon, as with above question, in favor of joint lease holdings of rental radio sites to provide proper security but also the town where the site is, has some control

Board was split on this; Esposito and Berry were no and Roberge was yes

1. Regardless of ownership of radio equipment, is Mont Vernon in favor of MACC being the sole contact for maintenance, emergency repair, and programming of radio sites

Board consensus was: yes

Brown said that Zoe Fimbel was inquiring as to whether or not the Lamson Farm Commission could start planning for Lamson Farm Day.

Board consensus was: yes.

Esposito brought up the Deed Waivers from the Tax Collector.

Brown said that Town Counsel suggests that we not proceed with Tax Deeding.

Berry said that we need to take the next best step. We should have a meeting with Counsel and the Tax Collector. Board agreed.

Esposito stated that, in non-public session earlier the Board had reviewed the proposals for a new website of 3 vendors.

Berry motioned to hire CivicPlus to design our new website.

Roberge wants the Board to revisit this in 3 years to make sure the site is still working for us. She seconded the motion. Roberge; yes, Berry; yes, Esposito; yes.

Esposito wanted to discuss the DPW's proposed summer hours: (4) 10-hour days with Friday off.

Roberge asked how he will manage the rotation with the transfer station being down an operator.

Crosby said that the man who works the transfer station will have Sunday and Monday off.

Esposito was concerned about the paving schedule.

Crosby has spoken with the paving company, and it won't be a problem.

Roberge asked about the necessity of overtime.

Crosby said that he did not run into that at all last year.

Board ok'd Crosby to start the DPW summer schedule next week.

Esposito asked about the 2 properties in Town with non-permitted ADU's.
Roberge said that the Board needs to address them.

Esposito explained that he has signed the Septage Agreement with Merrimack in order for Septic vendors to dump their Mont Vernon septage at the Merrimack site.

Berry asked if the Board could schedule a meeting with Town Counsel now to go over the junk yard issue.
Esposito said we should wait until town meeting to see if the Town votes in favor of this expense.
Roberge said that the Board has to set something up.
Esposito thinks that it can wait until next week.
Roberge feels it should be decided now since the Board will be going to its summer schedule soon.
Berry reminded the Board that we have a new letter from Town Counsel to approve sending out. We should schedule a meeting with him, and the first junkyard owner.
Esposito said that we should tentatively schedule it for June 28.

A Town resident, thanked the Board for setting up the meeting with Town Counsel regarding the junkyards.
Berry told her that the wheels of Government move slowly, but there is money in the proposed operating budget to facilitate the junkyard issue.

She also wanted to talk about 54/56 Weston Hill Rd. She is extremely upset that the new owners have so many vehicles in the yard, junk all over, and that she feels the non-permitted ADU is being occupied.
Esposito said that he knows, first hand, that the real estate agent knows that the ZBA did not grant them permission to occupy that unit. There are a lot of cars there, that is true, but he believes they are all registered. The Code Enforcer will have to take a look at the second residence to see if it is being occupied.
She said that the Board's minutes say that it is not to be sold as a two-family residence, but that is how it was listed, and the real estate agent is involved in the ownership of the seller. She is also sure that the septic has failed.
Esposito asked her to be patient, we are aware of her concerns and are addressing them as we can.

Board reviewed the minutes of May 24, 2021. Berry motioned, seconded by Roberge to accept the minutes of May 24, 2021 as written.
Berry; yes, Roberge; yes, Esposito; yes.

Esposito asked about the Consolidated Communication settlement.
Brown explained that their schedule only went up to 2019, and Counsel has asked us if we want to roll 2020 into the settlement. He was going to contact Consolidated and get back to us with an amount. I haven't heard back from Counsel as of yet. We can let them apply for an abatement like anyone else.
Board agreed to Consolidated filing for an abatement for 2020.

Berry asked if Attorney Tom Quinn had sent over a Limited Liability letter pertaining to the Wilkins property on a class VI road.
Brown said that she has not seen that come through yet.

Roberge spoke about a letter from a resident coming to the Code Enforcement Officer. She stated that none of the concerns mentioned were in the Code Enforcer's purview.
Board agreed and said that her concerns were a civil matter.

Roberge discussed another email from a resident who wants the Selectmen to close "Beech Hill Extension" or to at least lower the speed limit to 10MPH. As it happens, they are talking about Blood Road Extension, and the Board is not able to close a road without permission at town meeting. They are also unwilling to entertain a 10 MPH speed limit. All dirt roads in Town have an inherent 30MPH speed limit.

Roberge asked about a work session for the Board before Town meeting; the School tax rate will increase \$1.97.
Esposito added that \$2.00 on just the School side is obscene – it is untenable.
Berry said that he was speaking with someone who said that the tax rate when they moved here was \$33 – now it's \$26. Every fall the Board is able to adjust the tax rate if there is any surplus. Taxes go up and down. Towns end up paying for much that the State does.
Esposito reminded everyone that much of the surplus retained is in the form of unpaid taxes.
Berry said that the Budget Committee is suggesting that the Board needs to take the settlement money out of surplus.
Brown explained that can't be done without a warrant article.
Roberge asked what the tax increase would be if the budget passes as is.
Brown said that the increase would be \$0.96.
Berry said that last fall we bought back \$0.68 from the tax rate. There was good reason why we retained more than what the state suggests.
Esposito considered that we now have to ask the Town's people for \$75,000 a year because a few property owners have been irresponsible. Also, the DRA does not help us with unpaid taxes.

Berry offered that the American Recovery Act could bring the Town up to \$260,000 because of Covid-19. He suggested that the Board look into a company that would bring broad-band to Mont Vernon.

Board agreed to let Berry look into this.

Howard Brown asked if Town meeting would be mask free.

Belinda Yeaton, Town Clerk, said that visitors to the school must still be masked, per the Superintendent.

8:35 PM As there was no further business before the Board, Berry motioned seconded by Roberge to adjourn.
Berry; yes, Roberge; yes, Esposito; yes.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie Brown