

# Waterford Selectboard Working Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 26, 2024 @ 6:00 PM

Davies Library

In Attendance: Sue Hayes, Sukey Watson, Ron Gray, Kevin Gillander, and Marcia Martel.  
Attendance list attached.

Ron Gray called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Modifications to Agenda

- No modifications were made.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Marcia Martel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of the August 12, 2024 meeting. Kevin Gillander seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Citizens' Concerns

- No citizen concerns were raised.

Transfer Station Punch Card Approval (Discussion/Action)

- The state has a program to pay for the punch cards to be watermarked to prevent duplication. The Town Clerk sent over a draft of three credit card sized punch cards, all for different prices of trash bags. The \$5 punch card has 12 punches and costs \$60. The \$4 punch card has 12 punches and costs \$48. The \$7 punch card has 6 and costs \$42. Punch cards can be purchased at the Town Clerk's office or by check at the Transfer Station.
- Kevin Gillander explained they are starting this system because it is a point of contempt with the auditors that the Transfer Station accepts cash. The punch card system will allow the Transfer Station to no longer accept cash.
- Clem asked if any of the Board members could volunteer to help explain the system to citizens because it would take too long for him to explain it to each individual with a line of people waiting. Sue Hayes volunteered to help on a few Saturdays.
- They will start introducing the system on September 1 and switch over fully beginning January 1, 2025.
- Sue Hayes motioned to approve the three punch cards provided by the Town Clerk. Sukey Watson seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

## Road Recovery/Hazard Mitigation (Discussion/Action)

- Ben Matthews was present from the Department of Environmental Conservation of the Agency of Natural Resources. FEMA and the Vermont Emergency Management Agency provide funding for repairs. Ben's program is to write permits to authorize work- he is not associated with funding. FEMA will not reimburse any work done unless you have the appropriate state permits. He can retroactively permit projects as long as they meet the standards.
- He walked Simpson Brook Road today with Road Foreman Jim Hayes and identified where it would be advantageous to remove wood that will fall in and cause problems. Some of the wood is helping more than hurting by slowing down water and catching debris before it gets into culverts. It was not a comprehensive survey and he didn't mark any specific trees. He would need to walk the grounds with whoever is doing the work to identify which trees need to stay and which need to go before writing a permit.
- A permit is required to remove debris, but there is a 10 cubic yard exception per land owner per year which is about one dump truck load. Debris can only be removed from above the water line.
- The state doesn't typically pay for debris removal unless there is a direct connection to their infrastructure. Ben has taken steps to get state aid for Simpson Brook Road but the list is long and he doesn't expect to see any results from that particular program.
- Mr. Witcher asked some specific questions about his situation and some clarifying questions about debris removal permits. For work not related to flood recovery, the permit fee is \$200. Flood recovery projects have a special permit called Next Flood Measure (when there is a danger that another flood will continue to cause damages) where the application process is skipped and the fee is waived. Ben has to assess these permits on-site.
- Dave Morrison asked about the status of the Keith Powers situation. Jim says they're meeting tomorrow morning with a contractor.
- Marcia Martel asked Ben if the town needs permits for new culverts going into Mad River and Hale Road. He said that repairing an existing structure does not need a permit, but replacing a structure does need a permit. If it takes more than 50% of the cost of a new structure to repair an old one, it is considered a replacement. He can't issue a permit for a culvert that isn't sized correctly for the hydraulics.
- Marcia Martel asked what people are supposed to do with old culverts that had to be replaced. Ben said they can be sold, donated, or taken to a scrap yard.
- David Hetzel asked for an update on Hale Road. Jim said the hydraulic study said to replace the 4 foot culvert with a 7-foot culvert, which has been ordered and should be here by the beginning of next week. It will be a couple of weeks before the project is finished.
- Barkley Stetson asked about the culvert at 984 Simpson Brook Road. Jim said that the situation has not been addressed yet, but it should be. Ben said from what he was able to

see today it needs to be bigger and it is not well aligned. Jim agreed there is a similar issue on Hale Road that needs to be addressed as well.

- Barb Zider asked where the town stands on addressing the issues with Hale Road, Simpson Brook Road, and Mad Brook Road. Ron Gray said it will take a while for all of the projects to get finished. The priority is to reopen roads wherever possible. Barb is concerned that it seems to be dragging out, but Jim explained that there is a process they have to go through and assured her things are moving along as fast as possible.
- Jim discussed the decision to put a temporary pipe in Mad Brook Road because there is no way to get a box culvert built this year. Everyone in the state is too busy and materials are low. With the options currently available, the town could either rebuild the culvert already there or put in two six-footers for a temporary solution. They are pushing forward with this project as fast as they can. FEMA will only reimburse for the cost of the labor, not materials, if the temporary solution is chosen. They will pay for the whole project if the permanent solution is chosen.
- Barb expressed safety concerns if another storm comes before the projects get finished. Ron Gray said the Selectboard has approved a \$1 million line of credit to help with flood repairs but there's a lot of work to be done. Some roads haven't been touched yet because things have to get done on a priority basis. Jim noted that one employee is getting done so he is now a two-man crew.
- Ben commented on the risk factor at Simpson Brook Road. By his professional estimate, it would take another storm event of the magnitude that happened in July to mobilize the hazardous wood. A normal high water flow event that goes over the banks would not cause the same damage.
- Barb Zider asked if the town could start the process of getting the dangerous stuff out of Simpson Brook Road. Ron Gray stated that the town has spent a fair amount of the \$1 million credit already. Barb asked if the Selectboard could start working on the paperwork process while Jim is working on other projects.
- Sukey Watson asked Ben about debris removal being the responsibility of the town versus the property owner. He said he just writes the permits and it is between the landowner and the town to decide where the responsibility lies. Jim said the town is responsible for 25 feet from the center of the road according to the municipality and insurance. Sukey said she researched funding solutions for private property owners but didn't find anything.
- Ben said the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is designed for trying to make your infrastructure resilient to the impacts of the river rather than trying to modulate the river to accommodate landowners.
- David Hetzel requested updates on the progress of the projects that are underway. The Town Clerk and Treasurer are posting some updates on the town website and Facebook page.

- Marcia Martel clarified that Jim runs the show, and it is not up to the Selectboard to hire a contractor or send someone out to work. Jim is doing a great job, and they are doing their part by making sure the money is flowing so he can keep people busy. They have offered him their assistance in any way they can. Jim said they can work on making a decision on landowner versus town liabilities. He reminded the room that money is the biggest factor for everything, so taking care of that is very important.
- Todd Randall brought up that there are hundreds of trees on their land brought by the flood which could plug the culvert and wash out roads again. Ben noted that no matter how much debris you remove, there will always be a risk of more debris coming unless you remove every tree within 100 feet of the bank, which could remove beneficial trees and have a greater negative impact than a positive one. He also stated that it is not legal to monetize debris from the channel.
- Ben pointed out that municipalities can access some hazard mitigation assistance. He recommended the Selectboard talk to their NVDA contacts and apply to do studies to look at the town. Some studies cover private properties and could look into Simpson Brook Road to find interventions and hire an engineering firm to suggest solutions. They will not fund the project, but they will help with identification and triage.
- Deb Allard is the town's NVDA representative. Sukey Watson volunteered to reach out to her and look into possibilities. Sukey offered to visit some properties to get a better sense of what the problems are and will collect contact information.

#### Subcommittee Appointments (Discussion/Action)

- There will be 3 Working Groups for Working Selectboard Meetings (4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month when held).
  - Marcia Martel will replace Gary Allard on the Town Garage Working Group with Kevin.
  - Sukey Watson will replace Warner on the ATV Working Group with Ron Gray.
  - Sukey Watson will be added to the Policy Working Group with Sue Hayes and Kevin Gillander.

#### Reading of Balanced Budget Policy (Discussion/Action)

- Balanced Budget Policy discussion was tabled until the next meeting to allow Sukey Watson and Marcia Martel time to read it.

#### Budget Meeting Appointments with Town Treasurer (Discussion/Action)

- Marcia Martel will meet with the Highway Department with the Treasurer Heather Gonyaw.
- Sue Hayes will meet with the Fire Department with the Treasurer.

#### Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Balance Budget Policy (Discussion/Action)
- Remaining ARPA Funds

#### Executive Session 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) - Personnel

- Marcia Martel motioned to enter Executive Session. Sue Hayes seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. The group entered Executive Session at 7:22 PM.
- The Group exited Executive Session at 7:49 pm. No action was taken.

#### Adjourn

- Marcia Martel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sukey Watson seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

DRAFT

Waterford Selectboard Meeting August 26, 2024

Sign In Sheet

Name

Deborah Caldwell

David E. Morrison

Clem Gray

Jai Hays

T Phoe

Warren Whitaker

Tina Stetson

Barclay Stetson

Herb Ziter

Barb Ziter

Todd Randall

HOWARD JONES

Jim + Wendy O'Malley

Ben Matthews

Cynthia Payne

David Hetzelt

Signature

DS Caldwell

David E. Morrison

Clem Gray

Jai Hays

Warren Whitaker

Tina Stetson

Barclay Stetson

Herb Ziter

Barb Ziter

Todd Randall

Howard Jones

Jim O'Malley

Ben Matthews

Cynthia Payne

David Hetzelt