

Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 2, 2020
Meeting held remotely via online video with no physical presence

Board Members Present: Georgianne Mora, Thomas Cavanagh, Vincent Annunziata, and James Fleming (via telephone).

Board Members Absent: Taylor Prouty.

Others in Attendance: Town Officials – Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe, Town Treasurer Tina Labeau, Town Clerk Kelly Pajala, Solid Waste Coordinator Esther Fishman, Board of Listers Chair Sandra Clark, Planning Commission Chair Sharon Crossman (6:11 PM), Road Foreman Josh Dryden (6:08 PM). Others – Deerfield Valley CUD alternate representative Jeff Such, Josh McLaughlin (6:43 PM), Renata Sawyer (6:53 PM) resident Richard Phelan, and Cherise Forbes (Chester Telegraph).

1. Call meeting to order

Selectboard Chair George Mora called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

She noted that in response the Governor Scott’s January 20, 2020 declaration of a State of Emergency due to the spreading COVID-19 pandemic, and his “Stay Home, Stay Safe” executive order restricting and minimizing all unnecessary activities outside of the home, and in accordance with Act 92, signed into law on by the Governor on March 30, 2020, which allows for changes to the Vermont Open Meeting Law to protect the health and welfare of the public, that the meeting was being held entirely remotely with no physical presence.

She added that the meeting was being conducted entirely on Zoom meeting software and that the Board members and staff were participating by video except for Board member Jim Fleming, who was participating via telephone. She noted that the public was permitted to participate via video or telephone. And that the agenda posted on October 30, 2020, and still available on the Town’s website, provided information on how the public could participate in the meeting.

She noted a few matters of meeting process, including the requirement that all non-unanimous votes by the Board must be taken by roll call vote, with each member stating their name and vote.

Mora provided some technical guidance for participation by both phone and video. Each of the Board members than vocally identified themselves.

2. Additions or deletions to the agenda

George Mora moved to add the following matter to the New Business section of the agenda: 2nd Class Liquor License - Mountain Energy of Vermont, Inc., doing business as Mountain Energy, seconded by Vincent Annunziata, passed unanimously.

3. Minutes Approval – Meeting of October 19, 2020 & October 22, 2020

Mora noted that the draft minutes of 10/22/2020 show the meeting taking place on Monday when in fact it was a Thursday, and the minutes should be changed accordingly.

Vincent Annunziata moved to approve the minutes of the Selectboard meetings of October 5, 2020 and October 22, 2020, seconded by Tom Cavanagh, passed unanimously.

4. Selectboard Pay Orders

Tom Cavanagh moved to approve the pay orders for payroll and accounts payable, seconded by Vincent Annunziata, Passed unanimously.

5. Announcements/Correspondence

Kelly Pajala reminded everyone that election day was the following day, that the polls at the Town Office will be open from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM with drive-through voting, and that all ballots received by 7:00 pm will be counted.

O’Keefe mentioned that the Town Office boiler was recently serviced and needs to be replaced soon. He noted that Tina Labeau had received an estimate from Carroll Mechanical, and he has asked Cota & Cota for one as well. Chris Cole, the engineer for the Town Office renovation project, has mentioned that it is likely that we’ll need two boilers if the project goes forward, so installing a new one now at roughly the same BTU output would work but the plans call for the boilers to be in another location, so any new installation should accommodate that.

O’Keefe noted correspondence included in the Board’s meeting packet was as follows:

- Notice of the Southern Vermont Communication Union District’s 11/11/2020 public hearing, along with the draft annual report.
- Annual report for the Deerfield Valley Communications Union District annual report, and its public hearing is also scheduled for 11/11/2020.
- A letter from the Vermont DEC Waste Management & Prevention Division, dated 10/30/2020, regarding the former septage fields noting that because of PFAS being detected in one of the on-site wells, the Town is required to hire a consultant to develop a monitoring plan, which may require additional monitoring wells and ongoing monitoring. He mentioned he’d ask for a proposal from the Town’s engineer (Waite-Heindel) and put this on the agenda for the next meeting
- A box ad from The Shopper showing all three Town positions now being advertised.
- A letter, dated 10/8/2020, from VTrans indicating that our application for funding under the Better Roads program for the Derry Woods Road culvert project was denied. It would have supplemented the \$175,000 already received and was a longshot.
- A copy of Mora’s 10/23/2020 letter of thanks to the owners of Londonderry Hardware for their donations of shelter supplies.
- An article from the Chester Telegraph on the Cemetery Commission’s notice of the 11/12/2020 closing of Town cemeteries.

6. Visitors and Concerned Citizens

None.

7. Town Officials Business

a. Emergency Management Director – COVID-19 response updates

None.

b. Town Clerk – Approve Land Records Portal Agreement with NEMRC

Pajala spoke to the proposed supplemental contract agreement with the New England Municipal Resource Center to provide for a land records portal, which will allow for online viewing and printing of land records. She recalled that the Town applied for records digitization funding and this is part of that effort. The agreement term begins on 11/1/2020 and calls for a one-time setup fee of \$800 and an annual fee of \$1,200, and the Town receives from the vendor \$1 for each downloaded, non-protection marked record purchased by the public. She mentioned that there already exists a contract with NEMRC for disaster recovery and other various municipal software packages.

She mentioned that the Land Records Preservation Fund can help to pay the ongoing cost of this service, and further explained how the Town Clerk's office receives funds through online and in-person document research.

Tom Cavanagh Mora moved to approve the Land Records Portal Agreement with the New England Municipal Resource Center, and authorize the Selectboard Chair to execute the agreement on behalf of the Town, seconded by Jim Fleming, passed unanimously.

c. Listers – Consider hiring position of Town Assessor

Board of Listers Chair Sandra Clark explained that she wishes to step down from the Listers in the next year and believes that the Town would be best served by hiring a Town Assessor while retaining the Board of Listers, and asked the Selectboard to create the new position.

Tina Labeau spoke to the budget available for the position, noting that \$10,000 was available from the field inspection budget line, some funds from Listers hourly rates that won't be used due to the new position, and that \$7,000 to \$8,000 can be taken from the Reappraisal Fund though it would need to be repaid to the Fund by the General Fund budget the following year.

She explained that the half-year cost of the position is proposed to be \$27,500, and that it would be a part-time position of 24 hours/week earning \$44/hour, and an annualized cost of \$55,000.

Clark mentioned that she would be responsible and finish the Grand List for this coming year, and would be available for only half of the following year, as she will have completed 21 years of service at the 2022 Town Meeting, and that the Town needs to ensure a responsible transition by bringing in someone with the necessary background in property assessment to ensure that the Grand List is done properly.

There was discussion about the high cost of property assessment in general, and Labeau stated that using the Reappraisal Fund for a Town Assessor salary is legal as the Fund is for maintaining the Grand List. Pajala mentioned the professionalism that Clark has provided to

the Town over the years and the importance of maintaining the Grand List, and in order to do so the Town needs to pay the going rate for a Town Assessor.

Mora stated that she felt that the Town should take this step as recommended by Clark.

George Mora moved to accept the Board of Listers recommendation to establish the part-time position of Town Assessor, subject to approval of a job description and appropriate budget adjustments by the Selectboard, and to begin the process of recruitment for the position, seconded by Jim Fleming, passed unanimously.

It was decided to hold off on posting the job until the salary and job description are approved, and to address that at the next Board meeting. Labeau and Clark left the meeting at 6:30 PM.

8. Transfer Station/Solid Waste Management

a. Updates

Tom Cavanagh had no updates. Esther Fishman gave several updates:

The first VTrans directional sign for northbound traffic at the Transfer Station is presently being made, and there has been a request submitted for the second sign for southbound traffic.

The 10-year recertification for the transfer station has been submitted and an inspection done, and she'll be notified when the application is approved.

New transfer Station stickers are due November 15th.

The food scrap numbers mentioned at the September 21, 2020 Board meeting were not accurate due to several factors, including the size of the food scrap totes and the formulas. She did not have new figures but made it clear that the numbers are going up from July through September.

b. Solid Waste Implementation Plan comment, review, and approval

Fishman mentioned that the Solid Waste Implementation Plan must be done every five years and this is the last year of the current SWIP. The adoption process requires two public hearings and Selectboard meetings satisfy this requirement, and she has already attended four other Board meetings in other communities. She reviewed the SWIP in detail with the Board members, and discussed some issues facing the Transfer Station operations. Fishman asked for any comments to report back to the State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and there were none.

Mora thanked Fishman for her efforts to write the Plan.

Tom Cavanagh moved to accept and approve the Londonderry Solid Waste Group draft Solid Waste Management Plan, and authorize the Selectboard Chair to execute any documents necessary to support the submittal of the plan to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources on behalf of the Town, seconded by Vincent Annunziata, passed unanimously.

Fishman introduced Josh McLaughlin, who has applied for the part-time Sunday position at the Transfer Station. Fishman left the meeting at 6:53 PM.

9. Roads and Bridges

a. Updates

Josh Dryden that he and the one other Road Crew member are doing lots of winter preparations over the past few weeks, and mentioned that they have had to plow and salt already, but have not sanded as of yet.

b. Discuss options for winter maintenance due to staffing shortage

Dryden mentioned that he has spoken with one person interested in the vacant Road Crew position, and O’Keefe noted that he had had inquiries from two people but no applicates have been forthcoming.

Mora posed the question as to what would happen with the department if the Town is unable to hire the position.

Dryden suggested that a crew of two people can operate the department, but everything would take much longer, and a third member is critical especially for a big snow storm. He stated that the department is almost at the point where it could use a fourth member.

O’Keefe raised the idea of a fourth person that would work half-time highway Department and half-time working on buildings and grounds. There was discussion about existing recruitment efforts and ways to improve them.

c. Letter of intent to participate in the 2021 Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program

Mora mentioned that this annual program helps fund Highway Department efforts to improve water quality through stormwater runoff mitigation work necessary to meet the State of Vermont Municipal Roads General Permit. The Town is working with the Windham Regional Commission on a road inventory to target ditches and culverts in need on improvement, which will be completed by the end of the year.

O’Keefe pointed out that the Town is eligible for funding of \$16,400, and must provide a local match of \$4,100.

Vincent Annunziata moved to seek funding through the VTrans 2021 Grant-in-Aid Program and authorize the Selectboard Chair to execute the required Letter of Intent on behalf of the Town, and the Town Administrator to execute any necessary grant-related documents thereafter, seconded by Tom Cavanagh, passed unanimously.

Dryden left the meeting at 7:06 PM.

10. Old Business

a. Discuss additional Wi-Fi booster locations for public use

Jeff Such mentioned that the VT Department of Public Service is funding for 50 Wi-Fi hotspots around the state to provide drive-up internet access to those without this service at home. The Town has applied for and received approval for such a service at the Town Office, and Such suggested taking advantage of the program and finding other sites in the community.

He said he believes that the Mountain Marketplace shopping plaza is an ideal location and that an application should be filed. Mora suggested that Neighborhood Connections would be a great host for the Wi-Fi booster at the shopping plaza. Pajala reached out to Neighborhood Connections Executive Director Nicole Wengerd on this idea, and Such will follow up with her.

Other sites were also briefly discussed. Such left the meeting at 7:17 PM.

b. Consider proposal for Town Office cleaning services

O’Keefe noted that no one had responded to the initial invitation to bid for Town Office Cleaning services, but that Renata Sawyer of Chester submitted a bid the previous week in the amount of \$120/week. Sawyer gave the Board information on her experience.

Jim Fleming moved to accept the bid from Renata Sawyer for Town Office cleaning services in the amount of \$ 120 per week, and to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a contract agreement for these services on behalf of the Town, seconded by Vincent Annunziata, passed unanimously.

Sawyer left the meeting at 7:20 PM.

c. Review proposed invitation to bid for Pingree Park & Town Hall winter maintenance services

There was a brief discussion about the invitation to bid, which O’Keefe noted he had shared with Labeau, Pajala and Dryden for comment.

Tom Cavanagh moved to approve the Invitation to Bid for Pingree Park and Town Hall winter maintenance services, and authorize the Town Administrator to take all necessary steps to solicit bids for review by the Board, seconded by Vincent Annunziata, passed unanimously.

d. Consider change of job description of Zoning/Floodplain Administrator position

The Board reviewed the proposed job description amendments, which now reflect it as being a part-time position and there are other minor changes, such as reference to the statute reference for Zoning Administrative Officers.

Tom Cavanagh moved to amend the job description for the position of Zoning Administrator/Floodplain Administrator as presented, seconded by Vincent Annunziata, passed unanimously.

e. Ratify Board vote regarding Vermont Council on Rural Development offer for community engagement process

The matter of an invitation to participate in an alternate community engagement process with the Vermont Council on Rural Development was added to the agenda at the previous regular meeting and therefore required ratification per the Board’s Rules of Procedure.

Jim Fleming moved to ratify the Board’s October 19, 2020 decision to accept the invitation for the Town to participate in the Vermont Council on Rural Development’s community engagement process, seconded by Tom Cavanagh, passed unanimously.

11. New Business

a. Discuss FY2022 budget goals

O’Keefe asked the Board for direction to share with departments as they assemble their budgets.

Mora stated that given budget shortfalls and increased needs for the coming year, level funding will not be an option, but we should keep increases to a minimum given where our citizens are in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. She suggested that departments limit increases, and then look at where cuts are necessary to keep the budget down. The following other budget priorities were discussed:

- Pay the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer more fairly.
- The solid waste contract with Casella Waste Systems expires next year and a new contract is likely to be very costly.
- There is a need to build up the unassigned fund balance through budgeting a surplus.
- Capital reserve fund contributions could be reduced to keep expenses lower.
- May need to delay the Town Office renovation bond once again.
- Consider revisiting the local option tax as there are more people in the area, and it is required for the Town to take full advantage of revenue opportunities with the recent legalization of retail marijuana sales.

Mora said that she will sit in on all the budget meetings with department and other Board members can participate as they wish.

b. Request by Chester Snowmobile Club for use of Town property for snowmobile trails

Mora explained that the Chester Snowmobile Club again wishes to use a small portion of the shoulder of Lowell Lake Road for snowmobiling.

Tom Cavanagh moved to approve the request from the Chester Snowmobile Club to use a portion of Lowell Lake Road for snowmobiling between December 15, 2020 and April 15, 2021, and authorize the Town Administrator to execute a Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Inc. landowner permission form on behalf of the Town, seconded by Vincent Annunziata, passed unanimously.

c. 2nd Class Liquor License – Mountain Energy of Vermont, Inc., DBA Mountain Energy

George Mora moved to approve a 2nd Class Liquor License for Mountain Energy of Vermont, Inc., doing business as Mountain Energy, related to property located at 3590 VT Route 100, seconded by Vincent Annunziata, passed unanimously.

As this matter was added to the agenda earlier in the meeting it will need to be ratified at a subsequent meeting.

d. Executive Session – The appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, per 1 V.S.A. 313 (a)(3)

George Mora moved to enter executive session to consider the hiring of a Town employee, pursuant to Title 1 V.S.A Section 313(a)(3) to include Josh McLaughlin and Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe, seconded by Tom Cavanagh, passed unanimously.

The Board entered in executive session at 7:40 PM. The Board came out of executive session at 7:47 PM.

Tom Cavanagh moved to hire Josh McLaughlin to fill a part-time Transfer Station attendant position for 5 hours on Sundays at a rate of \$16.00/hour, seconded by Vincent Annunziata, passed unanimously.

12. Adjourn

Tom Cavanagh moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jim Fleming, passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM. The next regular meeting of the Selectboard is scheduled for November 16, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,



Shane P. O’Keefe
Town Administrator

Approved November 16, 2020.

LONDONDERRY SELECTBOARD



Georgianne Mora, Chair