

Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 7, 2020
Meeting held remotely via online video with no physical presence

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

Board Members Absent: Thomas Cavanagh.

Others in Attendance: Town Officials – Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe, Town Treasurer Tina Labeau, Town Clerk and E911 Coordinator Kelly Pajala, Assistant Town Clerk Bonnie Cobb, Emergency Management Director and Tree Warden Kevin Beattie, Planning Commission Chair Sharon Crossman, Road Foreman Josh Dryden, and Beautification Committee members Martha Dale, Pam Abraham and Bonnie Johnson. Others – Resident Richard Phelan and Cherise Forbes (Chester Telegraph).

1. Call meeting to order

Selectboard Chair George Mora called the meeting to order at 6:02 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 December 4, 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

Town E911 Coordinator Kelly Pajala asked that the Board add to the agenda the renaming of Town Trail #4, located off of Town Trail #2 and the end of Under the Mountain Road. It was agreed to add this as agenda item 7.d.

3. Minutes Approval – Meetings of 11/16/2020, 11/20/2020 & 12/3/2020

Vincent Annunziata moved to approve the minutes of the Selectboard meeting of November 16, 2020, seconded by Taylor Prouty, passed 4-0-1 with Tom Cavanagh abstaining due to his absence from the meeting.

Vincent Annunziata moved to approve the minutes of the Selectboard meeting of November 20, 2020, seconded by Taylor Prouty, passed 4-0-1 with Tom Cavanagh abstaining due to his absence from the meeting.

Vincent Annunziata moved to approve the minutes of the Selectboard meeting of December 3, 2020, seconded by Jim Fleming, passed 4-0-1 with Tom Cavanagh abstaining due to his absence from the meeting.

4. Selectboard Pay Orders

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

5. Announcements/Correspondence

Pajala discussed with the Board options to change the way the Town hold its 2021 Town Meeting in response to the ongoing pandemic conditions. She noted that the Selectboard already has the authority to hold Town Meeting by Australian ballot this year by virtue or recent legislation. There is also a draft bill in the works that would allow for Town meetings to be held later in the year, possibly May or June, that would allow for an in-person and/or outdoor meeting. The bill would also allow for the option of the Town mailing out absentee ballots to all Voters, similar to the recent November election, allow logistical operations changes for Town Clerks, and provide that all Town officers currently serving would continue to serve until the next election.

As various deadlines relating to Town Meeting are fast approaching, Pajala suggested that the Board discuss this further and in more detail at the next meeting or soon thereafter.

O'Keefe mentioned that he and Mora had met with State Highways Safety Office Administrator and staff, regarding radar speed signs and as a result have requested two radar speed signs from the Windham County Sheriff's office, which may be available probably on the spring. Also, a mobile speed cart may be made available by the Sheriff's Department in the coming week on VT Route 100, weather permitting.

Mora mentioned that feedback from the State on employing a large number of radar speed signs would not be permitted, as the research indicates that they can become less effective over time. The recommendation is that the Town use a smaller number of moveable signs.

O'Keefe noted that he had done research on logistics of an engineering report for the William dam, and it is estimated to cost approximately \$50,000, and he has received from the State of Vermont a list of approved engineers who can do the work.

O’Keefe mentioned that the new Zoning Administrator and Floodplain Administrator Will Goodwin would begin work the following day, and would meet with him and Sharon Crossman to discuss transitional issues, and status of applications.

He noted that the Town Garage generator connection looks to wrap up next week. There have been manufacturing delays due to the demand for generator products in general due to economic factors.

He mentioned that the Town had received formal notice that day of a \$5,600 community facilities grant from BDCC for the design of the Town Office renovation project., we he had applied for back in February.

O’Keefe conformed that the Town office internet booster was installed that day.

He also noted correspondence included in the Board’s meeting packet was as follows:

- A letter received on November 6th from the Stratton Mountain School to area towns about safety measures for its Nordic skiing dry land training while on Town roads. Concerns about this were briefly discussed at a recent Board meeting.
- The final Road Safety Audit of VT Route 11 in the north village area prepared by VTrans and dated November 25, but just received this past week. This was requested by the Board on August 3rd, and the draft was presented on November 16th.

6. Visitors and Concerned Citizens

None.

7. Town Officials Business

a. Emergency Management Director – COVID-19 response updates

Kevin Beattie mentioned that there is not much to mention on COVID-19 at the time, but that hospital capacity is running low around the country, but is fine right now in Vermont but that that could change. He mentioned that emergency management did not have a significant function at this time but would be monitoring and ready to jump back in as necessary.

b. Emergency Management Director/Tree Warden – Emerald Ash Borer update

Beattie mentioned that he had had conversation with a Green Mountain Power representative and the company is in the process of marking trees for take-down that affect its right-of-way. It’s a large multi-year project with no set timeframe and the company will be contacting affected property owners. The bad news is that there are some trees affecting the Town right-of-way that he thought GMP would mark but have not been, which would put more work effort and cost onto the Town.

He recommended that the Town Meeting warning include at least a \$3,000 contribution to the EAB capital reserve fund, but it would need to be increased in the future.

c. Conservation Commission - Donations in lieu of honoraria payment

The Board considered a request from Conservation Commission Chair Irwin Kuperberg, to allow for budgeted honoraria normally provided to speakers at Commission events to be

instead donated to conservation-related organizations of the speaker's choosing. It was noted that there have been a number of remote meetings held due to the pandemic, and most of the speakers have been public sector employees and therefore are unable to accept the funds themselves.

It was mentioned that as public employees the presentations given were likely a part of their jobs and they were therefore already paid for their efforts by their employers. Also, the matter of outside organizations seeking Town funds through the standard appropriations process. Mora suggested that the Commission write thank-you letters to the speakers and keep budgeted funds for direct conservation efforts in town. The other Board members either agreed or had no issues with this suggestion. No formal action was taken by the Board on the request.

d. E911 Coordinator – Rename Town Trail #4

Pajala mentioned that she had been approached by the Town of Jamaica E911 Coordinator to jointly rename Legal Trail #4 that spurs off of Legal Trail #2, located at the end of Under the Mountain Road (TH#36), and leads into Jamaica where a new home is being built in Jamaica's legal trail portion of the travelled way. She noted that the Selectboard had approved the Jamaica property owners' request to upgrade and maintain the legal trails to the Town line. The legal trail is considered to be Under the Mountain Road Extension at this time and the two E911 Coordinators are recommending the name be changed to Shatterack Mountain Road, she stated. The Board reviewed several maps provided by Pajala. She suggested that the Town's road maintenance agreement with the Jamaica property owners could be changed to reflect a name change.

Beattie suggested that signage directing travelers to Town Rail #4 would be important due to Town Trail #2 being impassable for vehicles past their intersection.

Prouty noted that the signage at the change from Under the Mountain Road and Under Mountain Legal Trail (Trail #2) needs to be corrected. O'Keefe noted that the Class 3 portion of Under the Mountain Road extends beyond the existing sign that notes the end of Town maintenance. Mora noted that the sign was placed at the request of homeowners beyond. O'Keefe suggested either maintaining the end of the Class 3 road or reclassify it as either a Class 4 road or legal trail.

George Mora moved to rename Londonderry Legal Trail #4 as Shatterack Mountain Road, seconded by Tom Cavanagh, Passed unanimously.

8. Transfer Station/Solid Waste Management

a. Updates

Tom Cavanagh mentioned that the new Sunday employee has been doing a great job. Tina Labeau noted that the 2021 Transfer Station stickers are now available (and green).

9. Roads and Bridges

a. Updates

Dryden noted the following usage for the month of November 2020, through 1/26/2020:
Salt – 68 tons Sand – 92 yards Vehicle Fuel – 394 gallons

Heating fuel (gallons): Town Office Generator 18.5, Transfer Station 140

He mentioned that he had not heard back on the drug test for the new employee, whose CDL test is scheduled for later in the week. Pajala mentioned she'd let him know of the results as soon as she receives them. The next available opening for a CDL test is January 4, 2021 Dryden noted, and that the crew could be in tough shape if he's not legal to operate a Town vehicle. There was discussion about the Town's drug testing policy and the status of Town drivers.

10. Old Business

a. Discuss Delinquent Tax Collector fees

Labeau note that there is no agreement between her and the Town with regard to her recent appointment as Collector of Delinquent taxes. She requested that 3% of the 8% delinquent tax penalty go to her and that the Town retain the 5% balance collected.

George Mora moved that the delinquent tax rate of 8% be split, with 3% going to the Delinquent tax Collector and the remaining 5% going to the Town, seconded by Tom Cavanagh, Passed unanimously.

b. Discuss bond vote for the Town Office Renovation Project

O'Keefe reminded the Board of the decision this past May to reschedule the bond vote for the Town Office Renovation Project from the August primary election to March 2021 Town Meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He mentioned that he, Mora and Labeau in reviewing the budget for the coming fiscal year felt that the timing for the rescheduled bond vote, at roughly \$1 million, would still not be appropriate due to ongoing economic factors stemming from the pandemic, and he recommend holding off on the vote once again. O'Keefe noted that construction costs could escalate if the vote is postponed, but that due to long-term bonding this may not be a significant factor. The present high price of building materials was noted and that costs in fact may go down in the future.

Continuation of smaller pieces of the project to keep up project momentum was discussed and encouraged by the Board, and it was mentioned that the buildings reserve fund could be used for that. Examples of priority projects were cleaning out the basement, asbestos remediation, roof work above the Clerk & Treasurer's office, exterior painting and repair. Ways to provide protection of the service window area from weather conditions were discussed.

Grant funding opportunities for the incremental work was briefly discussed. O'Keefe recommended that there be some brain storming to develop a list of projects.

Taylor Prouty moved to rescind the Board's May 18, 2020 decision to schedule a bond vote for the Town Office renovations for the March 2021 Town Meeting, and instead hold off on scheduling such a bond vote until a later date., seconded by Vincent Annunziata, Passed unanimously.

c. Platt Elevation Project – Consider proposals for construction engineering/oversight

O’Keefe briefed the Board on the status of the project, noting that because the project engineer had backed out of the project that he had secured proposals from alternate engineers and the proposals were in the meeting packet. He noted that he had heard that day that the primary subcontractor, who would be lifting the building, will not be able to do the project until the spring, so he recommended not acting to hire an alternate engineer at this time.

He said he needed to hear from Vermont Emergency Management on what this delay might mean for the project funding. No action was taken by the Board.

d. Ratify 11/16/2020 Board vote regarding Board of Listers Errors & Omissions

The matter of a Listers error was added to the agenda at the previous regular meeting and therefore required ratification per the Board’s Rules of Procedure.

Taylor Prouty moved to ratify the Board’s November 16, 2020 decision to separate SPAN parcels 10888 and 10890 to rectify a Grand List error/omission, seconded by Jim Fleming, passed unanimously.

11. New Business

a. Beautification Committee/Planning Commission presentation on “Welcome to Londonderry” signage

Planning Commission Chair Sharon Crossman spoke to the Board about recent efforts to enhance the visual appearance of the community, and to replace the four existing Welcome to Londonderry signs at the entryways to the villages. She noted that the Beautification Committee was approached to work on this effort and they did so with a Sign Task Force and recently made a presentation to the Planning Commission on their recommendations.

Beautification Committee member Martha Dale made a presentation to the Board noting that the goal of the Sign task Force was “to enhance the visibility, appeal and ‘friendliness’ of our town for residents and visitors alike”, and she described the efforts to solicit ideas and estimates of cost from several signage designers/ fabricators. She showed and described the four proposals received from generally local vendors.

The Task Force recommended working with Londonderry-based Rick McDonough of Typestries due to his reputation and the quality of local examples of other work he’s done. Dale stated that the Town can of course proceed with the sign type and vendor of its choice, but that the Task Force recommended this vendor. She mentioned some of the sign design recommendations and design elements that should be avoided.

Crossman mentioned that the Planning Commission generally concurred with the Task Force’s recommendation to work with Typestries. There was a lengthy discussion about how to proceed with this effort and how to fund the new signs. Crossman noted that the Planning Commission is always on the lookout for funding opportunities, and stated that she was not proposing at this time to recommend a Planning Commission budget line item for this effort but was open to it if preferred.

There was discussion about a fundraising effort for the project instead of use of tax dollars. Rich Phelan pledged \$500 for the cause as long as the sign is made by a Londonderry vendor.

Mora recommended going back to the recommended vendor for some design work to help with the fundraising effort, and raised the possibility of the Town matching raised funds.

The question of the legality of the Town accepting gifts for specific projects was raised, and O’Keefe will look into this. Pajala suggested that a Town Meeting voted appropriation might be a preferred way to fund the project.

The Board took no action on the matter. Mora thanked the presenters for their time and efforts, and encouraged them to come up with a formal design for review by the Board.

b. Consider new Town Office phone system

Labeau spoke to a proposal for a voice-over-internet phone system of the Town Office that is expandable, and explained the system capabilities. Overall additional cost is \$10 per month but eventually when adding the Town Garage we could be saving up to \$70 per month due to internet costs for the existing Town Garage service. Issues with connecting the Town Garage with fiber optic cable was discussed. Labeau added that security system upgrades costing about \$825 that were already in the offing would need to be advanced due to the new phone system, though monitoring costs would remain the same.

Taylor Prouty moved to accept the proposal from VOXO, LLC for provision of a new municipal telephone system and services at the quoted prices, and 2) authorize either the Town Treasurer or Town Administrator to enter into a service agreement on behalf of the Town, and to use \$825 from the Town Building Capital Reserve Fund to upgrade the building security system, seconded by Tom Cavanagh, passed unanimously.

c. Preventive maintenance agreement for Town Office generator

O’Keefe recalled with the Board the history of the maintenance agreement with Brook Field Service for the Town Office generator, which was installed in December 2018.

Jim Fleming moved to accept the preventative maintenance agreement from Brook Field Service for annual service of the Town Office generator one time per year, and authorize the Town Administrator to execute the agreement on behalf of the Board, seconded by Tom Cavanagh, passed unanimously.

d. Review bids and award contract for Town Office heating system replacement

The Board reviewed proposals received for replacement of the Town Office boiler, which is in need of immediate replacement. Mora noted that the low bid called for retaining the existing burner while replacing all of the other elements of the boiler system. Carroll Mechanical is familiar with the system which may explain his fine-tuned proposal.

Taylor Prouty moved to 1) accept the bid from Carroll Mechanical, Inc. for replacement of the Town Office boiler heating system in the amount of up to \$7,300, 2) authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a contract agreement for these services on behalf of the Town, and 3) authorize the expenditure to be paid from the Town Building Reserve Fund, seconded by Tom Cavanagh, passed unanimously.

e. Discuss creation of a new Town website

There was general agreement that replacing the existing website is long overdue. O’Keefe recommended going with one of the website companies that specialize in municipal websites, and suggested that he would like to move forward with this with the help of others to see what works well for other communities. Labeau, Pajala and Mora all volunteered to participate in this effort. O’Keefe mentioned that there would need to be budget figure developed for the FY22 budget and he will work on this, and he recommended that others forward to him links to quality municipal sites they may come across.

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

Taylor Prouty moved to enter executive session to consider the evaluation of a Town employee, pursuant to Title 1 V.S.A Section 313(a)(3), seconded by Vincent Annunziata, passed unanimously.

The Board entered in executive session at 8:06 PM and O’Keefe was asked to participate. O’Keefe left the executive session at 8:22 PM, and was invited back at 8:46 PM. The Board came out of executive session at 9:01 PM.

g. Consider employee compensation matter

Taylor Prouty moved to amend various sections of the employment contract for Shane O’Keefe to include reassigning the responsibilities for Zoning Administrator and Floodplain Administrator, adjusting the Town’s contribution to his retirement to 10%, and to authorize the Selectboard Chair to execute the contract amendment subject to Town Attorney review, seconded by Tom Cavanagh, passed unanimously.

12. Adjourn

There was a brief discussion about salaries of Town employees, and it was mentioned that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns annually publishes a salary and benefits survey.

Tom Cavanagh moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Vincent Annunziata, passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 PM. The next regular meeting of the Selectboard is scheduled for December 21, 2020.

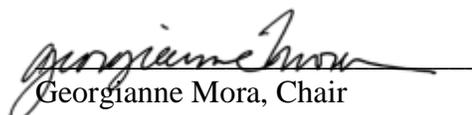
Respectfully Submitted,



Shane P. O’Keefe
Town Administrator

Approved December 21, 2020.

LONDONDERRY SELECTBOARD



Georgianne Mora, Chair