

Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 30, 2021
Twitchell Building - 100 Old School Street, South Londonderry, VT

Board Members Present: Thomas Cavanagh, Melissa Brown and James Fleming.

Board Members Absent: Taylor Prouty and Vincent Annunziata.

Others in Attendance: Town Officials – Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe, Town Treasurer Tina Labeau, Solid Waste Manager Esther Fishman (6:17 PM), Town Health Officer Richard Phelan and Planning Commission Chair Sharon Crossman (6:17 PM), Others – One Londonderry representative Patty Eisenhour and Gail Mann, Brattleboro Development Credit Corp. representative Sarah Lang, and Bruce Frauman (GNAT).

1. Call meeting to order

Selectboard Chair Tom Cavanagh called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

2. Additions or deletions to the agenda

Melissa Brown moved to add to the agenda, as item 9.e., acceptance of terms for the new tractor and equipment, seconded by Jim Fleming. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Minutes Approval – Meeting(s) of 8/16/2021 & 8/26/2021

The Board reviewed recommended revisions to the draft minutes of the meeting of August 26, 2021, which included additional meeting details.

Melissa Brown moved to approve the minutes of the Selectboard meeting of August 16, 2021 and August 26, 2021, as amended, seconded by Jim Fleming. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Selectboard Pay Orders

Jim Fleming moved to approve the pay orders for payroll and accounts payable, seconded by Melissa Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Announcements/Correspondence

- Regarding the Septage Fields Solar Array project, O’Keefe reported that Green Lantern Solar estimates that they are on track to submit the Certificate of Public Good application by the following day’s deadline. The 45-day review period has run and there were a few comments from review agencies. A feasibility study is underway with Green Mountain Power and a flood plain Letter of Map Amendment application is in process. And a draft lease is expected soon.
- He added that proposals for the Williams Dam study are due in two days, and it is hoped to have a recommendation for the Board no later than the first meeting in October.
- O’Keefe noted that a press release had been issued that day for the September 17th special Town Meeting and the August 31 and September 8 informational hearings.

Tina Labeau mentioned that the Town Office and the Transfer Station would be closed the following Monday for Labor Day, and that the Town Clerk's Office and Town Treasurer's office would be closed on September 23rd and 24th for training.

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

- An email dated 8/18/2021 from Conservation Commission Administrative Assistant Andie Fusco tendering her resignation, and mentioning that she will stay on until a replacement can be found and will help facilitate the transition. The Conservation Commission is trying to find someone.
- An email dated 8/19/2021 from Waite-Heindel Environmental Management, the Town's septage fields hydrogeologists stating that PFAS was detected in the new groundwater monitoring well, and that this will likely result in additional environmental investigation. The full report will be issued soon.
- A chart with 2020 populations changes from 2010 to 2020 for area communities, showing that Londonderry's population increased by 150 people from 1,769 to 1,919, an 8.5% increase.
- An invitation to the 2021 VLCT Town Fair, scheduled for in-person session on September 29th and virtual sessions from October 4 through 8.
- An 8/19/2021 request from VLCT for the Town to choose a voting delegate to attend the September 29th annual business meeting in South Burlington.
- A letter of thanks dated 8/5/2021 from Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont for the Town's annual contribution as approved by the Voters at Town Meeting.

6. Visitors and Concerned Citizens

a. Monthly update – One Londonderry

Patty Eisenhour gave a detailed presentation on the One Londonderry Housing Group, noting that its primary goal is to ensure the availability of housing for all residents of Londonderry. She added that the group is tasked with exploring ways to enhance Londonderry's livability by facilitating the creation, rehabilitation, retention and reuse of a diversity of housing opportunities for all, while preserving Londonderry's rural character.

Eisenhour stated that the specific goals for the coming year are to:

- Collect information on the housing situation today, review work conducted to date and understand the most pressing need.
- Identify and learn from experts in similar communities that have successfully tackled housing matters.
- Understand options and resources that might be available and develop action plans (near, medium, and long term) that can address the identified needs.

She mentioned several top priorities for the group as follows:

- Year-round rentals.
- Properties for sale \$300k and under for first time home buyers.
- Incentives to keep as primary residences.

- Rehab homes for rental or sale.
- Incentives for owners.
- Repurposing motels into apartments.
- Incentives for owners.
- Subdividing property to create affordable homes/rentals or facilitating the creation of “granny units”.
- Second Congregational Church project.
- Multi-family developments, including modular home parks w/ shared well/septic.
- Tax sales.

And also spoke about the many connections locally and state-wide that the group is either working with now or seeking to forge relationships, and mentioned several top priorities for the group and initiatives being monitored. Of particular concern is the availability of affordable rental properties, she noted, and recommended a town-wide housing assessment.

Melissa Brown agreed that affordable housing is a significant issue locally and state-wide that needs to be addressed.

Gail Mann inquired about public input into how the Town would be using the incoming federal funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, and asked what the planning process would be and how citizens can get involved. She suggested that affordable housing was one area where the community can benefit from the funds.

Cavanagh stated that the Town needs to get better handle on what can and can't be funded under the federal funding programs. It was suggested that a public input meeting could take place at an upcoming meeting.

b. Meet with representative(s) of Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation/SeVEDS

Sarah Lang of the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation met with the Board to discuss the services and programs offered by BDCC and its sister organization the Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies, and to follow up on their annual funding request.

From the FY 2023 budget, the BDCC/SeVEDS is requesting 5,307 from Londonderry, which equates to about \$3 per person (2010 census), and she noted that a good part of the organization's funding comes from these contributions from many of its 23 member communities.

Lang provided copies of the previous year's annual report and a program overview. She described some of the work of the organizations and the business training work of her office in particular. She spoke of connections between BDCC and the Planning Commission and the One Londonderry group, and the high level of participation of Londonderry businesses with her organization.

She spoke about specific programs and services, both regionally and locally, and provided information on the many businesses assisted with COVID-19 sustainability and recovery funds and other aid.

Sharon Crossman spoke in support of the funding request, noting that the community has benefitted greatly by the efforts of BDCC and SeVEDS.

On the issue of labor shortages, Lang spoke about general employment trends and about the organization's recruitment and retention efforts.

The Board thanked Lang for attending the meeting and for the work of BDCC/SeVEDS.

7. Town Officials Business

a. Planning Commission – Monthly update

Sharon Crossman provided updates as follows:

- With regard to affordable housing matters, she stated that she supports efforts to address the housing shortages as they directly impact community members. She suggested establishing or otherwise tapping into Town reserve funds to assist with housing affordability
- The Town Hall restoration project kicked off that day, with probe work in the balcony to determine its viability, work on basement mold issues and providing adequate accessibility. The State of Vermont fire safety permit has been issued.
- On the Maine Street Master Plan project, there will soon be an announcement of a town-wide meeting to be hosted by the project consultant to discuss study efforts so far, take comments and encourage further participation.
- The Water-Wastewater project is stalled due to legal review of deed issues for a specific property that may be able to accommodate users on the south village. There is one opportunity in the north village involving shared use of an existing wastewater system that is being explored. Arranging for free water quality testing of private wells is still in process, and 32-34 people have expressed interest in this.

b. Conservation Commission – Appointment to fill vacancy

The Board met with Gary Hedman, who has applied to volunteer for the Conservation Commission and provided information on his professional background and interest in helping the Town. It was noted that Hedman had met with the Commission, which voted to recommend Hedman's appointment.

O'Keefe mentioned that Hedman had volunteered to assist with the Williams Dam study given his background in engineering, including dam removal projects.

Melissa Brown moved to appoint Gary Hedman to the Conservation Commission for a 3-year term ending May 31, 2024, seconded by Jim Fleming. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Transfer Station/Solid Waste Management

a. Updates

Esther Fishman spoke about the efforts of Grow Compost, and there has been some guidance on how to ensure a minimum of contamination in order to keep down costs. She stated that working with the company is going well.

Cavanagh noted that the take-it-or-leave-it shed is open between noon and 3:00 PM every day the Transfer Station is open. Drop-off is limited to those hours as well.

Fishman mentioned that she has ordered signage for the entrance that provides days and hours of operation of the Transfer Station

b. Request for Transfer Station fee waiver – The Collaborative

Fishman explained that Transfer Station fee waivers have been granted to not-for-profits for their regular trash but must pay for special disposals such as with construction. The Collaborative already disposes of its regular trash at the Flood Brook School and is now asking for a waiver for occasional large items. Fishman stated that she supports the waiver request.

No decisions were made, and the Board will discuss this matter at the next regular meeting pending further information from Fishman, such as the type of disposal items and frequency.

9. Roads and Bridges

a. Updates

O’Keefe noted that he was still inventorying the vehicles and equipment in the cold storage building and hoped to have it completed for the next regular meeting.

b. Consider bids for winter road salt

The Board reviewed the following bids received in response to an invitation to bid sent out on 8/19/2021 for road salt supply and delivery:

- Apalachee, LLC \$80.00/ton
- American Rock Salt Co., LLC \$81.30/ton
- Cargill, Inc. Did not bid

O’Keefe explained that Apalachee has provided salt to the Town in the past few years and Road Foreman Josh Dryden reports that he is happy with the product and service. The cost last year was \$70.15/ton.

Jim Fleming moved to accept the bid from Apalachee Salt for FY2022 supply and delivery of winter road salt in the amount of \$80.00 per ton, and to authorize the Town Administrator to execute any documents necessary for the hiring of the contractor to provide the necessary material and services, seconded by Melissa Brown. The motion passed unanimously

c. Review Town highway speed studies

The Board reviewed traffic and vehicle class counts from 2018 and 2020, and speed recommendations prepared by the Windham Regional Commission, for the following roads:

- Spring Hill Road
- Landgrove Road
- Winhall Hollow Road

O’Keefe mentioned that these studies are needed in order to establish speed limits on paved roads. On 7/26/2021, the Board reviewed reports for the following roads:

- Goodaleville Road

- Hells Peak Road
- Winhall Station Road

He noted that the reports each have recommended speed limits from WRC, which he has checked and believes there may be alternative speed limits that might make better sense based upon actual observations in addition to the data. He stated that he is waiting on recommendations from the Windham County Sheriff's Office as well, and looks to have a set of proposed Ordinance amendments with new speed limits for these roads at an upcoming regular Board meeting.

He stated that he has been unable to determine ordinance language for the formal establishment of "no through trucking" on Middletown Road and Thompsonburg Road/Main Street, but will continue to do research on this.

d. Discuss posting of Town highway speed limits

O'Keefe explained that the speed limit for all gravel roads in the community is 35 miles per hour (mph) per the Traffic and parking ordinance, but until such time as roads are posted at that speed limit the roads default to the State maximum of 50 mph. He noted that there is \$4,000 budgeted for signs, which would provide for about 40 signs with posts, and recommended that the Board prioritize which roads should be posted first, and then roll out signs at other locations in the coming year or two depending on budgets.

Location and frequency of posted signs was briefly discussed, as were budget and labor issues.

Specific roads for speed limit signage were discussed. O'Keefe noted that if the Board approves new speed limits on paved roads at an upcoming meeting they too will need to be posted. Melissa Brown suggested posting notification of class 4 roads.

The consensus of the Board was for the Highway Department to order 20 sets of 35 mph signs with posts, and to come back at the next regular to settle on which specific roads to sign.

e. Acceptance of financing terms of for the new tractor and equipment

With regard to paying for the new tractor with roadside mower and blower, which is now on order from H.P. Fairfield, Labeau stated that she had sought financing quotes from several financial institutions and for the best deal to be with North Star Leasing Company. The proposal is a 5-year term at 4.999% interest for the \$143,344.60 purchase price. Labeau noted that other proposals were for 5.5% and 6.1% interest.

Melissa Brown moved to accept the financing proposal from North Star Leasing Company and authorize the Town Treasurer or the Town Administrator to execute this and any subsequent documents to secure the funding, seconded by Jim Fleming. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Old Business

a. Discuss upcoming Special Town Meeting and informational hearings

The Board reviewed and discussed possible handouts for the upcoming informational hearings, the first being scheduled for the following evening.

Brown and Crossman spoke about the language in the draft Zoning Bylaw that addresses cannabis businesses. The specific bylaw section would be included in the information packet to be handed out as a draft.

Information on potential income from a 1% local sales tax would be included, as would a list of Vermont municipalities with the local sales tax. The definition of integrated cannabis licenses would also be provided.

Cavanagh prepared an opening statement to address each of the articles and distributed a draft for review and comment. There were a few changes made to improve the statement, including that the Board itself is not recommending that votes be cast one way or another on any article. O’Keefe was asked to prepare a final version for Cavanagh.

In addition to Town Moderator Doug Friant, it was noted that others invited to attend to address questions are:

- Gwynn Zakov from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns
- Maryann Morris from The Collaborative
- Drug policy reform advocate David Silberman
- Julie Hulburd from the Vermont Cannabis Control Board

Absentee ballots will be available at the informational hearing and possible ballots, Labeau mentioned.

The Board discussed logistics of the informational hearing, including pandemic-related health measures.

b. Ratify 8/16/2021 decision on use of Town Office meeting room

The matter of use of the Town Office meeting room by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science on 9/4/2021 was added to the agenda at the previous regular meeting and therefore required ratification per the Board’s Rules of Procedure. It was noted that the Conservation Commission was a co-sponsor of the event.

Jim Fleming moved to ratify the Board’s August 16, 2021 decision to authorize use of the Town Office assembly room on September 4, 2021 by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science for an educational event conditioned on there being no admission charged for attendees, seconded by Melissa Brown. The motion passed unanimously

11. New Business

None.

12. Adjourn

Brown noted that before the next regular meeting there will be meeting with the Windham County Sheriff’s Office, and she requested that there be an opportunity to report out on that meeting at the 9/13/2021 Board meeting.

Melissa Brown moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jim Fleming. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM. The next regular meeting of the Selectboard is scheduled for September 13, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,



Shane P. O'Keefe
Town Administrator

Approved September 13, 2021.

LONDONDERRY SELECTBOARD



Thomas Cavanagh, Chair