

Town of Londonderry, Vermont
Selectboard
Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 8, 2024
Twitchell Building - 100 Old School Street, South Londonderry, VT

Board Members Present: Thomas Cavanagh, Martha Dale, Taylor Prouty, Melissa Brown and James Fleming.

Town Officials: Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe; Town Treasurer Tina Labeau; Town Clerk Kelly Pajala; Assistant Town Clerk Jennifer Lawrence; Town Assessor Jeremiah Suud; Town Lister Sandra Clark and Planning Commission Sharon Crossman.

Others in Attendance: Neighborhood Connections representative Nikki Wengerd; Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad (LVRS) representatives Pete Cobb, Alex Sheets, Doug Friant and Peter Pagnucco; Dufresne Group engineer Chrissy Haskins; Paul Hendler; and GNAT camera operator Bruce Frauman.

1. Call meeting to order

Selectboard Chair Tom Cavanagh called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Additions or deletions to the agenda

[1 VSA 312(d)(3)(A)]

None.

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

James Fleming moved to enter executive session to consider the evaluation of a Town employee, pursuant to Title 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(3), and invite Kelly Pajala, Tina Labeau and Jennifer Lawrence to attend the executive session, seconded by Melissa Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board entered executive session at 6:02 PM, and Pajala, Labeau and Lawrence left the executive session at 6:14 PM. The Board came out of executive session at 6:18 PM.

Martha Dale moved to increase the pay rate of Jennifer Lawrence to \$20.00 per hour effective the pay period ending 12/19/2023, seconded by James Fleming. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Minutes Approval – Meeting(s) of 12/19/2023 and 1/4/24

Martha Dale moved to approve the minutes of the Selectboard meeting of 12/19/2023 and 1/4/2024, seconded by Melissa Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Selectboard Pay Orders

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

6. Announcements/Correspondence

a. Announcements

1. O’Keefe mentioned that last week the newly adopted Short-term Rental Ordinance was posted and appeared in the Vermont Journal. The next milestone toward its final adoption is the petition period to request a Town Meeting vote, which has a 2/1/2024 deadline. Absent that the Ordinance would take effect on 2/17/2024.
2. Sharon Crossman announced the Village Wastewater Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 1/10/2023 at 6:00 p.m. There will be remote options available that are available on the Town website: www.londonderryvt.org
3. Tom Cavanagh and Martha Dale testified in front of the Economic Development Committee of Senate regarding the July 2023 flood. ~~They~~[Cavanagh](#) will testify on Wednesday, 1/10/2024 in front of the Senate Government Operations Committee about the actions during this flood and the actions taken.
4. Kelly Pajala announced it is time to renew and report dog licenses for 2024.

b. Correspondence included in the Board’s meeting packet was as follows:

1. A letter from the Mountain Towns Housing Project thanking the Town and giving a status report on the new house on Bob Perry Lane.
2. Regarding the new solar array at the former septage spreading fields behind the Transfer Station, a notice from the Vermont Public Utilities Commission regarding an alleged violation of the certificate of public good regarding timely completion of the aesthetic mitigation plan. The Commission is imposing a civil penalty in the amount of \$1000.00 pursuant to 30 VSA §§30(a)(1) and (b). The Town will confer with Town Attorney Bob Fisher.
3. A 12/26/2023 article in Valley News regarding a settlement for alleged violations of the Vermont Open Meeting by the Town of Norwich was included for cautionary reasons as it deals with the need for committees and subcommittees to abide by the law.
4. The Town of Londonderry has received the PFAS Groundwater Monitoring Report for the former septage fields. Numbers are going down in well #6 closest to the West River. Hopefully, requirements will go down in the next year or two. The next monitoring event is scheduled for May 2024.

7. Visitors and Concerned Citizens

- a. Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad (LVRS) President, Pete Cobb asked about appropriation procedures. Cavanagh explained that petitions must be submitted to the Board from those that have increased the asking amount. Cobb noted that some LVRS costs have increased 50%. Last year they received appropriations from all towns of \$41,000. The insurance and diesel fuel costs alone are \$40,000. He said they cannot ingest these costs. This year, their appropriation request from all 7 towns reflects a 5% increase. He said, “as volunteers we are not going to be doing petitions”. He asked that the Board accept the submitted invoice as a bill and it be added to the budget. It was clarified that LVRS was seeking to have its Town Meeting warning article appropriation for this year raised from \$15,000 to \$15,750, and to be added to the budget in the future.

Cobb spoke about the contributions from other LVRS service area towns and described the ambulance services provided by other regional communities. The total LVRS budget is just under \$200,000, he noted, and mentioned that there were 601 calls last year, with 306 in Londonderry.

Martha Dale moved to change the initial budgetary allocation for the Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad, seconded by *Taylor Prouty*. The **motion passed** unanimously.

- b. Neighborhood Connections Nikki Wengerd presented the Board with specific information on the areas that have increased in cost and reminded the Board that the grant funding for the transportation program ends 6/1/2024. She noted they are working on a petition to submit to the Board for increased funding at Town Meeting.
- c. Bruce Frauman reminded the Board that the radar feedback sign going into the north village from the south on VT Route 100 is damaged. O’Keefe said there will be an insurance claim on this device.

8. Town Officials Business

a. Village Wastewater Committee – Presentation on 60% Project Report

Project engineer Chrissy Haskins reported they had a committee meeting on Friday, 1/5/2024 and have scheduled a public meeting on Wednesday, 1/10/2024 where they will review the Project Report and its alternatives. She referenced the 60% Draft Preliminary Engineering Report and spoke about the recommended projects. ARPA funds each village at approximately \$4 million dollars. The recommendation is to go with larger systems in each village. It was noted that 90% of construction costs are covered by ARPA funding and 100% of non-construction costs are covered. Design and acquisition are funded for the non-funded village if choose to go with only one village. Maintenance fees are included in these preliminary projected costs.

At the next Selectboard meeting on 1/22/2024 a decision will need to be made to continue with both villages or just one. Sharon Crossman added that the Village Wastewater Committee would like to do both. Haskins added that bond vote/s for local cost share would need to be submitted by 8/31/2024.

Martha Dale moved to accept the 60% Draft Preliminary Engineering Report for the Village Wastewater Project, dated 12/21/2023 prepared by the Dufresne Group, seconded by *Melissa Brown*. The **motion passed** unanimously.

b. Village Wastewater Committee – Discuss bond vote for local project cost share

The Selectboard discussed when they would do bond vote/s and decided to do them on Town Meeting Day 3/5/2024. Haskins is calling the State tomorrow to see if they would consider both North and South Village projects. Then the Selectboard can move forward with the Warning.

There was discussion on how the bonds would be paid down; whether to include some tax funds in addition to just user fees.

Martha Dale moved to schedule and take the necessary steps to arrange for a bond vote for the local funding match requirements of the Village Wastewater Project for the

meeting at the Annual Town Meeting on 3/5/2024, seconded by *James Fleming*. The **motion passed** unanimously.

c. Board of Listers & Town Assessor – Consider proposal and award contract for town-wide property reappraisal

Jerimiah Sund explained that due to the rising housing sales, the Listers have received notice from the State that a property reappraisal must be done. The Listers will need to create a plan and Reserve Fund for reassessment to be done in 2028. Requests For Proposals were sent out to 14 vendors from the qualified list, and 4 replied. The reappraisal has been a 10-year cycle; but has changed to 6-years. The Vermont Legislature is working on a state-wide system.

Taylor Prouty moved to accept the proposal from New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC) for Town-wide property reappraisal services and authorize the Town Administrator and Town Assessor to execute all necessary documents to employ this consultant, including a service contract after review by the Town Attorney, seconded by *Melissa Brown*. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Transfer Station/Solid Waste Management

a. Updates

Cavanagh said there are new permits on sale at the respective?? locations.

The Selectboard discussed a potential new fee from Green Mountain Power (GMP) affecting electricity costs at the Transfer Station.

10. Roads and Bridges

a. Updates/storm damage and recovery

O’Keefe said the Town has requested approximately \$250,000 for reimbursements from FEMA so far.

A new Town truck is now under construction.

The Cobble Ridge Bridge meeting is on 1/12/2024 with FEMA.

b. Access Permit 2023-04 – Middletown Road, Parcel 062001.000

According to Prouty, the culvert that was too small has been replaced and passed inspection.

Martha Dale moved to approve access permit application No. 2023-04, submitted by property owners Andrew and Elizabeth Cooper, for a modification of an existing 2nd access to parcel #062001.000, located on the east side of Middletown Road, authorize the Chair to sign the permit on behalf of the Selectboard, seconded by James Fleming. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Old Business

a. Review and discuss proposed FY2025 Budget

The proposed Budget of FY2025 is in process.

b. Consider amendments to the Personnel Policy

The Selectboard opted to discuss the policy in smaller portions.

c. Discuss establishment of a new Town website

O’Keefe suggested that he assemble a working group for this effort and request proposals from a small number of companies that specialize in small government websites and come back to the Board with a recommendation. It was agreed by Board members that this is an important project to better communicate with the public. Board members mentioned including members of the public to help advise staff on this.

12. New Business

a. Review draft Town Meeting Warning

The Selectboard reviewed each of the twenty-one articles in the Warning.

An article seeking to fund a fourth Road Crew member at a cost of \$90,000 was discussed.

O’Keefe mentioned the article that increases the contribution to the Highway Improvement Reserve Fund to \$300,000 in keeping with the paved roads capital plan approved in 2021.

Articles seeking property tax exemptions for the Second Congregational Church parsonage and the Library’s Janeway property adjacent to the Town Office were briefly discussed.

The Local Option Tax (LOT) was reviewed and discussed at length. It is a way for municipalities in Vermont to raise revenue beyond the property tax. It was noted that a vote to establish a LOT for sales, rooms, meals and alcohol failed at the 2020 Town Meeting, and that a vote at the 2021 special Town Meeting for sales only also failed, but a LOT for rooms only was passed last year. O’Keefe noted that to put it on the Town Meeting Warning again the Board must take a specific vote to do so.

Taylor Prouty moved to recommend pursuant to 24 VSA Section 138(b), that the Voters of the town of Londonderry vote at the next Town Meeting to assess a local option tax for meals and alcohol, and to include in the Town Meeting warning an article providing for the same, seconded by Melissa Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

Taylor Prouty moved to recommend pursuant to 24 VSA Section 138(b), that the Voters of the town of Londonderry vote at the next Town Meeting to assess a local option tax for sales, and to include in the Town Meeting warning an article providing for the same, seconded by Melissa Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board discussed a proposed article regarding establishment of the Town Manager form of government, which was recommended by the Government Structure Study prepared by the New England Municipal Resource Center and discussed at the 11/3/2023 meeting. Given that there has been little discussion on this significant change for the Town, it was agreed that it’s premature to include on the Town Meeting warning and that the subject requires additional discussion by the Board and public feedback. It was agreed to post the Study to the Town website for public review.

13. Adjourn

James Fleming moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Taylor Prouty. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM. The next regular meeting of the Selectboard is scheduled for 1/22/2024.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deborah Carleton
Minutes Taker

Approved January 22, 2024.

LONDONDERRY SELECTBOARD

Thomas Cavanagh, Chair

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