

Town of Fletcher – Select Board
Link: <https://tinyurl.com/fletchersbmeeting>
Password: 330460
Monday, October 5, 2020
Meeting Minutes

Virtually Present

Members: Jon Bondy (Chair), Rich Bidwell, Matt Gillilan, Christine E. Nilsen, and Jesse Wiens.

Guests: Allison Crowson, Michelle F, Sue Ferguson, Eva Gillilan, Sybil Gupwell, Pam Jedlicka, MQ, Rick Russell, Trista Ringer, Rick Russell, Rachael Scarpa (Secretary), Matthew Swartz, Karrie Sweet (Town Clerk), Tara Sweet, Aimee Tinker (Assistant Town Clerk).

1) Call to Order

- a. Jon called the meeting to order at 7:00pm

2) Orders:

- a. Jon, Chris, Rich, and Jesse approve Accounts Payable and Payroll orders.

3) Heat Pump:

- a. Town office heat pump is working well. Still cooling and heating as needed.

4) Nominations for Select Board replacement:

- a. Jon explained that this is a short-term appointment of a Select Board member to fill Christine's position until it can be voted on at the next Town Meeting. In 2021, the position will be voted on at Town Meeting to determine who will fill the post for the remainder of Chris's term. Jon also explained the duties and time obligation for this position.
- b. The Select Board asked to hear from anyone interested in the position:
 - i. Matt Swartz expressed his interest and explained that he's lived in Fletcher for over 20 years. This Select Board appointment would be an opportunity to get more involved in the town. Matt is familiar with budgeting and people management.
 - ii. Jon said he spoke with Rick Russell earlier, but Rick said that he thinks he might be too busy.
- c. The Select Board asked each meeting attendee if they were interested in the Select Board short-term appointment. Each participant confirmed they were not interested.
- d. The Select Board members each spoke about appointing Matt Swartz as a short-term Select Board member. The Select Board unanimously agreed to appoint Matt Swartz to temporarily replace Christine Nilson on the Select Board after she leaves her position.
 - i. The Select Board discussed setting up Matt Swartz with an email address and confirmed that Matt won't be voting until Chris leaves.

5) Metcalf Pond Water Level:

- a. The roadcrew kayaked from the culvert to where it was thought there was a beaver dam. The culvert appears to be set correctly and there wasn't a dam between the culvert and ledges. The Select Board voted to hire two people (Kyle and Howard) to trap beavers. Chris voted no to trapping beavers and suggested using beaver cages instead of traps. The Select Board discussed alternative options to trapping beavers and that the Road Crew mentioned that the beaver season usually ends in the beginning of November. Jon proposed that the road crew clear the culvert daily until the end of the beaver season, typically November 1st. This gives Chris and Jesse time to research alternatives. The Select Board unanimously approved.
- b. The Select Board discussed that the water level is still too high, even when there isn't a beaver dam. Jon spoke with Terry Riggs and he noticed that the vegetation in the pond is growing thicker and thicker each year. Matt agrees that the vegetation that's growing is causing the water

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level to rise. Matt said he hasn't been down beyond the town's property but has been told the access is tight. Matt would be happy to walk down with Jon and look at the area.

- c. Rich proposes that the road crew clears culverts daily until beaver activity is complete and to sign the trapping permits for Howard and Kyle, but only have them trap if it is an emergency. This will still give time for Chris and Jesse to research other methods of addressing the beaver issue. The Select board unanimously approved this proposal.

6) Other Business:

- a. Rich will get a quote for raising the Town Office heat pumps off the ground.
- b. Norman mentioned he doesn't have time to read emails that are sent to him. Matt said he used to receive all emails to the Road Crew, but he doesn't now that the board has switched onto the new email. The Road Crew was checking them and there were very few emails that came through.
- c. Matt mentioned they need to sign a letter of intent to participate in road grants. The Select Board approved signing the letter of intent and the Town Clerk and Road Commissioner can do whatever is necessary to make it happen.
- d. Town Meeting Minutes: The Select Board needs to approve the Town Meeting minutes. Jon asked if anyone on the Select Board had comments, questions, or suggestions about the minutes. Jon suggests that the board approve the minutes in tonight's meeting. The Select Board unanimously approves the Town Meeting minutes.

7) Broadband:

- a. Jesse reminded everyone that the town was selected to receive the Northern Borders grant.
- b. The VEDA Loan application was submitted last week and the town hopes to hear something by 10/30/2020. Jesse will follow up this week to see the status.
- c. Memorandum of understanding is very close to being complete, and this has not held up the application process.
- d. Aimee will let the Select Board know what needs to be done to accept the Northern Borders grant money while abiding by the complex reporting procedures.

8) Metcalf Pond Group: The plan is to gather Metcalf Pond residents to discuss the use of the Metcalf Pond beach area. The Select Board discussed that the Road Crew should attend as well. Jon suggests that proposals for usage are prepared to bring to residents in the meeting. Rich will get to the office in next two weeks and gather historical information to share with the Select Board at the next meeting.

9) Road Report:

- a. 5500 yards of winter sand hauled in, under budget. We need to have 6500 total at start of winter.
- b. River Road box culvert is complete. Matt will meet with Aimee and Karrie to close out the grants.
- c. The process with FEMA is slow. Matt and Aimee are still coming up with the RFP for the Wright Road Bridge grant. Matt asked for Select Board approval to create an RFP for an engineering study and to gather responses. The Select Board unanimously approved.
- d. Shoulders are installed for the 2020 Fairfield Road paving.
- e. Pike industries made repairs to the 2019 Fairfield Road paving at no cost to the town; the repairs have leveled out some a little since they made them.
- f. The Road Crew has been grading on non-rainy days. Matt talked to road crew about berms. Norman and Randy are grading because they are the most experienced.

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- g. Succession planning – Norman is likely to want to retire in 1-1.5 years. The Select Board will talk about succession planning in the spring.
- h. Rich mentioned that the grading has really improved and there was no grader berm.

10) Jesse called Skip Lyle from Beaver Deceivers during tonight’s meeting. Skip could implement a solution for urgent needs within a week. Without knowing situation at all, solutions cost between \$2500 - \$3000 and they are permanent.

11) Reappraisal: Jon asked Alex to keep the Select Board updated monthly on the reappraisal progress.

12) Public Comment:

a. Michelle discussed the conduit problem with Mansfield Community Fiber (MCF): That residents were told they need to prove they own their conduit if they want MCF to utilize it to run fiber to the home. Michelle would like to know if there something the town can do to mitigate this issue so residents don’t have to jump through hoops to get broadband. Matt explained that the homeowner doesn’t typically get receipts for conduit when it is installed by the general contractor. Jon suggested that Jesse contact MCF about the proof of conduit ownership requirement. Pam said she spoke with Brian at MCF and he agrees that proving you own conduit isn’t always possible and if there was some sort of brace or something to support the conduit, that’s where the issue lies. For clarity, Jesse needs to get in touch with Brian to find out what the true issue is with conduit. The Select Board and meeting attendees discussed the different experiences residents’ have had concerning Broadband and conduit. The Select Board needs to confirm the conduit process with MCF and determine the concerns.

i. Jesse confirmed what questions Michelle would like answered and will speak with MCF before the next Select Board meeting:

1. As per the agreement with MCF, MCF will cover the cost of running fiber 300 feet from the pole to the residence. If, that 300 feet from the pole to the residence is existing conduit, will the resident have to provide proof of conduit ownership for MCF to run the fiber through it?
2. If there is conduit that is shared between multiple residences, will the resident have to provide proof of conduit ownership?
3. When is a resident required to provide proof of conduit ownership?

If it turns out MCF conduit policies aren’t reasonable, then the Select Board can address if needed.

- b. Allison thought that there would be the Select Board or a smaller committee that would be intermediaries between residents and MCF. Allison also wondered what the timeline is for when broadband will be available in her area. Jon reminded everyone that we don’t have the VEDA loan yet and the Broadband build out depends on the loan.
- c. Jesse explained the following timeline: MCF will file applications for pole attachment licenses (normally it takes 6 months after the application is filed to get licenses). Then, it takes about 3 months to install. It will be about a year from the loan going through for the fiber buildout to be complete. This means residents will be able to get hooked up after that point.
- d. Allison mentioned that there could be a group of residents that could represent the town as a liaison for this phase of the broadband project. That committee could then help make decisions once the town starts to receive the operating cashflow dividends from MCF. There was a recommendation that the old Broadband Committee act as this liaison. Jesse is wondering if it

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makes sense to contact the members of the most recent Broadband Committee and reach out on social media to see if anyone is interested in joining the new committee. Jon said that the composition of the old Broadband Committee probably was not appropriate for the new liaison committee. Jon suggests that this could be a new group of people to help if residents have trouble getting answer from MCF. Then, the group could also help further build the FAQ. Jon suggested that in the next couple of meetings, the Select Board define the group's responsibilities. Jesse will also see if there is a specific project manager from MCF for the Fletcher build out.

13) Adjournment:

- a. Meeting adjourned at 9:33pm

Upcoming Meetings:

Select Board Meeting: October 19, 2020 at 7pm

Jon Bondy, Chair

Christine E. Nilsen

Rich Bidwell

Jesse Wiens

Matt Gillilan