

Town of Fletcher – Select Board
Link: <https://tinyurl.com/fletchersbmeeting>
Password: 330460
Monday, October 19, 2020
Meeting Minutes

Virtually Present

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

Guests: Dan, Michelle F, Eva Gillilan, Sybil Gupwell, Pam Jedlicka, MQ, Trista Ringer, Rachael Scarpa (Secretary), Matthew Swartz, Anthony Stout, 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) Road Report:

- a. RFP for Wright Road engineer is complete.
- b. Winter sand hauling is complete, 6900 yards. More than we've had in the past years and we are still under budget.
- c. International truck needs body repairs.

3) Orders:

- a. Jon, Matt, and Chris approved Accounts Payable and Payroll orders.

4) Heat Pump:

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

5) Broadband update:

- a. Jon got a call from Brian Davison from MCF (Mansfield Community Fiber) about digging under the road at their expense. Since this would likely need to happen for multiple roads, MCF is looking for a way to pay a fixed lump sum to the town to cover the costs.
- b. Conduit clarity: If conduit goes from a pole to the house directly it is owned by the homeowner; MCF would not require proof of ownership. In cases where wires to the home are run through a pedestal, Consolidated Communications claims ownership of the pedestal. MCF would need the homeowner to provide proof of ownership for the pedestal before using it to run fiber.
- c. VEDA has made a change and because of it MCF can now borrow directly from VEDA. This is preferable for everyone and would mean that the town wouldn't have to be involved in the revenue loan, eliminating all "risk." We are now exploring with NBRC (Northern Borders Regional Commissions) whether there is a way we could do this that still honors the grant agreement; we are waiting her hear back from NBRC. Once we get their decision, the MOU (memorandum of understanding) will be completed, and the loan should be able to be processed in short order. We were on the cusp of both when this new option emerged.
- d. Reporting Requirements for Northern Borders grant: Aimee said she would be happy to complete the requirements, but it will be time consuming. Jon wanted to bring to the Select Board's attention that they might need to fund more time for Aimee. Aimee asked Northern Borders for clarity on what reporting is needed and who can complete it. Aimee also inquired if the Northern Borders grant could cover the cost of Aimee's time. Aimee will let the Select Board know once she has an answer.

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6) Other Board Business:

- a. Jon received a request from Braver Angels:
 - i. Would the Select Board endorse the following message: “We Stand Together for Democracy. We recognize that there are differences of opinion in Franklin County regarding the desirable outcome of the national election on November 3. As Franklin County citizens, we wish to remind everyone that we are Vermonters and Americans first. We all have the power to be heard by voting for the candidate of our choice. As Americans, it is our duty to protect our democracy by ensuring a peaceful election and a peaceful transition of power regardless of who wins. In our communities we strive to take care of each other and see the best in each other regardless of our political views. We invite you to choose to believe in our best selves. Let’s build a stronger, healthier and more resilient community together!”
 - ii. The Select Board wanted to know the entity behind the message to be endorsed. Jon emailed the above statement to the Select Board and asked that they review it so they can decide if they endorse the statement in the next meeting.
- b. Town Meeting:
 - i. The Select Board discussed potential options for Town Meeting, taking into consideration that there still may be safety guidelines in place due to COVID-19.
 1. In person town meeting: Seating 6 feet apart, no food offered, no childcare.
 2. Separate School and Town meeting.
 3. Zoom Meeting: Hold an online Zoom meeting. Though there is a voting facility that comes with Zoom that is anonymous, how would we differentiate between voting and non-voting members. How would we deal with the smaller votes to bring items to the floor?
 4. Could the meeting be virtual with an in-person option?
 - ii. Decision will need to be made at the beginning of January.
 - iii. Jon will add this discussion to each meeting. Tara said the School Board discusses at their meetings as well. Jon thinks it would be important for the school and the town to do the same thing, so it is easiest for residents.
 - iv. Aimee let board know that she emailed the Secretary of State office about local elections and how towns can proceed.
 - v. Tara suggested doing a joint meeting with the Select Board and the School Board, so they can discuss Town Meeting.
 - vi. Need to find out regulations for school gym in order to consider how to move forward.
- c. Quote for raising the heat pumps at town office will be pushed to next meeting’s agenda.
- d. Liaison group between town and MCF: Jon came up with a list of possible responsibilities for that group:
 - i. Field resident comments and complaints (assuming the residents have first tried to work things through with MCF).
 - ii. Get questions answered by MCF.
 - iii. Clarify and extend the broadband FAQ.
 - iv. Bring issues to the Select Board as necessary.

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- v. Matt Swartz volunteered to write a rough draft of the charter for this group. Jon will help create the liaison group.

7) Metcalf Pond:

- a. Beach usage: Sybil has a binder of historical information about the Pond. Rich is working on scanning all the relevant information from her binder. Jon explained the importance of getting this resolved while there is time to do so.
- b. Water level: Chris came up with documents that listed options for beaver mitigation. Sybil came up with a state document as well. The Select Board discussed different options. Aimee reached out to the list serv to see if anyone has experience with different beaver solutions, but she hasn't received a response yet. Aimee suggested reaching out the Westford Road Crew to see what they installed for beaver mitigation. Fletcher's Road Crew will need to be involved in decisions because they will need to maintain it. Sybil spoke with Tyler Brown (beaver specialist) from VT Fish and Wildlife; he said he is willing to help. Jon asked Sybil to send the information from her phone call with Tyler to Jon so he and Matt Gillilan can meet with Tyler. Jon also reached out to the State's wetlands expert because the water level issue is more than just a beaver issue.
 - i. Tony offered to shoot some elevations. Jon said that he and Matt could meet with Tony at the pond. Tony asked if it is possible that the culvert gets pushed up in the winter. Matt Gillilan said the Road Crew doesn't believe that the culvert has moved because the road hasn't needed to be repaired. They do believe that the water is not flowing at the rate it used to flow because of the vegetation overgrowth.

8) Additional Items:

- a. Chris was wondering if we need to gather plowing bids for the Town Office. If the Select Board can find last year's bid invitation, they can update it and use it this year.
- b. Matt suggested that the Select Board review the annual timeline.
- c. Pam asked if a special vote is needed if the town is going to vote via Australian Ballot for Town Meeting. Aimee explained that there was legislation approving a one-time use for towns and schools in 2021 due to COVID-19.
- d. Aimee applied for a grant from an organization called "Center for Tech and Civic Life" whose goal is improve town elections and voting experience. Fletcher received \$5,000 to put towards purchasing PPE, wipes, supplied for any future elections. The Select Board thanked and commended Aimee for her initiative.
- e. This is Chris's last meeting as an official Select Board member. Jon said Chis is always welcome at Select Board meetings whether she's a voting member or not and thanked her for her service to the town and Select Board.
 - i. Matt Swartz will need to be added to the Select Board email. Matt Swartz should look for an email from Matt Bouchard.

9) Adjournment:

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:23pm

Upcoming Meetings:

Select Board Meeting: November 2, 2020 at 7pm

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Jon Bondy, Chair

Christine E. Nilsen

Rich Bidwell

Jesse Wiens

Matt Gillilan