

**Town of Fletcher – Select Board  
Fletcher Town Clerk's Office  
August 21, 2023  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Present:**

**Members:** Rich Bidwell, Jon Bondy, Bruce Douglas, Matt Gillilan, Matt Swartz

**Guests:** David Clark (Health Officer), Michelle Frennier, Aimee Tinker (Ass't Town Clerk/Treasurer, Board Clerk), Tara Sweet (School Board Chair)

**1) Call to Order**

Jon called the meeting to order at 7:01pm

**2) Regular Board Business**

**Health Officer Updates**

*a. Lee Meunier Property*

David Clark did not have any new info as he is still waiting to hear back from the State. David does not know if Lee has received the mailing from the State or if someone has been picking up his mail.

*b. Dog Bite*

There was an incident involving a dog bite a few weeks ago. It did not break the victim's skin. Per the Ordinance, Aimee filed a Dog Incident Report and sent the owner a Warning. David filed his Health Officer Report for the incident.

*c. Failed Septic*

New issue of failed septic system on Shaw Road. David is working with the resident and neighbor to resolve the issue.

**School Board Update**

Tara Sweet shared that the School Board has updated their vision for the school and part of it is increasing the connection between school and community, especially those residents who don't have kids in school. She suggested reactivating the newsletter and the school would be willing to go in half on the project, both in funding and implementation.

Jon explained why the newsletter met its demise some years ago – no one was contributing articles, so the newsletter had little or no content, items were being posted on FaceBook and website instead, it was difficult to get info out in a timely manner in a monthly newsletter, etc. Tara suggested perhaps publishing them quarterly as well as posting them on the website. Aimee will ask Jeremy Frederick (webmaster) if we can track the website traffic.

Tara suggested a survey where residents could share how they'd prefer to receive communications from the Town and School. She said the School Board is meeting again in September. Jon offered to work with her on creating and distributing this survey.

**Broadband**

Michelle Frennier had emailed the Board asking about the history of the broadband project and where we are now.

Jon gave brief history of project (NBRC grant, VEDA loan, etc.) The loan would be paid back from income generated by customers. In January of this year, the Board asked MCF if they would need ARPA funds. It was at this time that MCF let us know that the project would cost more than originally projected due to MCF unnecessarily, and without consultation, expanding the scope of the project outside of Fletcher. As a result of this, NBRC said no more money could be reimbursed until we get answers as to how this occurred and created a plan forward. This process took months due to the challenges in getting all of the numbers assembled accurately in one complex spreadsheet. The Town and NBRC have been corresponding back and forth to resolve this and we are currently awaiting a response from NBRC. They are supposed to get back to us by the end of this week. MCF is continuing construction with their own funds, but they are getting close to running out of that funding source.

Michelle feels the project delays are unacceptable and that the trust in MCF is gone. She feels NBRC is correct in putting a stop to the project.

Jon feels we've put so much time and effort into getting broadband service to the Town that we need to see it through. We need the project to be successful so customers can get hooked up and generate revenue to pay back the loan.

Michelle said that she has called MCF and was told that the delays are due to the Town. Jon said that is not true as the project is on hold per NBRC. Rich said he also has heard from residents that MCF is telling them the delay is the Town's fault. He feels since this is inaccurate, MCF or the Town should put something out to set things straight.

Michelle would like to view documents/invoices for the project thus far. She would also like to read what NBRC was requesting from the Town as well as the Town's response. She feels that transparency is hugely important, and these missteps need to be communicated to the public. Perhaps a summary could go on the website? Jon feels a monthly summary on the website would be doable and helpful.

Michelle asked what would happen if this project fell apart and we defaulted on the loan. She asked if that would affect our ability to borrow in the future. Jon said that MCF would have to take responsibility if that happened.

Bruce thanked Michelle for expressing her frustration as well as that of others in town. He feels this is constructive feedback.

Jon and Bruce will meet with Michelle to go over the spreadsheets that were sent to NBRC as well as give her more background on the back and forth. Aimee will meet with Michelle and show her all invoices and associated project documents.

Rich would like information from MCF regarding how many customers have been lit thus far. Jon will reach out to MCF for his information.

### Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP)

The State has a new grant program through which municipalities can have energy audits of their buildings. The Board has asked Aimee to apply for one of these grants for both the Town Office and the Town Garage.

### 03 Mack

The highest bidder backed out once he saw the truck in person due to its clutch issue and extensive rust.

### Grader

Matt G gave an update on the status of the grader. We thought it had a 5-year warranty, but it was actually only 3 years. It has about 3400 hours and the warranty was for 1500, so we are over on mileage and time. Matt said repairs would not be as cost-effective as replacing the motor completely, which would cost around \$60K so he ordered a new motor last week. It should be in later this week and will take 2-4 days to install.

Jon suggested that Matt G and Glen look at the budget to see where we may be able to cut back in order to not have the new engine be such a huge hit. Matt G agreed this was a good idea.

Fairfax has been helping with spot-grading the worst spots and has completed a full grade of North, Pond, and Rugg roads.

### Traffic Counters

Residents have reported seeing a few traffic counters installed in Town. Aimee reached out to VTrans and Regional Planning to get details. Apparently, the State is ahead of schedule in their random location assessments. They should only be up for a week or so and data will be made available to the Town soon.

### Garage Decisions

There was a discussion regarding who has the authority to make road/garage decisions when Matt G is not available. Would it be helpful to have another Board member serve as Assistant Road Commissioner? Glen shared with Matt his concerns about what level of authority *he* had in this capacity, most recently whether to enlist grading services from neighboring towns if the roads were deemed in great need of grading.

Matt S said he drove all the dirt roads this past weekend and shared their status with the rest of the Board via email. He feels it's not good to have more people for Glen to report to as that is Matt G's responsibility.

Jon suggested that if Glen needs to make a time-critical decision and cannot reach Matt, he should try Jon. If he's unavailable, try Rich. If Rich is unavailable, Glen can make the decision. The rest of the Board agrees this is a good approach.

### Werner Pond Access

There was a discussion of the Board's response letter to Kim Werner. Bruce suggested walking the Town-owned parcel with State wetlands and shoreline protection officials. Aimee will update the letter with the Board's edits, Jon will sign, and Aimee will mail it to Ms. Werner.

### Crack Sealing

Glen has reached out to Fresh Coat to arrange a time for them to come to town and assess our roads. He has yet to hear back from them. Aimee will try to reach out to them.

### School Road Parking

Matt G spoke with Regina Newfield who owns the land across from the school. She agreed to let the town add material to a small section of the ROW directly across from the parking lot in order to create additional parking. This would not be an immediate project, but a gradual one as the Town had fill to place there. Matt will work with Aimee to draft a letter to Mrs. Newfield to recap their discussion and share the plan forward.

Listers/Outside Assessor

The Listers have been calling references and are working on drafting a contract for Spencer Potter. Aimee is working with them to accomplish this.

Personnel Policies

Matt S provided drafts of the road foreman job description and road crew personnel policy to the rest of the Board. Board members will give their feedback to Matt S in advance of the next meeting. Glen and Ed have looked it over as well. They've given comments and had their Q's answered.

Building Updates


- Rich fixed the heat pumps' insulation.
- Glen added soil & seeded/mulched around pavement at office parking lot.
- Rich will get the Town Office building pressure washed. He's looking for a wand extension.
- It's been a while since the generator at the Town Office has been serviced. Aimee will schedule one. Rich will speak with Brenda about not mowing grass into generator vents.
- Rich will look into scheduling a service/cleaning of the Daikin exchangers in the office.
- We are looking for a contractor to be available for boiler repair/maintenance (Rich doesn't do commercial work, only residential)

FY23 GIA

This grant project on Vreeland and Moore Roads is complete. Glen and Matt G will work with Aimee to assemble all documents necessary for reimbursement.

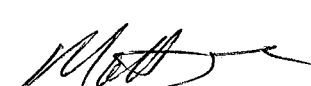
**3) Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32pm.

  
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Jon Bondy, Chair

  
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Rich Bidwell

  
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Bruce Douglas

  
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Matt Gillilan

  
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Matt Swartz