

**Town of Fletcher – Select Board
Fletcher Town Clerk’s Office
April 1, 2024
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Present:

Members: Rich Bidwell, Bruce Douglas, Matt Swartz

Guests: Rich Amato, Larry Cota, Kelly Cummings, Keith Donahue, Pam Farmer, Jeremy Fredericks, Jen Getty, Sandy Mayotte

1) Call to Order

Matt S. called the meeting to order at 7:15pm - late due to technical issues with Zoom.

2) ATV Committee Discussion

- Rich A feels there’s too much in that email that is not factual. The committee has met for 6 hours and there has been a lot of progress, meetings are not neat and tidy. The committee went over ATV regulations, so everyone had a working understanding so as a group, we could answer questions coming in from the community. The committee:
 - took 28 questions and categorized them to enable us to answer them in a concise way
 - came up with agreed upon questions to get input on - started with VLCT and made a bigger list for town attorney
 - agreed to reach out to law enforcement - and came up with agreed upon questions so we will be moving forward.
- Rich A observed that in the letter there were some statements that the committee was using stalling tactics. He does not want to confuse due diligence with stalling to find out what are the real answers to questions. Regarding the comment about liability vs legal – he was miffed that the emails prior to this email were all positive. He feels they have not wasted 6 or 7 hours and have gotten a lot done.
- Rich A stated that he would be remiss in stating that Bruce has kept us on task and regained us to train of thought. Anyone who has worked on any committee has background comments, but Bruce has gotten folks on both sides of the committee on track.
- Pam agrees with progress that was made though some work was done without all committee members being responded to. She feels the responses from VLCT to Mike should have come back to the committee. She feels there was quite a debate on whether we were doing a proposal or a recommendation. It would be great if we can circle up and work as committee.
- Rich B said the Selectboard runs meetings in an open format and that is what we are used to. However, if the committee wants to utilize more structure, they can do that.
- Matt has read a lot about open meeting law and disagrees with his colleagues on the outcome of a committee with its members from both sides of the issue.
- Rich B did not hear any objections to the comment that Bruce is keeping folks on track.
- Sandy feels it is hard to set up a meeting with six people pro and six people against. She feels the committee has not had a chance to truly communicate and has allowed folks to be aggressive to members.
- Bruce responded to feedback on his role as facilitator.
- Keith thought the email was harsh.
- Matt feels there needs to be a bit more structure.

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- Kelly said there is no reason for the statement “is not being neutral” referring to Bruce. She said he remains silent. The email gave no example so it is wrong to accuse him of not being neutral, and she requested that a retraction be made.
- Rich B said an opinion was stated and that led to someone calling Bruce biased.
- Jen said the letter was sent to the selectboard so we can all have a discussion. She wants everyone to be involved so we can talk about these issues. She feels we are not trying to not talk about it, but said it is hard to talk about things in front of the public.
- Mike said the appropriate step would have been a conversation between Jen and Mike and Bruce.
- Rich B stated that he read through Jen’s letter. He feels Bruce answering questions on behalf of the selectboard is tough as he cannot make those calls and nor can he. Regarding the facilitator part - Bruce just spoke to it. Rich feels Jen, Mike and Bruce need to get together and give Bruce some guidance on how they want meeting run. He did not notice anything wrong with how he was facilitating. Rich feels the Select Board was not clear in providing direction and he thought that the committee would present an ordinance, so clearly we all need to regroup.
- Mike pointed out that Aimee copied Jen on her email to VLCT.
- Sandy said she did not see any emails and feels that acting alone inhibits trust - Mike apologized.
- Matt said it sounds like there is frustration and miscommunication about the meetings and what happens outside the meeting. He feels the committee would benefit from having more structure and rules around communication should be more formal. Need to consider input from both sides.
- Rich B said his opinion from being at the meeting was the committee was working and it might be helpful to have pairs of people gather information to save time.
- Matt said they are going to have to figure out how the committee can move forward.
- Rich A does not want to lose sight of the progress that has been made, despite the messiness. It will be helpful that we have law enforcement coming to answer questions. He asked if the questions have been sent to the Town attorney. Jen said no, not yet.
- Rich A said those are two steps (law enforcement and Town attorney advisement) that will help us move forward with the more technical questions.
- Matt said the committee needed to evaluate the facts and it sounds like they’ve made a lot of progress.
- Keith asked what the delay tactics were that were referred to in the letter.
- Matt feels we don’t need to keep picking apart the letter.

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- Larry wants to apologize to Bruce for the letter. He feels the discussion of a proposal is a problem that the selectboard should take on. He feels the committee can find out the facts and answer the questions.
- Rich B does not want the Select Board to make a decision tonight as Jon and Matt G are not here.
- Rich A suggested that the committee continue with fact finding as that is the first phase. The Select Board needs to provide guidance on what is the next phase.
- Matt said it sounds like there is enough to discuss at the next meeting. It sounds like there has to be structure on how conversations are dealt with and who has the floor to speak. People who don't get to speak will leave with frustration.
- Sandy feels the co-chairs should meet before each meeting. Jen and Mike agreed.
- Rich B spoke about Kelly's flow chart which she had presented to the Select Board.
- Matt said he had difficulty with the flow chart.
- Rich B said Bruce is correct that the Selectboard had never made a decision on this flow chart.
- Kelly said the flow chart was simply brought to the Select Board when the committee was at the same place we are now and trying to determine how to move forward. It was a simple way to show a process where the town could decide.
- Rich B asked when the next committee meeting is, as he wants to address committee members. He said that when Bruce read the minutes of the 2/19 board meeting, they were not what he remembers.
- Rich A said the Select Board should include the committee co-chairs in the discussion of what will be the charge of the committee.
- Rich B said he could not do what the committee is doing. In his opinion, the committee should gather facts and compare it to an ordinance from another town.
- Kelly reframed Rich's comment, saying: the committee should gather facts and then evaluate other ordinances to see if they have followed the facts. Is that what he was saying? Rich said yes and that in itself would be a fact-finding task.
- Matt summarized that there is a path forward and everyone will regroup. He wished to close out the ATV discussion.
- Rich B felt the committee work was civilized.
- Kelly asked who originally brought the issue of ATVs to the table. Jen said it was she.

** All members of the public left the meeting with the exception of Jen.

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3. Building Maintenance

- Rich brought up the following items:
 - Since it is an election year (four-year cycle), we will need to pump the Town Office septic tank. Rich will take care of scheduling that.
 - We still need to find someone to take care of maintenance on the gas furnace.
- Matt S will follow up with Shawn Bishop on the generator project.

4. Marshall Road Discontinuance

- Bruce Brought up the issue of Marshall Road. The Board agreed to the process for road discontinuance outlined in the Orange Book which Bruce had sent to the Board.
 - Rich asked Bruce to let Jon know that this should be on the agenda for the next meeting

5. Other

- Jen shared that the NWSWD Meeting was tomorrow regarding the bond for new facilities.

6. Adjourn

- Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Rich Bidwell

Bruce Douglas

Matt Swartz