



Town of Underhill
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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 22, 2024, 6:00 P.M.
Underhill Town Hall

Present:

Selectboard Members: Bob Stone, Patricia Richards

Town Staff: Brad Holden, Russ Clark, Jennifer Silpe-Katz, Amanda Bosley (remote), Dan Manz,

Committee Members: Seth Friedman, Kurt Johnson

Others: Graham Chapek, David Demarest, Daniel Lee

Absent: Dan Steinbauer

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call Meeting to Order / Adjustments to Agenda*

Bob called the meeting to order at 6:00. It was agreed to add an item related to a grant for Harvest Crossing.

2. *Opening Public Comment (6:01)*

No members of the public wished to comment.

3. *Harvest Crossing Grant (6:01)*

Dan Manz said the church successfully completed the Vermont Community Development Program planning grant and now they have the opportunity to apply for an implementation grant. Funding is only available to municipalities so the town and church would have to have same subgrantee relationship as with the previous grant. The grant application is due to VCDP April 9. Before we can apply the selectboard needs to have a public hearing about the application. The meeting has to be warned 15 days ahead of time. Brad had asked if we could wait 6 months to apply. Dan learned that the state is about to be required by the federal government to meet Build America, Buy America (BABA) requirements, which means grantees would have to document that everything used in the project was made in America. We get lumber from Canada.

Apparently there is only one company in the U.S. known to make PVC pipe. Meeting those requirements is likely to raise the cost of the project – maybe to the point where it would not be worth applying for the grant – and it creates huge administrative headaches. VCDP has \$500K of leftover money from FY2023 and the only BABA requirements on that are for iron and steel. If we don't apply by April 9 they will give all that away and the next round of grants will be subject to BABA requirements.

Patty moved to schedule a public hearing on the Harvest Crossing implementation grant prior to April 9, Bob seconded and the motion was passed.

4. *Proposed Pavilion in Moore Park – Development Review Application (6:10)*

Seth Friedman said he is here on behalf of the rec committee. They would like permission to submit the site plan for the pavilion at Moore Park to the DRB for review. The pavilion would hopefully be in the southwest corner of the park. A private member of the community is interested in building and funding it. The committee has staked out an area they believe will work but they will get it surveyed to make sure it is not in the riparian buffer.

Bob asked who will manage the construction. Seth said he thinks the rec committee would have purview over it but the person who will be building it is a builder. Bob asked who from the town will oversee the

construction. Seth said the rec committee can do that if the selectboard wants them to. Brad said he thinks it is likely that construction will only take a day. There are some logistics to be worked out regarding power, etc. He is happy to do what he can and the rec committee can fill in the gaps. Seth said the energy committee is trying to get a grant to put solar panels on the roof. Brad said the building would be oriented for solar panels.

Patty moved to accept the rec committee's proposal to submit an application to the DRB for construction of a pavilion at Moore Park. She said she highly encourages having solar sited there. **Bob seconded and the motion was passed.**

5. ***2024 ADA Traffic Control Contract (6:17)***

Russ said we contract with ADA in case we need them for traffic control so we know their rates. Brad said last year he ran the contract by the town's attorney and he said it was satisfactory. **Bob moved and Patty seconded to authorize the vice chair to sign the 2024 contract with ADA Traffic Control Ltd. for traffic control.** Patty said on the first page the contract refers to "the following Project(s) and Project Site(s): All jobs." Could we make that say "jobs as requested by the Town of Underhill" instead? Brad agreed that would be better. **The motion was passed.**

6. ***Replacement Plow Blades***

Russ said there is a new plow blade on the market designed for plowing soft roads. It is very difficult to plow roads that are soft because the blade has a tendency to dig in. He would like to purchase 33 ft. of this style of blade in order to set up 3 plows with the blades.

Jennifer said in 2020 we bought \$7500 worth of new plow blades and in December 2021 we spent \$5K on new blades. Do other blades also need replacement? It looks to her like we purchase new plow blades every 2 years. Russ said right now we have a good stock of carbide blades – plenty for this fiscal year.

Patty asked if we have funds in the budget for this. Jennifer said there is a budget line for dump truck maintenance. Russ said that line is still pretty healthy. He thinks it had \$60K or \$65K originally and we have spent about half of it.

Patty said we have done without these plow blades until now. Could we wait until the end of the fiscal year and see how much is left and then buy them for next winter? Russ said that is a possibility. Plowing dirt roads is very difficult. It can be nerve racking. He has seen trucks go over when the blades dig in.

Bob asked if we know of anyone who is using these. Russ said no. This blade was just brought to his attention last week.

Bob moved and Patty seconded to purchase 33 feet of blades for soft road plowing from Eastern Wear Parts at \$89 per foot. Patty said she will vote no because she would like to wait and purchase the blades at the end of the fiscal year. **The motion failed with Bob voting in favor and Patty opposed.**

7. ***Spring 2024 Mud Season Posting***

Bob moved to post roads effective February 23 at 8:00 am as presented in the meeting packet, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

8. ***Town Garage Heating Service Contract (6:34)***

Russ said we have a contract with Alliance Mechanical dated 2015 for maintenance of the town garage heating system. They called recently to schedule a time to come do maintenance. He wanted to see if the board wants to continue the contract. Brad suggested maybe we should shop around for new estimates. We also have a contract with Alliance for maintenance at the post office. The service location address is wrong for the post office. Patty said she doesn't like the automatic renewal in the contract. She thinks there should

be a new contract every year. It was agreed that Brad should investigate heating system service contracts with different vendors and report back to the board.

9. *FY25 VTrans Structures Grant Application – Pleasant Valley Road, Bridge 7 (6:39)*

Kurt said we applied for this grant last year but were not quite high enough on the priority list. It is a \$200K grant. He asked Cricket McCusker about the cost figure and she recommended increasing last year's amount by 10%.

Patty moved to approve and sign the FY25 VTrans Structures Grant Application for Pleasant Valley Road, Bridge 7, Bob seconded and the motion was passed.

10. *Irish Settlement Road Paving Bid Documents (6:43)*

Kurt said the due date for bids is April 12. Russ gave input about some side roads to include. We usually end up getting our paving work done in late September or early October. Sometimes that is pushing the edge of the envelope for temperature. Also, the asphalt pricing index the state puts out typically goes up over the course of the year. This time we asked bidder to give us a bid for paving this year and also one for paving next year between May and June 30.

Bob said he is concerned about having paving done when there is school traffic. It was agreed to revise the bid documents to say that paving of the section from Pleasant Valley to Pine Ridge must be done at a time when students are not in school.

Bob moved to send out the Irish Settlement Road bid documents with the changes discussed, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

11. *Consider Clean Water Grant Application – Range Road (6:54)*

Dan Lee said he lives on Range Road. There is a cross culvert that goes under Range Road and is channelized through his property and then hits a steep slope. There is erosion at one end. He previously asked if the town might be able to do something about it, but it was quite a ways out of the right of way so that wasn't an option. Now Vermont has a funding mechanism for clean water projects that are not regulatory (not mandated by the state.). He thinks this project falls into that category. Brad said the money is for private projects. He thinks there is a good chance of getting a grant. Dan wants to know if the town would support an application to the Basin Water Quality Council for the Lamoille drainage. Dan would work on the application with advice from Brad. Brad said it would be a design grant. Dan said he thinks this may be for preliminary design and then he could apply for a design grant and in the future could get a grant to do the work.

Jennifer said she used to live on South Hill and she brought that catch basin to the town's attention 6 or 7 years ago because it was caved in. It has been getting worse. The board looked at some pictures showing the erosion. Brad explained the infiltration system that is proposed to fix the problem.

Patty moved to submit an application to the Northwest Regional Planning Commission for a Clean Water grant, Bob seconded and the motion was passed.

Dan said he read that individuals are not allowed to apply so the town would be the grantee.

12. *Recess (7:04)*

Bob recessed the meeting from 7:04 to 7:07.

13. *Continue Discussion and Review Draft Amendment to Ordinance (7:08)*

Amanda had sent out a new version of the street naming, numbering and addressing ordinance. Patty said one sentence says, "No new road shall have any currently used name in the Town of Underhill or other town serviced by the UJFD." Should we make it more generic and say "shared emergency services" instead of UJFD? Amanda said she would be worried about making it too broad. Do

we really need to include Bolton or Westford? Patty asked what other emergency services we share. Brad said the state police. Bob said Essex Rescue. Brad said if the other towns don't have the same restriction on duplicate names our restriction won't do any good. Currently Jericho and Underhill collaborate but it would be difficult to reach out to all the other towns that might share emergency services. Bob said right now he isn't aware of it being a problem. Brad said he thinks our E911 coordinator can help us determine whether there are any other roads with the same name in neighboring towns. Amanda said she would research it before suggesting a name to the selectboard.

There was discussion about whether the policy should say that vanity road signs are not permitted. After some discussion, Amanda said she would try to come up with different wording that is less strict. Bob suggested checking with some less rural communities to see what they do.

Patty asked to have Underhill Jericho Fire Department spelled out in the policy instead of using UJFD.

14. 2024 Underhill Land Contracts Changes (7:23)

Amanda said the Weir property sold. The two new owners that needed to transfer the contract have signed. The third owner is a relative and not required to transfer.

Bob moved to sign the new land contract dated February 2, 2024 with Jordan and Rachel Wyckoff for the property containing 48.9 acres located at 204 Poker Hill Road, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to sign the new land contract dated January 26, 2024 with Dylan Haden and Tory Wilder for the property containing approximately 50 acres located at 178 Poker Hill Road, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

15. April 8, 2024 Solar Eclipse Discussion (7:26)

Brad said VLCT has been having weekly eclipse briefings. The state emergency operations center will be open that day. They are encouraging towns to use the eclipse like a practice event and to coordinate. Cell providers are claiming bandwidth won't be an issue. There was discussion about mud season. The state is encouraging towns to close roads to all but local traffic. We can create a municipal account for the Waze app and show roads as closed on the app. They are encouraging us to do that. The state will be placing signs saying that the state park is closed. Brad thinks we can coordinate with them and decide where we would like signs saying "local traffic only." Cambridge selectboard chair Jeff Coslett wondered if Cambridge and Underhill should coordinate, for instance on Pleasant Valley Road. Stowe will be open. They will keep everyone at the top while the eclipse happens and then open the trails when the light comes back. Jay Peak is closing and maybe running the tram. Some towns are doing their own events. He thinks the state parks that will be open will be more toward the islands. He talked to sheriff to see if our deputy could be available. The sheriff said he would ask him. Bob said he thinks having a sheriff's deputy here for the afternoon or the entire day would be to the residents' advantage. Patty suggested having them at the entrance to either Stevensville or Mountain Road. Brad will coordinate with the sheriff. Bob suggested getting 4 "local traffic only" signs. Russ will get prices.

16. Closing Public Comment Period (7:28)

No members of the public wished to comment.

17. Member Items, Correspondence, Announcement, Schedule, Dates for Special Meeting (7:39)

The next meeting is the February 26 informational hearing.

Bob congratulated Dan Steinbauer on his 50th wedding anniversary. Dan is celebrating with his wife tonight.

18. Executive Session (7:40)

Bob moved to go into executive session under 1 V.S.A. Section 313(a)(1)(A) for the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, Patty seconded and the motion was passed at 7:40.

Bob moved to come out of executive session at 8:01, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob said the board will continue to examine a personnel matter.

19. Warrants and Minutes

Bob moved to approve the warrants dated February 15, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to approve the warrants dated February 12, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to approve the selectboard minutes dated January 18, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to approve the selectboard minutes dated January 25, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

Bob moved to approve the selectboard minutes dated February 8, 2024, Patty seconded and the motion was passed.

20. Adjourn (8:03)

Bob moved to adjourn, Patty seconded and the motion was passed at 8:03.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths

Read and approved as submitted/amended:

Dan Steinbauer, Chair

Date Signed

Date Approved