



Select Board

Town of Hinesburg
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Meeting Minutes – July 29, 2020

- Draft -

Attending the Meeting: Phil Pouech, Merrily Lovell, Jeff French, Mike Loner, Jeff Tobrocke, Renae Marshall, Joy Dubin Grossman, Andrew Driver, Allison Cleary, Caleb Casco, Bob Thiefels, Scooter MacMillan, Anthony Cambridge, Chuck Reiss, Kate Kelley, Erik Bailey, Chris Grande, Mike Webb, Laura Sau.

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom online remote meeting platform

Additions/Deletions/ Public Comment

Phil noted there will be an executive session at the end of the meeting to discuss the annual review for the Town Administrator.

Town Administrator Report

Renae noted with Governor Scott issuing the mandatory mask order she has removed this an item the Board needs to act on. Renae said a few stores are having problems with compliance and are looking for support. There is also increased need for shopping assistance again.

They interviewed an applicant for highway maintainer and are waiting for the background check.

Continuing to work on Wastewater upgrade funding. She and Erik met with State Clean Water staff.

Water main break at the intersection project the State is doing. It was repaired in a couple of hours. The project is moving along.

Renae met with the consultant for the impact fee update.

Processed the loan documents for the financing of the tractor.

She, Jeff F and Mike met with the energy committee to work on the solar proposals.

Finalizing the job description for the full time fire department position.

Aaron will be scheduling a meeting with staff and those interested in learning how the new website will work.

Select Board Forum/Correspondence

Phil said he was relieved when the governor mandated face masks and feels that is the right action. He thanked Renae for re-starting the shopping assistance program.

Merrily reported Richard Watts sent her some links to articles regarding police funding. Jeff T noted he received the same.

Jeff F asked if the Board is going to address a mandate about face masks to add support to the stores. Jeff T pointed out the mandate allows store owners to refuse service to anyone not wearing a mask.

Consider Acceptance of 2020 COPS Grant

Phil noted this item came to the Board in February and the Board approved applying for the grant. We have now found out the Town has been awarded the grant. The decision to be made is whether or not to accept the grant.

Merrily talked about where Hinesburg stands in overall % of police budget with other towns she felt were comparable. She feels it is fine to expand.

Jeff F said looking at the total average per capita spending in Vermont Hinesburg is below the average.

Phil said people are very satisfied with the Community Policing they are getting, they feel secure and good about having a Police Department. Phil feels good about the direction this Department has gone in and continues to focus on.

Jeff T is opposed, he feels given the tenor in the country now it is the wrong time to add to the force. He talked about the fact that when the grant runs out the Town is responsible for the costs. He added that Chief Cambridge has stated in a news article the funding is adequate for what we are doing now.

Jeff F said he hears what Jeff T is saying about the national tenor and added that the Police Department in Hinesburg is leading the pack in use of funding and approach to mental health.

Mike realizes the timing is not opportune, he has heard from multiple community members supporting this. He received two letters of concern.

Allison Cleary referred to the article in VT Digger which made her aware of the distinctions between towns and the way that budgets are being allocated toward police departments. She feels Hinesburg has a robust PD at this point and when compared to Charlotte which has no community police and does not seem to have additional crime or problems. Not the time to put taxpayer money toward more policing. She feels we are getting out of balance.

Anthony said the Charlotte comparison is misleading, Richmond's higher budget could be compared as well.

Jeff T asked what the dollar amount is (the 25%) the Town will be paying over the next three years.

Caleb said the grant is \$125,000 over the next three years to pay for a full time officer. Phil said that is a good point as it is not 75% of the cost as there are additional costs.

Jeff T said he is looking for the dollar amount we will be paying as a Town is if the grant is accepted for an additional officer over the next three years.

Merrily noted we can use more grant money in the beginning it does not have to be equally divided over the three years.

Phil moved to approve accepting the 2020 COPS Grant for \$125,000 funding toward a new full time police officer over the next three years with the Town on the hook for the following year. Caleb corrected that the Town is on the hook for the three years.

Joy said she is concerned with not having a second officer to respond to calls for safety reasons.

Mike asked what the cutoff date is. Caleb said August 9. He received an email day before yesterday stating we need to accept ASAP or could lose it.

Jeff F said using a figure of \$87,000 costs and benefits over three years minus the \$125,000 grant is \$45,000 a year for the three years. This example assumes a family plan for benefits.

Andrew Driver said the safety of our officers is paramount and he is in favor of accepting the grant.

Phil called for a vote at which time Jeff F second.

The motion was amended with the permission of Phil and Jeff to read. I move to approve accepting the 2020 COPS Grant for a maximum \$125,000 of funding over the next 3 years for a full time police officer and the Town is on the hook for the 3 years. Motion voted and approved 4 to 1 with Jeff T opposed.

Phil added that the hiring process should go through a normal hiring process where we define the job, reach out to potential candidates, put together a small committee to do the evaluation and make the recommendation.

Consider Approving Conservation Commission Bylaw Revisions

Merrily moved to approve the Conservation Commission Bylaws as amended. Second by Jeff T and approved with 5 yes votes.

Review Solar Proposals with the Energy Committee

Phil said he will participate in discussion but will recuse himself from any vote as his company is one of the bidders.

Mike Webb of the Energy Committee reviewed the bid summary. He noted there is no commitment at this time and the Town can work with bidders and can select multiple projects, locations and bidders.

Erik asked why they did not consider the new Water Treatment Building which has a south facing roof. Chuck said they can revisit, it was not considered at this time as it is a smaller size.

Phil asked Mike what the next steps would be.

Mike said at the meeting on August 5th the objective would be for the Board to identify which projects they want to move forward with and authorize the committee to notify those bidders. That would lead to discussion with each bidder about specific contractual language.

Phil asked that the Energy Committee and those who worked on this project give some recommendations. Chuck said the Energy Committee is meeting before the Select Board and can put together some recommendations.

Merrily agreed with Phil and said the information is a bit overwhelming to her. She would appreciate a recommendations from the Energy Committee.

Mike L said we can accept more than one proposal.

Mike W said he is comfortable moving ahead with project A. The decision left is to move ahead with project D or E.

Jeff said there are two parts to this. If we do solar, how much revenue will come into the Town and how much energy offset we will get. The other component is how much will go the community where they will be able to buy into community solar.

Laura Sau asked the Library be put on a higher priority to have solar. She feels it would be a great location for people to learn about solar. Mike W said the Energy Committee is definitely going to work with the library. It is not a Town owned facility which is the focus of this project.

Jeff Forward, partner in Vermont Independent Energy, noted their proposal is not mutually exclusive of any of the other proposals.

Wastewater Upgrade Funding Update and November Bond Vote Discussion

Renae and Eric had a virtual meeting with the folks from the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund Program as well as the Town's consultant Wayne Elliott. They shared some good news regarding grant funding and an Affordability Program.

Consider Approving Annual Allocation Pool Designation – Appendix E

Erik reviewed the draft water allocation noting the Town’s water use has gone down significantly. Jeff asked what the suggested amounts given by Alex are based on. Is it specific projects of development that are on the table? Erik said all he knows is what Alex wrote in his memo regarding keeping allocation to support new business.

Phil moved to approve Appendix E for water as proposed. Second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Phil moved to approve Appendix E for wastewater as proposed. Second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Update on Creation of Community Advisory Working Group and Discussion of Art Installation Ideas

Renaë has been communicating with Laura Sau, an artist who has worked with the town of Richmond regarding the current issues around racial equity. Renaë shared some examples of her artwork which include data incorporated into the artwork.

Sau said she was inspired to make signs that will inform with statistics. She has been talking with Renaë to find out if there is space for these in Hinesburg.

Mike said he has been in touch with a few people interested in being part of a workgroup.

Phil talked about a meeting just to talk about this issue.

Jeff T suggested a “Town Hall” type meeting.

Renaë said having Sau’s artwork around Town could help to get a conversation started.

Review Minutes from July 15, 2020

Phil moved to approve the minutes from July 15, 2020 as amended. Second by Merrily and approved with 5 yes votes.

Consider Approving Warrants

Phil moved to approve the warrants, including payroll, as submitted by the Town Treasurer. Second by Merrily and approved with 5 yes votes.

Consider a Motion to Enter Executive Session Under Provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(a)(2)&(a)(3)

Phil moved the Board go into executive session for personnel reasons, second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Phil moved to go into executive session under Provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(a)(2)&(a)(3). Second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Phil moved to come out of executive session and adjourn, second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Respectfully Submitted,
Valerie Spadaccini, Clerk of the Board