

Approved Minutes
West Fairlee Selectboard Meeting
Monday, August 7, 2023, 6 pm

Present: Beverly Jo Ash, Fred Cook, Bruce Durkee, Delsie Hoyt, Steve Malinoski

Visitors: TRORC - Harry Falconer, Sidney Steinle, and Sarah Wraight (via Zoom)

Clerk: Nina Schwartz

The meeting was called to order by Delsie Hoyt at 6 pm from the Town Office and via Zoom.

Minutes of the July 17, 2023, regular select board meeting were reviewed. Bev made a motion to approve those meeting minutes, as noted; Fred seconded; unanimously approved.

Visitors/Hear and act on reports of Town Officers and Committees

- TRORC/Harry Falconer, re: overview of Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP):
 - Provided overview of grants within this program, and application/eligibility requirements
 - Explained municipal building energy assessments (FOC), two levels, only level 1 is required to apply for MERP project grants. Level 2 is “investment grade”, for loans. Requires building documents to apply to assess eligibility
 - Project Implementation grant: up to \$500k, can be used for local match (stacking grants allowed). Eligible work: weatherization, insulation, heating system conversion, hot water system upgrade/fuel switching.
 - SB needs to sign grant agreement. Grants are awarded on several criteria, including energy burden levels. Any municipal building eligible.
 - Municipal energy loan program will be available. Details not yet released.
 - Next steps: apply! Gather necessary documents if interested in Level 2.
 - The SB collectively agrees Level 2 is beneficial to apply to assist with road mapping and prioritizing projects
- TRORC/Sidney Steinle and Sarah Wraight, re: overview of Municipal Technical Assistance Planning (MTAP):
 - Aimed at Towns with little personnel capacity to work on funding sources for projects and manage (FOC). A discussion was had on possible ways the program can be applied to the community and the challenges we face. Bear in mind ARPA funding needs to be obligated by a certain deadline. Consider a strategy to convert ARPA dollars (on eligible categories within your operating budget) to local surplus money.

Organizational

Review Treasurer’s Financial Statements/Journal Entries – emailed by Treasurer, circulated to SB members via email prior to the meeting

- Steve commented observing Winter Equipment Hired budget seems to have been adjusted slightly with an expense reassigned to the correct category by Treasurer, all else is fine
- Capital Budget Planning: discussion, re: structuring flood expenses while awaiting FEMA and State reimbursement which could be 12 to 18 months out

Roads/Land

- Abbie Lane: signage missing, needs replacement
- Summer maintenance and grant projects: getting back on track
 - Jonathan working on drainage by Beaver Meadow Rd.

- Jennings Rd. needs to be done by September 30th due to grant deadline, as well as Brushwood Rd
- Highway Safety Improvement grant (HSIP): awarded \$28k for Wild Hill ledge/corner (FY'24)
- Driveway access permit for Middlebrook Rd (near old schoolhouse):
 - Steve consulted with Jonathan, who had no objections
 - Steve made some suggestions on driveway access per Highway Access Ordinance standards to avoid drainage issues
 - There were no objections by the SB to permitting the scope of work
 - Steve will notify them ok to proceed
- Roadside mowing: Fred inquired about the status, which is supposed to start this week

Public Safety/Ordinance Enforcement

- Flood damage, updated & plan: FEMA briefing, portal registration -
 - First step of registering on the FEMA portal completed. Once approved, the SB can move on to the next phase of requesting public assistance.
 - Beanville Rd repair:
 - River engineer made a site visit and approved plan, DEC permit is in process
 - Mark Bannon (engineer) to update the scope of work, then RFP can proceed. At least 3 contractors must be contacted and RFP advertised on State website for FEMA procurement process. Important to note the contacted contractors who decline to bid.
 - Signage needed for jersey barrier. Bruce made a motion to procure a “One Lane Road Ahead” sign for site safety from WorkSafe. Fred seconded; unanimously approved.
 - Bruce also made a motion to procure safety reflectors for jersey barriers. Steve seconded; unanimously approved.
 - VEM Hazard Mitigation Program (EWP): property buyouts.
 - WF did not have any property “substantially damaged” this time to require activation of flood bylaws provisions regarding reconstruction standards
 - Oversight is required on the “river corridor”, meaning the Town may be responsible for some additional expenses as a result

Old Business

- PACIF Community Building appraisal (insurance): awaiting appraisal information
- Community Building/grounds:
 - Public Water Supply permit amendment: per Steve, still ongoing.
 - Now being considered a major amendment (contrary to initial information given to the SB) and the process for this has begun
 - SB is disappointed with the misinformation originally given by Erin Stewart (VT DEC)
 - ADA improvements: status on documents/drawings. Library Capital Grant? (front): still pending
 - Improve/correct drainage, additional parking behind, entrances to Green, re-seed: pending
- Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP): update
 - Dartmouth Energy Justice Clinic visits tomorrow (8/8) with food shelf volunteers

New Business

- 2023 tax rate: to be set (Treasurer’s computation circulated to SB via email prior to meeting)
 - Due to Lister’s last-minute change to PVR Form 411, Treasurer’s calculations were later updated and new calculations were shared at the meeting
 - Bruce made a motion to set the tax rate and warrant, Fred seconded; unanimously approved
- Order to Reappraise: letter received by the State because the town’s Coefficient of Dispersion (COD) is at or below 20% (circulated to SB via email)

- Response by SB is required w/in 30 days that the letter was received
- 120 days given to come up w/a detailed reappraisal compliance plan
- Steve made a motion to submit response, Bev seconded; approved
- Town Fairlee change of appraisal notice, re: Brushwood Forest. Minimal increase. SB agrees to not pursue a tax grievance.
- Journal Opinion, re: article noted on mobile home park revitalization
- Recycle Center mowing: Bruce suggested having Bill Hodge extend mowing along the recycling center monthly, or as needed. SB is in unanimous agreement. Bruce to contact him to make the request.
- Minor road issues: Bruce commented that Jonathan Blake intends to attend the next SB meeting to discuss various areas that need attention
- Excess Weight Permits: none

Other Business/Agenda Items (to be acted on at the next regular meeting)

- E911 Name/signage: private drive off Beanville (subdivision) & on Austin Rds. Pending with E911 Coordinator

Review correspondence

Sign Orders

Bev made a motion to sign orders, and Bruce seconded the motion; unanimously approved.

Upcoming Events

- Flood Bylaws update/Kyle Katz-TRORC: rescheduled for August 14th, 6:30 pm @ Planning Commission meeting

Bev made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Fred seconded; unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.