

Approved Minutes
Town of Brookline Selectboard
Wednesday January 16th, 2019, 6:30 PM

Present:

Selectboard: Dot Maggio, David Jones, Gwen Tanza, Chris Webb, Bruce Mello

Members of the Public: Tina Bills, Jorda Daigneault, Mark Bills, Guy Tanza (Videographer), Peter Barus (Recorder)

Call the meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Review changes to the agenda if any

Add after executive session, “Shall the Selectboard send a Letter of Commitment regarding 2019-2022 Lease for 624 Grassy Brook Road” – discussion.

Scheduled member of the public

Jorda Daigneault – Brookline Representative to Rescue, Inc.

The Selectboard welcomed Ms. Daigneault, who explained that Rescue, Inc. had answered 6,300 calls last year, and over 6,200 calls already this year, 11 of which were in Brookline; that most of these had been transfers and mental health visits; that there are over 80 employees; that the vehicles are up to date, putting about 150,000 miles on each per year; that the subscription program covering ambulance expenses within the catchment is \$60 per year with insurance, \$100 per year without.

Ms. Maggio asked how to get the information out to the public; Ms. Daigneault noted that the mailings go out in July. There was discussion.

Andy Sheere – Forester

Mr. Sheere identified himself as a consulting forester, working with private landowners; that he works with ten-year management plans and manages the logging contracts; that the Ward property is part of his portfolio; that the Ward land has been in Current Use since 1992; and that they had purchased abutting properties.

He discussed timber quality, poor access, poor previous forest management; new methods and machines; that in 2014 some improvements to access were made; that the Vermont Land Trust is involved, and harvesting done under VLT and State approval; that the property includes almost 500 acres. He explained that his work involves assessing soils, tree species, timber values, recreational trails, positive impacts on wildlife habitats with multi-age management, the effects of weather on productivity at different times. He estimated another two years’ harvesting work (the logging operation) in the present Management Plan.

Mr. Sheere was asked whether the only access was Whitney Hill Road, noting that the Selectboard is considering an Ordinance or Policy change. He discussed the decision process, relationships with road foremen, new logging legislation, and his responsibility to maintain Town roads as found or better, mitigating the impact of logging operations on roads.

Mr. Tanza discussed overweight truck permits, insurance requirements, having seen none to date; and the complaints received from neighbors about the noise. Mr. Sheere noted that the project is ongoing, and not going to stop. Mr. Tanza reported that he had heard “Jake brakes” at his own home, and asked how Mr. Sheere plans to address public concerns.

Mr. Sheere discussed permitting, promising to follow up. He explained that his contract is as owner-agent between logger and landowner; that the contracts state that the logger is responsible

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for all associated permits; that he will follow up with the logging contractors. Regarding time of day, noting that “Jake brakes” (Jacobs compression-release engine brakes) are necessary on Whitney Hill, Mr. Sheere explained that while he is appearing on behalf of the Wards, the truckers come from all over the United States and Canada, and can’t be confined to certain hours without affecting profits.

Mr. Tanza noted complaints from taxpayers, and questioned why the logging contractors could not be told to avoid operating at four and five in the morning; he noted that police could be stationed there to enforce Town regulations. Mr. Sheere noted that logging is a major local industry, and deploys only a few trucks per week, and that there are other logging activities in the area.

Mr. Mello asked about the actual frequency of trucks per week. Mr. Sheere described the activity as irregular, affected by weather conditions.

Ms. Maggio noted that one concern is the lack of identification on trucks. Mr. Sheere noted that any truck driver must display that information, and he can pursue that with contractors, and complaints about drivers not driving courteously. He reported that the logging contractor is J. Topping, Advanced Timber Harvesting LLC, and works alone.

Mr. Bills was recognized. He noted that as Road Supervisor his job is to make sure the roads are kept in good condition for safety vehicles; he reported no current issues related to logging; that the Ward property is at the end of a dead-end road; that only plows frequent the road; that the log-landing had been set up so that the road was part of the landing, which is not a problem since there is no through traffic. He noted that on one occasion the plows could not pass.

Mr. Sheere agreed that this section should be put back in good condition.

Mr. Bills reported that he had held back on maintenance while logging was going on, but was concerned for the condition of the road; that he had cleaned culverts and ditches in the Fall.

Mr. Sheere suggested that the landing become the turn-around location.

Mr. Bills noted some improvements over time, and emphasized the importance of the Town and the logging contractor(s) working together cooperatively; and noted that there was one trucker who had left deep ruts at night. He asked that truckers take more care with the Town’s roads.

Mr. Sheere discussed the lack of access from other roads.

Mr. Bills noted that noise and speed had been a concern and the subject of taxpayer complaints.

Mr. Sheere noted that logging is the third largest industry in the State, that the Wards have cared for the land for three generations, that they allow hunting and non-motorized recreation, and suggested that “it goes both ways”.

Ms. Maggio thanked Mr. Sheere and asked that he address the concerns discussed.

Mr. Sheere discussed the duration of the operation noting that weather had been a major factor; he anticipated continuing the operation for “a couple of years.”

Unscheduled Members of the Public

(None)

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Approve the Minutes from January 2nd, 2018

Mr. Jones moved to approve the minutes for January 2nd, 2018, as amended. Second by Mr. Mello. **Passed with one abstaining.**

Executive session

Mr. Webb noted a potential appearance of a conflict of interest, as Sara Webb is on the board of directors for an interested party, and offered to recuse himself if requested. Without objection, he remained.

Ms. Maggio read the statement:

“This Selectboard may at this time vote to enter into an executive session after making a specific finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage: the topic is the lease contract for the building located at 634 Grassy Brook Road”

Ms. Maggio moved to enter Executive Session. Second by Mr. Jones. **All in Favor.**

The Selectboard entered Executive Session At 7:11 PM, and returned at 7:57 PM, with no action taken.

Shall the Selectboard send a Letter of Commitment regarding 2019-2022 Lease for 624 Grassy Brook Road – discussion

Ms. Tanza moved to continue the 2019-2022 Lease and sign the new Lease for 624 Grassy Brook Road. Second by Mr. Jones. After discussion, **All in Favor.**

There was discussion of staffing changes.

Ms. Bills and the Selectboard exchanged expressions of appreciation for work on the property.

2019-2020 Budget discussion

A. Changes to any line items

Ms. Maggio asked if there were concerns other than SLDC.

Mr. Tanza noted that appropriations had been similar to last year.

Mr. Webb suggested discussion of Article 13 before approving the Town budget. Ms. Maggio noted that this could be amended later. There was discussion.

Mr. Jones noted that \$18,000.00 was budgeted for recycling next year, and discussed the question of how long it would continue in light of rising costs; there was discussion. It was noted that the Town has no control over the costs. There was discussion of what to do if the Town voted against continuing to provide recycling services.

Ms. Zwick explained that if the recycling was voted down, the operations budget would have to be amended in its entirety; or recycling would have to be Warned in a separate Article.

There was discussion of this year’s increase from \$12,000.00 to \$18,000.00; of how to deal with costs rising beyond \$18,000.00; of the suggestion that the bins be removed at that point; and that the vote would not be line-by-line.

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Mr. Jones suggested re-writing the Articles, separating the recycling operation. The \$18,000.00 was moved to a special separate Article.

Ms. Zwick asked if the WRC dues estimate had been confirmed; Mr. Tanza reported that it had not.

There was discussion of how to maintain the SLDC building if empty, and whether to set aside funds to cover that eventuality. Mr. Webb noted the commitment from new tenants; Mr. Jones noted that there are always other unforeseen circumstances to deal with.

Ms. Zwick noted that \$18,000.00 was removed from the total.

B. Discuss surplus – Wording for the article to be voted on at town meeting

Ms. Zwick discussed the Consolidated Balance Sheet noting the surplus listed as \$3,381.00. She explained that the last Audit was in 2010; costs had been between \$12,000.00 and \$20,000.00; and noted that the Reserve Fund balance is at \$4,000.00.

Copies of the proposed Article were provided; \$3,381.00 to be moved to an Article on whether to move it to Capital Reserves. There was discussion.

C. Discuss wheeled excavator purchase & loan – Wording for the article to be voted on at town meeting

Copies of the proposed language were provided; Ms. Maggio read the document aloud; there was discussion of the loan structure and the level of detail needed for the Article.

D. Discuss Town Report booklet – any changes. Dates of importance re: printing & mailing

Mr. Jones discussed a price quotation from Springfield Printing, 28 pages, and noted he had obtained a lower quotation from R. C. Brayshaw; and proposed to format the document for January 26th-27th and proof-read with Ms. Zwick, Ms. Lavorgna and others, sending to the printer in time to mail by February 23rd.

E. Recycling – Discuss cost, location, alternatives, wording for article to be voted on at town meeting if so desired.

Mr. Jones proposed language for Article 13: “Shall the voters approve the appropriation of up to eighteen thousand dollars for recycling costs for Fiscal Year 2020?”

F. Town Center – discuss wording for an article to be voted on at town meeting if so desired.

G. Vermont Arts Council Grant – discuss wording for an article to be voted on at town meeting if so desired

Article 15: “Shall the Town vote to apply for a grant from the Vermont Arts Council to fund the adding of insulation and heat to the Brookline meeting House?”

Mr. Jones moved that the Selectboard approve the following as the Warning for the 2019 Brookline Town Meeting: “Shall the Town vote to apply for a grant from the Vermont Arts Council to fund the adding of insulation and heat to the Brookline meeting House?”. Second by Mr. Webb.

There was discussion. It was noted that \$6136.50 was the total of appropriations.

On the Motion, **All in Favor.**

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Town Clerk Report – Guy Tanza

Mr. Tanza noted one dog license sold.

Highways & Roads

A. Road commissioner Update – Guy Tanza

Sand orders up to date.

B. Road supervisor Update – E. Mark Bills

Mr. Bills reported that he had hired the Clark & Sons to put some ¾-inch stone in potholes; and now has extra material at the town yard; that salt and sand bays are full.

New Business

Old Business

A. Dog ordinance revision –

Mr. Webb suggested making the ordinance change and voting next meeting.

B. Logging in Brookline – Policy development or ordinance development

Ms. Maggio noted that an ordinance had been developed in consultation with the Road Commissioner in Cabot, Vermont; and will email it to the members and Warn a vote for the next meeting.

There was discussion of issues covered in the ordinance. It was noted that noise and hours cannot be addressed because of the nature of the logging industry.

Communications

Ms. Maggio noted a communication from the Winston Prouty Center regarding interest in being on the planning commission; and that appointments are done at reorganization.

A. Email

B. Regular Mail

- Drinking Water Testing, Rec'd Jan 14, '18. Ms. Maggio read the letter from Nancy Burke explaining an increase in charges beginning in January, to \$70 per hour, \$125 per month.

Pay Orders

A. Payroll

Ms. Maggio moved to approve Payroll Warrant # 2019-27 in the amount of \$2,170.98. Second by Mr. Webb. **All in Favor.**

B. Accounts payable

Ms. Maggio moved to approve Accounts Payable Warrant # 2019-28 in the amount of \$9,786.71. Second by Mr. Webb. **All in Favor.**

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Set Agenda for the next meeting February 6, 2019

- Job description revision for building maintenance at 624 Grassy Brook Road
- Vote to sign the Highway Mileage report for 2019 – no change in mileage
- Town Meeting
- Dog ordinance
- Logging ordinance

Adjournment

Mr. Webb moved to Adjourn.

The meeting was Adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Peter Barus, recorder January 22nd, 2019