

Town of Mendon

Selectboard

May 23, 2022

Members of Selectboard present: Larry Courcelle, Val Taylor, Bryan Sell

Town Officers and employees present: Sara Tully, Town Administrator & Health Officer, Nancy Gondella, Town Clerk & Treasurer, Jesse bridge, Bookkeeper & Assistant Clerk, Susannah Loffredo, Zoning Administrator

Visitors present: Dennis Charles

The Selectboard Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM at the Town Office.

Agenda: Motion by L. Courcelle to approve the agenda with the addition of comp time and to delete Paving Contract from the agenda. Motion seconded by B. Sell. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Announcement

Vt. Public Works Week was 5/15-5/21 as proclaimed by Governor Scott. Public Works professionals focus on infrastructure, facilities and services that are vital to sustainable and resilient communities. The town would like to thank our Road Crew, Administrative staff and our contractors and engineers that assist in this effort.

Better Road Program Grant was awarded for an erosion control project on Journeys End. The town received award of this grant for a total project cost of \$23,612 of which \$18,890 will be paid by the grant and 4,722 paid by the town.

Administrative Matters

Selectmen's Orders were reviewed.

Motion by L. Courcelle to approve orders for 05/23/2022 in the amount of \$1,372.00 and \$30,707.52 and payroll for 05/16/2022 in the amount of \$9,785.00. Motion seconded by B. Sell. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: L. Courcelle moved to approve the minutes of 5/9/22 as presented. Motion seconded by B. Sell. Lengthy discussion whether to amend the minutes. L. Courcelle and B. Sell approved the motion. V. Taylor abstained from voting.

Public Comment

R. Carlson, President of the Eastridge Acres Homeowners Association, attended the meeting requesting an update regarding the Town's use of ARPA Funds. L. Courcelle responded that the Town has elected to take the standard allowance which allows the town to spend the funds on any governmental service. VLCT is still advising municipalities to move forward cautiously because definitions of eligible expenses are still being defined. L. Courcelle expects the Selectboard will start talking about the use of ARPA Funds at the second meeting in June.

Business

Zoning Violation Fees S. Loffredo requested the Selectboard clarify Zoning Fees for violations. Motion by L. Courcelle to set the Zoning Fee Violation at \$200. Motion seconded by B. Sell. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion. S. Loffredo is following up on various Zoning Violations identified by the previous Zoning Administrators. S. Loffredo is requesting approval to seek legal counsel in determining course for enforcement. The Selectboard agreed and will provide contact information for attorney Chris Corsones.

Cemetery and Town Park Mowing L. Courcelle reported the Recreation Area and Cemetery were in great need of mowing and the Selectboard previously directed B. Ellis to contact the recreation Committee of Cemetery Commission if they experienced hardship in mowing the recreation Area or cemeteries. It is important for the ballfield to be mowed for the games and we are approaching Memorial Day and all cemeteries should be mowed before the weekend. S. Tully reported that some mowing occurred today and she saw the Tenney Cemetery mowed. The Selectboard agreed to send a memo to B. Ellis reiterating to request help if they are not able to get the mowing done routinely and timely.

Town Website/e-mail addresses N. Gondella recommended the Selectboard approve a change of website and emails to a .GOV address. The website and emails will be more secure and the town will assign emails to officials and staff so that personal emails will not be used. Mark Latzky is the town's domain host and it is believed he will be able to continue with a .GOV address. N. Gondella reported she has reached out to other municipalities to determine which companies are used to host domain .GOV addresses. N. Gondella requested a letter signed by the Selectboard to obtain the .GOV address at no cost. It was further recommended the Selectboard utilize Chromebooks to conduct town business. N. Gondella requested \$1,000 be spent to purchase 3 Chromebooks and software. Motion by L. Courcelle to authorize the change in the town's domain name to Mendonvt.GOV. Motion seconded by B. Sell. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion. The Selectboard tabled the decision to purchase Chromebooks until they are able to review budget data to determine best area of budget to expense this cost.

Credit card acceptance by the Town J. Bridge presented quotes from 3 companies to provide credit card acceptance services for Mendon. This will enable the town to accept credit cards for payments like taxes, zoning permits, and dog licenses. A fee of up to 2.65% will be charged to the user not the Town. There is a one-time cost to the Town to purchase a USB terminal. Motion by L. Courcelle to contract with MuniPAY to provide credit cards acceptance services and to spend \$290 for a USB terminal to be paid for out of the Office Expense budget. Motion seconded by B. Sell. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Office Cleaning J. Bridge reported she attempted to obtain 3 quotes for office cleaning services and was only able to obtain one. In addition to routine cleaning of the office she reported getting quotes for cleaning the carpets and washing the windows inside and out. The Selectboard approved the expense but encouraged J. Bridge to get another quote for comparison. S. Tully reported the expense would come out of Buildings and Grounds Maintenance line item in the budget.

Open Meeting Law and VLCT Trainings N. Gondella provided copies and an overview of VLCT's Open Meeting Law FAQ's. S. Tully reported the Selectboard reviews the Open Meeting Law annually and adopts an Open Meeting Law Compliance Policy which outlines how Mendon will comply with requirements of the statutes with the office staff and office hours to post agendas, minutes and warnings. VLCT offers a training for \$400 that can be offered to all staff, elected and appointed officials, and members of committees. J. Bridge will reach out to everyone that is required to follow these requirements to determine the best schedule for a training.

Public Record Requests On May 9th, L. Courcelle and V. Taylor received a letter from Brian and Carol Gates. The town staff initially considered the letter a public information request and sought assistance in the response with VLCT. VLCT failed to see that the letter was requesting public information that hadn't already been provided. The Selectboard asked S. Tully to respond to Mr. & Mrs. Gates with this determination. The Selectboard will seek legal counsel to determine if a response to the letter should be prepared. V. Taylor will contact VLCT for further guidance.

Maintaining order during Selectboard Meetings B. Sell expressed a desire to seek legal counsel to advise the town on ways to maintain order during Selectboard Meetings while complying with the Open Meeting Laws and opportunity for public comment. The Selectboard approved the request. V. Taylor will contact VLCT for further guidance.

Electronic Recording of Meetings The Selectboard had a lengthy discussion regarding whether to record the Selectboard Meetings. Historically, the Selectboard have not recorded their meetings. COVID-19 safety protocols prompted the legislature to amend the Open Meeting Law to allow for remote meetings which were recorded on the platform the town used - Gotomeeting.com to conduct

remote meetings. The town held remote meetings from April 2020 to July 2021. The board discussed the pros and cons of both recording and not recording the meetings. V. Taylor and B. Sell will continue to gather information on recording meetings and the outlets in which to do so.

Mendon Constable B. Sell requested the Mendon Constable attend Selectboard Meetings. S. Tully provided information on the roles and responsibilities of the Constable and the contract Mendon has with the Rutland County Sheriff. No decision was made, issue tabled until the town seeks legal counsel on maintaining order at Selectboard Meetings.

B. Sell left the meeting due to time constraints.

Reappraisal Motion by L. Courcelle to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussion under T. 1 VSA §313 (1)(f) confidential attorney-client communication made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body at 8:15 PM with the Selectboard, N. Gondella and S. Tully present. Motion seconded by B. Sell. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion. The Chair declared the board out of Executive Session at 8:22 PM.

Motion by V. Taylor to authorize L. Courcelle to represent the interest of the Town of Mendon with legal counsel for Superior Court appeals. Motion seconded by L. Courcelle. The motion passed.

Comp Time discussion tabled.

L. Courcelle moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 PM. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The Selectboard approved the motion.

Date Approved June 13, 2022


Larry Courcelle


Sara Tully - Clerk of the Board

Val Taylor


Bryan Sell