

Town of Mendon

Selectboard

January 23, 2023

Members of Selectboard present: Larry Courcelle, Val Taylor, Seth Bridge

Town Officers and employees present: Sara Tully, Town Administrator & Health Officer, Lema Carter, Constable & Emergency Management Director

Visitors present: Fred Bagley, Lisa Brooks, Megan Smith, Dennis Charles,

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

Agenda: Motion by L. Courcelle to add Homeland Security Grant supplemental information for Cybersecurity Grant to the agenda and approve the agenda. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The Selectboard approved the motion.

Announcements

There will be two Selectboard seats open on the ballot for Town Meeting. One is for two years to complete a three year term and the second is a three year term. Petitions signed by 1% of the voters or 10 signatures must be submitted to the Town Clerk by January 30th .

The Selectboard is hiring a Zoning Administrator. This is a part time position at 10 hours per week. Please submit resume and letter of interest to Sara Tully at mendonadmin@comcast.net

Planning Commission Vacancy The Planning Commission is seeking two new members. The Selectboard would like to thank Gary Sihler for serving on the Mendon Planning Commission. Mr. Sihler is not seeking reappointment in March.

January 31st Larry Courcelle will be traveling to the State capitol as Mendon's representative on the Otter Creek Communication Union District (OCCUD) and the Vermont Communication Union Districts Association (VCUDA) to discuss the rural broadband crisis in Vermont. A resolution will be read that addresses the rural broadband crisis and the Communication Districts solution.

Town Meeting will be held at the VTRANS District Office at 61 Valley View in Mendon on March 6, 2023 at 6 PM. Additional parking will be available at 125 Valley View at Pockette Plumbing. The VTRANS District Office is not to be confused with the VTRANS Garage on Route 4 near Vista Senior Living. Voting will take place at the Mendon Town Office on March 7, 2023. Polls will be open from 8 AM to 7 PM.

House Bill 44 if passed would allow towns with populations of 2400 or fewer to vote to establish a local option tax and receive a portion of the tax minus administration costs.

Administrative Matters

Selectmen's Orders were reviewed.

Motion by L. Courcelle to approve orders for \$2,555.00 & \$31,721.40 and payroll for \$9,869.72 and permission to sign the invoice for legal fees when it is received. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The motion passed.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: Motion by L. Courcelle to approve the minutes of 1/9/23 as presented. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The motion passed.

Public Comment Lisa Brooks shared that on 1/21/23 the first Snowshoe Saturday was held at the Mendon Recreation Area. All are welcome to attend and learn how to snowshoe. The next Snowshoe Saturday will be 1/28/23. Please bring your own equipment. Rentals are available at High Altitude in Mendon. The Rutland Free Library also have shoe shoes available to check out. More information can be found on the town's website and Facebook page.

Business

ARPA The Town received \$302,285.47 in ARPA Funds. The Selectboard reviewed the list of projects previously approved for funding. The Selectboard reviewed the remaining list of projects. Motion by L. Courcelle to approve ARPA funding for the continued Digitization of Land Records \$50,000, Town Office Generator \$15,000, Mendon Recreation Playground \$50,000, and the Diesel Tank Structure \$5,000. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The motion passed. S. Tully recommended review of the Town Office New Equipment Fund, Town Garage Maintenance Fund, and Preservation Fund while evaluating funding of the remaining projects. L. Courcelle requested this information be available at the next meeting.

Community Center M. Smith discussed with the Selectboard Reserve Fund on the ballot for \$10K. M. Smith explained that Mendon on the Move have shifted away from building on our property to looking at existing buildings. Patti Lancaster will be at Town Meeting to address basic questions. M. Smith is looking into grants to pay for the purchase or creation of the Community Center. The \$10,000 would be used for matching funds. L. Courcelle read the Article 3 for Town Meeting "Shall the Town vote to create a Community Center Reserve Fund and appropriate \$10,000?"

Fireworks and Burn Permit Ordinance L. Courcelle provided an update on the Fireworks Ordinance. The town adopted a Fireworks ordinance dated 10/9/18. Some of the issues with the Fireworks Ordinance was discussed. In the application, the Fire Warden, Constable or other designee can approve the permit. It shall be submitted on a form by the Town of Mendon 15 days before the intended fireworks display. There is a communication issue. Should it only be the Constable issuing a permit because the Fire Warden doesn't know about it and vice versa. There is no requirement for communication. How far in advance the permit needs to be submitted was discussed. If a business is making a long term plan they need to know they can plan for an event and the permit states 15 days in advance. The third person as an other designee does not appear to make sense. F. Bagley also summarized his suggested changes. L. Courcelle referred to S. Bridge as the Fire Warden to request his opinion. Constable could issue the permit for many reasons. Typically the police get the complaint calls not the Fire Warden. The Fire Warden should be notified by the Constable. S. Bridge questioned how far in advance does a professional company need to know? We are going to know 2-3 weeks in advance if conditions are too dry. If something happens, he feels that's is on them. The discussion continued creating specific suggested changes. S. Tully suggested S. Bridge contact Lars Lund, regional Fire Warden to get his expertise on these changes and see if he had shared experiences from other towns. S. Bridge agreed. An updated draft will be created and submitted to the Constable for

further review. The Selectboard continued to discuss the Burn Permit. L. Courcelle provided an example that if a person burns without a permit and the Rutland City Fire Department responds, Mendon is charged \$750. This should not be the burden of the taxpayers. The Ordinance is not worded clearly and leaves room for interpretation. The town can clear up the wording of the requirements of the permit and fines. S. Tully and S. Bridge will meet to create an updated draft for additional review by the Selectboard.

Zoning Administrator – Signs F. Bagley, there are a number of derelict businesses on Route 4 and a number of derelict signs. Our Zoning Regulations state that if they are out of operation out of for 9 months the sign, lettering in sign board and the sign plaza must be removed. If not it's a violation and if its not resolved in 7 days there is a \$200 per day fine until the violation is resolved. The town can remove the sign and bill the owner a reasonable cost for removing the sign per Section 704 of the Mendon Zoning Regulations. This is an ongoing problem and unresolved issue. The change over of Zoning Administrators in the past year has not allowed the violations to be rectified and enforced. L. Courcelle requested documentation that the violations were received by the property owner. F. Bagley proposed sending new Notices of Violation be sent and work with the property owners. L. Courcelle stated the Town would need a legal opinion on the course of action to go onto private property to remove signs. F. Bagley asked if he is able to contact the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. S. Tully responded that he is able to in his capacity of Zoning Administrator to ask questions that pertain to his job function.

2023-2024 Budget The final budget was reviewed. L. Courcelle moved to forward the 2023-2024 municipal budget at \$1,295,460 to be presented at Town Meeting. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The motion passed.

Town Meeting Town Meeting will be held March 6, 2023 at the VTRANS Office Building at 61 Valley View in Mendon at 6 PM. Voting will be held March 7, 2023 at the Town Office. Need 3-4 volunteers to set up and clean up.

Dedication of the Town Report L. Courcelle suggested two dedications. The first is the Town Staff. It was a very difficult year full of disruptions and harassment. The second would be to dedicate the report to the Board of Civil Authority for all their hard work with hearing appeals for the reappraisal. The Selectboard discussed multiple suggestions for a Town Report dedication.

Town Meeting Warning L. Courcelle read the warning. Motion by L. Courcelle to approve the Town of Mendon Warning as presented. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The motion passed.

VLCT Safety Grant – application for Cybersecurity S. Tully requested authorization from the Selectboard to submit a VLCT Safety Grant to evaluate needs and make safety recommendations for cybersecurity. This project will identify what equipment and software is needed initially as well as identify ongoing annual costs to protect the town. The Selectboard authorized the town apply for this grant. L. Courcelle moved to authorize the town to submit a VLCT Safety Grant for Cybersecurity. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The motion passed.

Homeland Security Grant application for Cybersecurity S. Tully provided an overview of a request for additional information for the Homeland Security Grant application. Motion by L. Courcelle to approve an updated grant application with an increased cost of \$147.93 and authorize the Chair to sign the letter with supplemental information. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The motion passed.

Constable Training & Hourly Compensation L. Carter, Constable is requesting to attend an advanced training for tactical movement through buildings at a cost of \$850. S. Tully recapped the FY23 Constable training budget of \$500 has been spent. Therefore, in order to register for this class it would be paid for in the Continuing Education Budget. N. Gondella reported there is a balance in that line item for FY 23 of \$1,172. Motion by L. Courcelle to approve the expense of \$850 Continuing Education Budget for Constable Training. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The motion passed. There was a brief discussion regarding the hourly compensation of the Constable to conduct patrols. L. Carter explained he does not need a decision now, but wanted to get it on the Selectboard's radar for future consideration.

S. Bridge moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 PM. Motion seconded by L. Courcelle. The Selectboard approved the motion.

Date Approved _____

Larry Courcelle

Sara Tully - Clerk of the Board

Val Taylor

Seth Bridge