

Town of Mendon

Selectboard

September 11 , 2023

Members of Selectboard present: Val Taylor, Seth Bridge, Lisa Brooks

Town Officers and employees present: Sara Tully, Town Administrator & Health Officer

Visitors present: Susan Feenick, Andy Weinburg, Dennis Charles, Brian and Carol Gates and Rutland County Deputy Sheriff Duel

PEG TV was recording.

V. Taylor called to order at 5:30 PM at the Town Office.

The pledge of allegiance.

Moment of Silence in memory of all those who perished on 9/11. V. Taylor expressed thanks to all those that dedicate their service to ensure our safety.

Agenda:

Motion by V. Taylor to approve the agenda with the addition of approval of digitization and pressure wash the Town Office to the agenda. Motion seconded by L. Brooks. The motion passed.

Administrative Matters

Selectmen's Orders were reviewed.

Motion by V. Taylor to approve orders for 9/11/23 for \$51,306.65 and payroll for \$11,744.78. Motion seconded by L. Brooks. The motion passed.

Motion by V. Taylor to approve 8/28/23 minutes. Motion seconded by L. Brooks. The motion passed.

Announcements: V. Taylor would like to thank Bruce Peacock for fixing and cleaning monuments in the Parker Cemetery.

Public Comment: A. Weinburg inquired about when the Town Office will be open without having to make an appointment. He stated that he works for Castleton University and never felt unsafe. The Selectboard responded that the Town is obtaining quotes to secure the entranceway for the safety of the staff. S. Feenick asked if the Town had a restraining order against anyone and which other towns are closed to appointment only. The Selectboard responded the Town did not have a restraining order against any one person, but the safety measures are put into place to protect the safety of the office.

S. Feenick asked when are we going to get a Road Commissioner? The Selectboard responded that Bill Ellis is the Road Commissioner. S. Feenick expressed concern on Journeys End about sliding onto Route 4 in the winter, speeding on Route 4 and brush cutting at the intersection of Journeys End and Route 4 for visibility. She also expressed concern regarding the automated phone system to direct calls at the town office and that she preferred talking directly to someone that answers the phone. She requested a sandwich board be placed at the driveway of the Town Office indicating when voting is taking place and that the Town should vote the budget by Australian ballot instead of a floor vote at Town Meeting.

B. Gates requested an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance section 402.7 stormwater obversion to change the wording to “any water” versus “surface or subsurface water” to prevent flooding a neighboring property. S. Bridge agrees with adding well water, spring water or draining a pool. L. Brooks asked for clarification of the definition of well water or spring water versus surface water. S. Bridge clarified these definitions and discussed the Zoning Ordinance about directing water to runoff onto another property. S. Tully provided information regarding the process of adoption or amendments to Zoning Regulations. Any amendments go to the Planning Commission for consideration. The Selectboard can make a recommendation to the Planning Commission for an amendment. S. Tully suggested that S. Bridge pull together the wording of the request for the Planning Commission to review.

B. Gates also requested information about his neighbor’s driveway. V. Taylor stated that the Town is drafting a letter to the property owners to contact a surveyor to determine property lines and perform maintenance on their driveway without disturbing the Gates’ property. C. Gates requested a copy of the letter when sent. S. Bridge asked what the issue was as he was not on the Selectboard at the time. S. Tully recapped the issue of determining where the property line was because the property owners do not want to cross property lines during maintenance of their driveway. B. Gates disagreed there was a property line dispute and claimed the contractor wanted to divert water onto his property which he told him he could not do and requested the town specifications be followed. The contractor did not perform the work. L. Brooks asked if the town has billed the property owner for the cost to clean up the town road after the driveway washes out onto the road. S. Tully responded no and that she would distribute the Highway Specifications and Permit to perform construction in the town’s right of way for the Selectboard to review. L. Brooks requested the town enforce a violation for directing water onto a town highway and continuing to allow it to happen. S. Bridge clarified with S. Tully that the driveway was constructed prior to the Highway Specifications being adopted therefore no permit was required. L. Brooks confirmed that the repairs to the driveway need to follow current specifications.

S. Feenick inquired about paving the end of Journeys End. S. Tully replayed that the town is still seeking additional funding sources and the construction has been pushed off until next year.

Business

Recreation – field maintenance and playset project S. Tully reported the Chair of the Recreation Committee, Liam Fracht-Monroe submitted an email inquiring about the maintenance of the ballfield, and requested the committee members take over the mowing of the field with

access to the mower during non-business hours and get reimbursed for gas. S. Tully reported to the Selectboard that the town has put in place a plan to have the recreation Area mowed by employees that are covered by Workman's Compensation insurance. The struggle has been that we have had a vacant position and short staffed. The town hired a part time worker to mow the Recreation Area and cemeteries on Fridays and the frequent rain this summer prohibited this employee from routine mowing. L. Fracht-Monroe helped mow the Recreation Area this summer. There is concern about storing the lawn mower in the shed at the Recreation Area because mice get into it causing damage to the mower. Therefore, the mower is stored in the Town Garage. The Recreation Committee also fertilized the field by a licensed contractor for the first time this year which contributed to the growth of the grass. S. Bridge stressed that we should be maintaining town assets like the ballfield and asked whether a full staff would be able to stay on top of the maintenance. S. Tully responded that the town created a full time position with the Road Crew in order for part of that position to handle property maintenance.

Other questions submitted by L. Fracht-Monroe pertained to when the Notch Road would be repaired. S. Tully reported that the project on the Notch Road has been completed. Another question was about when the town was filling vacant positions and the plan to maintain the roads through the winter. S. Tully responded that the town is currently filling one vacant position and also interviewing to fill two additional positions from employees expected to retire later this year. The town fully expects to maintain the roads with town staff. There was a previous comment made at a previous meeting that we would hire a third party to plow the roads if needed. Mendon will willing to do whatever it needs to do to properly maintain our roads. We are actively pursuing handling the plowing with town employees and equipment we have in place. If at any time the town finds themselves short staffed and are unable to safely maintain our roads we would look to private contractors to fill that gap.

S. Bridge supported volunteers helping to perform projects and help bring together the community. S. Tully clarified that volunteers are welcome to help rake and maintain the field, but when the project involves the use of power equipment there is a liability issue and the town would not want to see anyone get hurt. L. Brooks agreed and added that if the project involves construction because if its not done properly who is liable for it now? The town is liable.

The town has many projects that volunteers can help with safely and if anyone is interested. We are specifically looking for help on maintaining the trails at the recreation Area and clear brush from them.

S. Feenick supported the Mendon on the Move Community Visit and the priority set by the focus group to boost outdoor recreation. S. Tully responded that the town received \$300,000 in ARPA

Funds and the Selectboard obligated \$50,000 to purchase and construct a new playground at the Recreation Area.

Cemetery Update V. Taylor reported that they will be looking for volunteers to help with maintenance of the stones.

Flooding Event- update from 8/4 storms

- i. *FEMA* .A disaster has not been declared and Rutland County has not quantified damage as being eligible for Public Assistance if a disaster is declared. Addison County has met the requirement for the Governor to request a FEMA disaster. Rutland County has not yet quantified damage that would allow for financial assistance from FEMA for this storm damage.
- ii. *Notch Road* - Temporary work completed last week.
- iii. *Wheelerville Road* The scope of work for the repairs to the roadway and ditch has not been finalized. This project will go out to bid with construction completed as soon as possible. Some work can be done in-house.

S. Bridge asked how the projects will be paid for. S. Tully reported that expenses will be used from the Bridge and Culvert Fund, the Highway Improvement Fund and the General Fund highway funds. It will redirect money from other projects that we had planned to do in order to make these repairs.

S. Feenick asked if Rutland City helps maintain Wheelerville Road because it owns property on the road. S, Tully clarified that Rutland City is a taxpayer in Mendon and the City receives a tax bill that is used to maintain services in Mendon. Wheelerville Road is a Class 3 roads and its maintenance is solely the responsibility of the Town of Mendon.

Digitization of Land Records Motion by V. Taylor to spend \$25,955 out of the \$50,000 designated in ARPA Funds for COTS to further digitize land records. Motion seconded by L. Brooks. The Selectboard approved the motion.

Town Office Maintenance V. Taylor presented two quotes for pressure washing the Town Office. Motion by V. Taylor to \$450 from the Town Office Maintenance Fund to pressure wash the Town Office. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The Selectboard approved the motion.

S. Feenick asked if there will be lines painted on Townline Road. S. Tully reported that Townline Road is a Class 2 highway, and the lines are painted by the State of Vermont.

S. Feenick asked when the Route 4 Safety Meeting will be held. S. Tully responded that the town is looking at a date in the beginning of October, but a date has not been finalized. Information regarding this meeting will be published on the Town website, Facebook and Front Porch Forum as well as at the Town Office. This meeting will present alternatives from VHB engineers for the Transportation Alternative Program Route 4 Scoping Study that focuses on Route 4 safety for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

S. Feenick asked who to contact to get more lighting or signage at the intersection of Journeys End and Route 4. S. Tully responded that signage on Route 4 is maintained by the State of Vermont. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the safety of Route 4 with regards to speeding, maintenance, and the three fatality accidents that have occurred in the past year.

V. Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:14 PM. Motion seconded by S. Bridge. The motion passed.

Date Approved _____

Val Taylor

Sara Tully - Clerk of the Board

Seth Bridge

Lisa Brooks