

Town of Moretown
Office of the Select Board

Draft – Notice of unapproved minutes of the 7/15/13 selectboard meeting

Board members present were: Rae Washburn, Tom Martin, Reed Korrow, Michelle Beard, and John Hoogenboom arrived at 7:10 p.m.

Guests included: Lisa Ransom, Scott Baughman, Dean Moulton, Jennifer Tripp Mead, Lydia Mendenz of the Vt. River Conservancy, School Directors: Tom Badowski, Kate O’Neill, Jim Burmester, Bruce Johnsen, Deb Feldman, Cheryl Brown as board assistant

Public Comment: - No one offered public comment tonight

Reports & Communication, Announcements:

Advanced Disposal – 7/12/13 media notice that the landfill and the State of Vermont have reached a settlement and filed a joint consent order to be approved by Environmental Court, which calls for the orderly closure of the landfill and submission of a closure plan that will address odor and groundwater relating to cell 3. Under the order, MLI will discontinue accepting any waste material as of 7/15/13, until such time as the proposed cell 4 expansion is properly permitted and constructed.

Ward Brook box culverts replaced after Irene – Notification was received from the State that Moretown will be paid \$31,006.13 from FEMA to offset the cost of the two box culverts that the town installed on Ward Brook after Irene destroyed two undersized culverts.

The box culverts were installed to satisfy recommendations made on the State Hydraulic Reports. FEMA refused to pay costs over what it would have been to replace the type/size culverts at the sites prior to Irene. The State wouldn’t permit the same size culverts that were at the site prior, because they were undersized, so the town installed the boxes and appealed FEMA’s decision. The \$31K is the result.

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Title 19, Section 958 Laying out roads for removal of timber - Cheryl noted that the town has spent in excess of \$3,500 in expenses relating to the last petition the selectboard received to laying out a logging road. Cheryl asked for permission to request that the State amend the law as it pertains to Title 19, Section 958, which references a process in Section 923 that “must” be followed by the town, so that the petitioner bears the associated expenses.

Tom moved; Reed seconded to allow Cheryl petition the state to amend Title 19, Section 958. All were in favor.

2014 Municipal Park and Ride Grant – This is a grant that the town could apply for that would pay for developing a park and ride facility on town land. The board isn’t interested in applying at this time.

Couples Club – On July 18th, the Couples Club is sponsoring a free ice cream social from 5:30 – 7:30.

Approval of Minutes –

7/1/13 and 7/3/13 – Michelle moved; Reed seconded to approve the minutes of 7/1/13 and 7/3/13 as written. All were in favor.

Old Business:

Host Town Agreement – Michelle reported that the committee will continue to meet, moving forward with suggestions for revisions. Michelle will contact the town’s attorney to find out if a Host Agreement is needed at this point, and if so what the wording should be.

Lisa Ransom said the agreement between MLI and the State is not final and suggested keeping the Host Town Agreement in effect.

*more old business later

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Jennifer Tripp Mead – came in tonight to introduce herself to the selectboard. Jennifer is interested in becoming a Library Trustee by filling a vacancy left when Tom Allen retired.

Michelle moved; Tom seconded to appoint Jennifer Tripp Mead as Library Trustee until 2014 Town Meeting. All were in favor.

*more old business

Blodgett mediation scheduled for 8/5/13 – Tom moved; Michelle seconded to approve that John Hoogenboom use his judgment at the 8/5/13 mediation relating to the Blodgett litigation as to the location of Trail # 49. All were in favor.

Class IV Road & Trail Policy - General discussion continued about the town doing maintenance on Lynch Hill Road, and why the policy was adopted. Michelle notified David Van Deusen that the selectboard will revisit the policy at their 9/16 meeting.

Rae thinks Dave has a good point about so many vehicles using the Lynch Hill and Herring Brook loop, and why he would have to bear the cost for the road maintenance. Rae said he can't think of any other class 4 road that gets the use the "loop" gets.

Discussion followed about how use of the loop is measured; policing the road; and that it might be helpful if the class 4 road committee started the review and pass along notes to the selectboard prior to the 9/16/13 review.

Michelle will pass along dates for a committee meeting; Rae was added to the Class IV Road Committee.

Lydia Menendez from Vt. River Conservancy (VRC) – Lydia gave an overview of the 4.5 acre parcel that was donated to the River Conservancy by Jonathan Larsen, and then to the Town via a Conservation Easement Deed from VRC.

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Ms. Menendez said a sign identifying the use and name of the facility would be nice. She said VRC is willing to pay for the sign, and wondered if the town would like to name the facility. A public inquiry for name suggestions will be put on Moretown Front Porch Forum. The board will decide on a name at their 8/5 meeting.

*More old business

Bridge #41 – Tom reported that Evan Detrick contacted him and said Austin Construction intends on pursuing the town paying them for the project overrun. The board wants Cheryl to talk with Ben Rose about the town being reimbursed if the town pays the \$25,000 invoice.

Rae said he thought the board had already made the decision not to pay the invoice, because neither Austin nor DuBois & King notified the town that there would be a significant overrun, prior to the work being done.

Joint meeting with the Schoolboard to discuss town/school expenses in general

–With the closure of the landfill, the selectboard invited the schoolboard to come in and discuss overall expenses. Tom Badowski, Kate O’Neill, Jim Burmester, and Bruce Johnsen from the schoolboard were present. Discussion included:

- From the schoolboard’s standpoint, the landfill closing doesn’t impact the school, as the state set the education rate based on a formula.
- The schoolboard is diligent to keeping the budget down and are trying to add to the head count through MECA.
- MECA is a fully funded, 52 weeks per year, daycare service with no interruption in services during summer vacation. The daycare does not add to the school’s pupil count.
- The schoolboard considers affordable housing in Moretown as being a significant problem in Moretown, and thinks it contributes to the low pupil enrollment because families won’t move here. How can we have affordable housing in Moretown for young families? We have affordable housing for seniors.

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- As the State calculates pupils, there are about 100 students at Moretown Elementary.
- In 2016 the school construction loan from 1996 will be paid in full, which will be a reduction in the budget.

Tom Martin invited the schoolboard to offer ideas on how the selectboard might save money. Discussion continued:

- Kate said possibly the schoolboard could “sit in” during the selectboard’s budget process and vice versa. The boards thought that was a good idea.
- There was discussion about sharing costs. And about how the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) drastically affects the education tax rate.
- The town has a contract (about \$7700 yr.) with professional appraiser in hopes of keeping the CLA at 100%, which in turn will save taxpayers money because the education rate will be lower. When the CLA drops below 80%, the State orders the town to do a reappraisal. This happened in 2011 when our CLA fell to less than 70%. The town’s CLA is used in the formula to set the education tax rate.
- Because a higher CLA % benefits the school too, this might be an area that the town and school can share costs.
- Tom M. worries about Moretown losing students to other towns – school choice. Tom B. said the supervisory district has discussed the idea of school exchange amongst the district towns.
- Rae asked the student radio versus the teachers. Tom B. said this year a teacher position was eliminated, and the school is down to two administrative people; the principal and secretary.
- Tom B. was asked if MECA is truly a wash even with expenses such as retirement. He said the providers do not have retirement, it isn’t in their contract.
- Reed said the State has to recognize that Vermont is one of the highest taxed states, and our Legislators need to face that fact.

The joint meeting ended.

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*More old business

Highway business:

Road worker activities - Reed reminded the board that if they have questions about what the road crew is doing, each man fills out activity sheets daily and Cheryl has them filed in the office.

Recent flood levels –Michelle reported meeting with Sean and Martin when the river was so high last week. Martin said he would appoint someone as the contact person when he is on vacation next week.

Temporary grader operator – Reed said he spoke with Martin about getting temporary help to grade, but Martin hasn't made a decision to do so yet.

Moretown Landfill business:

Cameras – There has been no response from MLI to Rae's letter of May 28th, regarding cameras on MLI property that Grow Compost say's film their personal residence.

Letter to Advance Disposal requesting payment of tipping fee owed – There has been no response from Advance Disposal to the letter sent them from the town's attorney in response to their letter of July 2nd. The board hopes to hear from AD before setting the tax rate.

Moretown Landfill closure – The selectboard heard about an agreement between the State and MLI that was made late last week but haven't been made privy to the specifics yet. Moretown "hosts" the landfill and the board feels if there were negotiations going on with the State about its closure and about a fourth cell, that Moretown should have been involved.

John has to call the Governor's office about other things, he will talk with him about the impact the landfill closure has on the district, and why the town didn't hear about the "agreement" until after the fact.

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Town office committee news –Rae reported that there will be a second public hearing on August 5th, at the Moretown Town Hall at 7:30 p.m., for public input to build a new town office on the “playground” site. The public hearing is a mandatory part of the town applying for a Community Development Block Grant that would help pay for the project.

There was discussion about the proposal made by Liz Harris at a prior selectboard meeting. What to do with the building will be a decision the selectboard makes, after learning whether or not the town receives the FEMA buy-out grant that was applied for this spring. Cheryl will call Ray Doherty to get the status of the application.

The town office committee hopes for a November 2013 bond vote.

Statewide river level gauge – Michelle said there are level tracking gauges for all of Vermont rivers on the website. She will pass along the link.

Town hall floor refinishing – The board approved refinishing the floor in the upstairs of the town hall quite a while ago, but it hasn’t been done yet. Cheryl will contact Becky and ask when she thinks that work to be done. There is still money in reserve to pay for the refinishing.

Town hall elevator - Tom will call Bob Weber and Joe Gabaree to find out the status of the elevator repairs.

New Business:

2013 Tax Rate – A draft formula for setting the 2013 tax rate was reviewed, but the tax rate won’t be set until the August 5th meeting, when hopefully the board knows more about the status of the \$350,000 in tipping fee owed the town by MLI.

Tom moved to enter into executive session at 8:45 p.m. for contract negotiations where general public knowledge would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. Michelle seconded. All were in favor.

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Tom moved to come out of executive session at 8:55 p.m. Michelle seconded. All were in favor. No action taken.

The VTrans HRRR grant maintenance agreement was signed.

Invoices were reviewed for payment and warrant #'s 38 and 39 were approved.

Rae moved; Michelle seconded to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. All were in favor.