

Wallingford Selectboard Meeting
Minutes
September 21, 2020

Selectboard Members Present: Bruce Duchesne, John McClallen, Patricia Pranger, Rose Regula, and Nelson Tift. The meeting was held via Zoom audio conference call.

Others present: Julie Sharon, Sandi Switzer, Gary Fredette, Debbie Scranton, Carol Macleod, Ralph Nimtz, Keith Shelvey, Michael Hughes, Nikolaus Houghton, and Lee Houghton. .

Selectboard Chair Nelson Tift called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Agenda Amendments. Loader use request added to the agenda by unanimous consent.

Minutes. R. Regula made a motion that was seconded by B. Duchesne to approve the 09/08/20 Minutes. Motion carried (5-0).

Pay Orders. B. Duchesne made a motion that was seconded by R. Regula to approve the 09/18/20 pay order total of \$49,318.94 after \$1,037 was added to reimburse Steve Lanfear for Medicare Parts A and B and a prescription plan. Motion carried (5-0).

Road Commissioner Report. Road Commissioner Phil Baker did not attend. He left a message with Town Administrator Sandi Switzer that he supported Kyle Eastman's loader use request and opposed lowering the East Street speed limit. He also asked it be announced he would be repairing the pavement on Maple Street, River Street and Route 7 within the next two weeks that was excavated during water line work.

N. Tift explained there was old material that need to be removed from the town garage property. He said Kyle Eastman could use the material at his home. Board members agreed to allow Mr. Eastman to use the town loader for up to one hour on a Saturday to load up the material and then haul it away at his own expense. N. Tift noted it would have been a municipal expense to get rid of the material and Mr. Eastman would be saving the Town money.

East Street Speed Limit. N. Tift explained Clarendon Selectboard Chair Michael Klopchin had requested the speed limit on East Street be reduced to 25 mph to match Clarendon's new speed limit. The board chair confirmed to caller Nikolaus Houghton that officials were in receipt of his petition requesting the speed limit be lowered.

Both Nikolaus and Lee Houghton said a lower speed was necessary as East Street had become a town bypass with lots of people walking, biking and even a few horseback riders on the road. Debbie Scranton said she had some close calls with vehicles on East Street.

After further discussion, N. Tift made a motion that was seconded by P. Pranger to lower the speed limit from 35 to 25 m.p.h. Motion carried (4-0). R. Regula abstained.

Coin Drop. Wallingford Fire Chief Michael Hughes requested permission to hold a coin drop on Route 7 just north of the Rotary building on Saturday, October 10 from 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. with a rain date of October 11. He said many fire department fundraisers were cancelled due to COVID-19. He said money raised was put into an account and used for medical, funeral and other expenses for firefighters over the years.

B. Duchesne asked how much was in the account. Mr. Hughes responded there was around \$3,000-\$4,000 in it. He added the department had a Certificate of Deposit totaling around \$14,000. R. Regula shared her concern the coin drop not disrupt businesses or post office operations in the village.

In response to a question, the fire chief said the coin drop times included set up and clean up and department officials would not be out on Route 7 at 7:30 a.m.

P. Pranger made a motion that was seconded by J. McClallen to approve the coin drop request for October 10 with a rain date of October 11. Motion carried (5-0).

Stone Meadow Bike Jumps/Trails. Conservation Commission Co-Chair Carol Macleod said she had met with Fire District 1 officials about a proposed new site for bike jumps that would be separate from walking trails at Stone Meadow following a recommendation by the Town's insurer, VLCT. The new site south of existing jumps would require access near Lodge Lane and Waldo Lane. In response to P. Pranger's question about the pros and cons of the new site, Ms. Macleod said it was separate from walking trails, bikers would enter and exit through a single path, and materials to build the jumps were readily available. If approved, the next step would be for the youngsters interested in building bike jumps to draft a plan.

Ms. Macleod noted Steve Pytlik had sent an email a few hours earlier featuring a proposal for jumps in the meadow to the left of the main trail as an alternative to building jumps at the commission's proposed site, which he indicated was a protected forest area and a wildlife corridor. Ms. Macleod said she along with Mr. Nimitz and Ms. Scranton were opposed to his plan. She said recreation land and conservation land should be two different areas.

Ms. Scranton gave a brief history of the Conservation Commission's work at Stone Meadow building walking trails, the board walk, and a canoe launch plus hosting annual Winter Fun days. She said she was opposed to bike jumps in the centerpiece of the conservation area. She said the new site south of the existing jumps was ideal.

Mr. Nimitz said the meadow was teeming with wildlife and was an even more important corridor than the location near Lodge Lane. He said bike jumps in the meadow would have the opposite effect of the purpose of Stone Meadow, which he said was to relax, walk and appreciate nature.

J. McClallen said Stone Meadow was conservation land and recreational activities like biking should take place elsewhere, such as the White Rocks area. He added he was opposed to the construction of bike jumps in the middle of Stone Meadow.

After further discussion, J. McClallen made a motion that was seconded by R. Regula to prohibit construction of bike jumps at Stone Meadow and limit all bike use to the Main Trail leading to Elfin Lake. Motion carried (4-1). N. Tift voted in the minority.

Ms. Scranton said the Conservation Commission tried to come up with a bike jump plan to make everyone happy. J. McClallen said the Recreation Committee should focus on bike activities in other areas. N. Tift said the Fernfield Farm acquisition with Green Mt. National Forest would be a suitable location.

Grant for Digitization of Municipal Records. Town Clerk and Treasurer Julie Sharon said the Town was awarded a Coronavirus Municipal Records Digitization Grant in the amount of up to \$21,086 to cover the cost of Cott Systems scanning and indexing five years of land records (\$11,930), the purchase of a work station (\$2,495), the purchase of a research station (\$2,140), training and monthly fees (for three months) for a total of \$17,045. She noted more records could be digitized with remaining grant funds. Researchers will be able to access digitized records online and the Town will receive \$1 per page for copies. There is no local grant match and hard copies of land records would still be maintained in the vault.

By unanimous consensus, the Board authorized the town clerk and treasurer to enter into an agreement with Cott Systems.

Skateboard Ramp Permit. N. Tift said Regional Floodplain Manager Kyle Medash had requested Keith Shelvey use marine grade plywood or treat the wood to be used for the skateboard ramp as a condition of the local zoning permit.

Mr. Shelvey said marine grade plywood was too costly at \$80 per sheet and he agreed to use pressure treated material. He further agreed as conditions of the zoning permit to provide before, during and after photographs of the project as well as copies of all invoices to the Town for documentation purposes.

By unanimous consent, the Board approved the skateboard plan as submitted to the Zoning Administrator.

Public Comments. None.

Secure Ballot Box. There was a discussion regarding where to install the secure ballot box outside of Town Hall. It was agreed the road crew would install the box at a location near the Taft Terrace entrance with the town clerk and treasurer and J. McClallen determining the exact site.

It was further agreed the road crew would install two solar powered security cameras, with one going on the front of the building and the other on the side by Taft Terrace. The state will reimburse the Town for the cost of the secure ballot box and possibly the security cameras.

Long Trail Baseball Account. Board members discussed whether the Long Trail Baseball account opened many years ago with a balance of about \$2,500 ought to be turned over to the Town since Little League was now operated under the auspices of municipal Recreation and covered by Town insurance.

Discussion expanded to other groups, such as flag football who are insured by the Town but collect revenue and manage expenses separately from the municipality. B. Duchesne said if the Town insured an activity then funds should go through the Town. He said otherwise the Town could authorize permission to use fields and groups can acquire their own insurance.

N. Tift agreed and he questioned why these sports programs were not offered through the Mill River School district.

By unanimous consent, the Board agreed ballfield maintenance expenses and Little League, baseball and softball program costs should be covered by the Long Trail Baseball account.

Selectboard Concerns. None.

Other Business. Board members directed the town administrator to contact the regional floodplain manager to discuss proposed improvements to the basketball court.

B. Duchesne said the most recent Rutland County Sheriff Department monthly activity report indicated deputies were issuing many warnings and not a lot of tickets. He said the Town paid RCSD over \$7,000 monthly and received just \$1,316 in ordinance fines in August.

In response to an inquiry, the town administrator said she would remind the road crew to contact Dig Safe as needed.

J. McClallen reported a low hanging telephone wire on Route 140E near the intersection with Church Street. The town administrator agreed to report it.

R. Regula noted the lawn around the town garage needed mowing and the area closest to River Street needed to be cleaned up.

Board members requested the town administrator send John Squier a letter of appreciation and a \$100 stipend for mowing and weed whacking municipal properties and areas along Route 7 several times this summer.

The meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Date Approved: 10/05/20

Sandi Switzer/Town Administrator