

**Town of Tinmouth
Select Board
Thursday, January 14, 2021
Virtual Meeting Due to COVID-19 Pandemic
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Members present: Michael Fallar, Frank Sears, and Cathy Reynolds

Others present: Sherry Johnson, Kim Harbaugh, Stan Wilbur – Public Works Project Manager, Ronnie Crossman, Eric Buffum – Road Commissioner, Michael Fannin – Emergency Management Director, Meadow Squier, John Holler, Grant Reynolds, Doug Fontein - Conservation Commission (at 9:35) and Gail Fallar – Select Board Assistant (SBA).

Frank called the meeting to order at 7:03 and welcomed everyone. Board reviewed agenda, Meadow requested the Board make a public statement supporting the Legislature’s condemning of the attack in the capital, as follows: *“We the democratically elected officials of the town of Tinmouth stand with our state legislature in condemning the violent attacks on our nation’s capital and our democracy. We trust that our community will work together to resist this violence and uphold the democracy that makes our nation great.”* Michael suggested it should be considered at the next Board meeting, Cathy and Frank agreed to add it to New Business. No other changes to the agenda.

Minutes of 12/10/20 were approved with these corrections: added ‘stormwater’ before permit in the Public Works Facilities section; clarified that Ronnie was ‘on vacation from the town’ in the Personnel Policy section (in reference to his being away fighting forest fires); and changed ‘tracts’ to ‘tracks’ in the section dealing with 605 Mountain View Road. Michael moved to accept as corrected, Cathy 2nded, all voted in favor.

Highway ~

Eric reported winter conditions have arrived, expressed appreciation that Glenn Merrill was able to help during the big storm in December. Road crew has been busy cutting brush when not plowing snow.

Proposed FY22 Highway Budget – Board added \$750 to roadside mowing to allow for a second pass on the gravel roads later in the season to help with getting leaves out of the ditch; reduced chloride by \$1,000; after much discussion about the need for project estimates to comply with state stormwater rules, Board added \$2,500 for gravel/stone – also need separate line for those projects going forward, noting that the town’s Storm Water Management Plan agreed to address seven segments in each of the next two years; and after much discussion regarding the impending Emerald Ash Borer invasion, added \$5,000 for ash tree removal. Total draft highway budget of \$548,250. The \$5,000 for EAB will come out of the extra state highway aide received this year.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) – Eric advised that he and Ron had done an ash tree inventory finding 3,858 ash trees along Tinmouth road sides. As the EAB has been found in West Rutland, it will be in Tinmouth (if it’s not already) in a couple of years. It will take several years to cut this many trees. Eric estimated a cost of \$130,000 after discussion with Trees, Inc. This project needs to be thought about and a plan developed to remove them – deadliest need to be cut first. The road crew cannot do it – flaggers are needed, a chipper, etc.- with the addition of the work required for storm water control, the road crew will not have time. After much discussion, Board asked Eric to contact Trees, Inc. for an estimate so they can build a budget plan.

‘What If Plan’ – Eric advised he is working on it, still needs to map the plow routes. Board asked that it be presented at its February 10th meeting.

Extra State Highway Aide - \$21,936 extra state highway aide (in lieu of any grants) was received in FY21. Cathy moved to use \$5,000 for ash tree removal in FY22 and to move the balance \$16,936 into the Capital Building Fund for the garage/salt/sand/shed projects, Michael 2nd, all voted in favor.

Salt Policy – As John Holler had posted a question regarding winter salt use on Front Porch Forum, Frank responded via FPF for John to attend a SB meeting to discuss it. John noted that the roads were fantastic, but that he had noticed salt residue on the mats in his garage and requested information regarding the salt product being used on the roads in winter. Was it a brine, what is the product, how corrosive is it? Eric responded that it is not brine, it is a product added to the winter salt that keeps the snow from sticking to the road, it is less corrosive, has a rust inhibitor, and has a higher sugar content to aide in melting. He offered to provide John with the manufacturer’s information sheet. John expressed appreciation for that and to the Board for its hard work. Michael Fannin questioned the use of brine in the summer on gravel roads – was it the same? Eric explained that the liquid spread on gravel roads in the summer is calcium chloride, that the winter salt product is not liquid and only applied to the paved roads. Cathy again advised that Eric is following all the state recommendations regarding winter salt.

Public Works Facilities ~

Stan advised that **design/build proposals** had been sent to nine contractors, six responded – Breadloaf, Giancola, Morton, Russell, VMS and Wright. He prepared a rating sheet for Select Board members, Eric and Ronnie, and Gail to review – he will be the moderator not a reviewer. Packets will be prepared on Friday morning; reviewers will pick them up and return rating sheets to Stan by Wednesday. Board agreed to meet on the 21st to discuss the proposals in executive session and determine who to interview at the SB meeting on the 26th.

Storm Water Permit – Stan advised that Otter Creel Engineering was not able to keep the impervious area under an acre, so a storm water permit will be needed for the town garage. He has advised Craig Jewett to proceed with the storm water permitting process to include the town garage and salt/sand shed – the whole site. These plans are supposed to be ready by the 21st for review.

Covid19/Emergency Management - Michael Fannin, EMD, advised that the Covid19 situation is dreadful at the present, but is hopeful as more vaccines are on the way, and that he had not received any calls for assistance. He also advised that the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Committee is winding up work on the plan, he and Eric recently met with staff from RRPC, and hopes to have a draft to the Select Board in February or March.

Financial ~

Financial Report – Cathy moved to accept, Michael 2nd, all voted in favor.

Warrants Reviewed ~ Payroll Warrants #24 dated 12/14/20 for \$2,718.24, #25 dated 12/21/20 for \$2,738.75, and #26 dated 12/28/20 for \$3,025.11, #27 dated 12/31/20 for \$2,625.98 and #28 dated 1/11/21 for \$5,218.71; and Accounts Payable Warrants #11 dated 12/14/20 for \$420,373.35, #12 dated 12/21/20 for \$12,351.06 and #13 dated 12/31/20 for \$19,351.36 were reviewed. Cathy moved, Michael 2nd, to approve, all voted in favor. Board thanked the road crew for working on Christmas day.

Draft FY22 General Budget – Gail inquired whether the Select Board wanted to ask the Auditors for a raise – since they have been meeting twice a month, etc. All said no thank you, and expressed hope that the number of meetings would go back to one, once the town garage project is under way. Michael stepped down from the SB temporarily to speak from the “other

side” of the table. He said he was speaking as a citizen and had noticed the draft budget did not include a raise for the clerk/treasurer. Frank moved and Cathy 2nded to give the same 3% raise to the clerk/treasurer/select board assistant as the road crew and other town employees received. They both voted yes, Michael recused himself.

Frank moved to approve the draft FY22 General Budget of \$232,915 (plus the raise just voted), Cathy 2nded, all voted in favor.

2020 Property Tax Waiver of Penalty and Interest – Board clarified that penalty and interest for unpaid 2020 property taxes will begin on May 17th.

Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) – Gail reported the 2021 CLA was determined to be 98.25%, the 2020 CLA was 98.14% (after a successful appeal).

Audit Update – Gail reported Sullivan and Powers sent word they would not be done by December 31st due in part to the pandemic and working remotely. They hope to wrap it up shortly.

Old Business ~

Trash at 605 Mountain View –Board is waiting for attorney Jim Carroll’s advice before proceeding.

New Business ~

Resolution - Meadow asked the Board to act on her proposal, noting that the Board is an extension of the Legislature, feeling the community needs to make a statement and has a responsibility to protect it, adding that it is not political – it’s about protecting everybody. Cathy moved to adopt it as a resolution, Frank 2nded after it was clarified that the request was for Select Board action, not town meeting.

Michael expressed concern that the Select Board would be making a political statement in a turbulent time and advised he would abstain, he needed more information and thought it was an unwise move for the Select Board.

Frank agreed that the Select Board is an extension of the Legislature and this would be a formal notice of condemnation.

Meadow noted it is not political, it’s purely supporting the legislation that condemned violence in the nation’s capital. It condemns attacks on democracy, that democracy is the heart of everything.

Michael noted it should condemn all the violence in protests during the past summer as well. Members voted as follows: Cathy yes, Michael abstained, Frank voted no as he felt it was imperative that the Board all agree. Motion did not pass.

Cathy thanked Meadow for her effort.

Personnel Policy – Postponed until February meeting.

‘What If Plan’ – Gail advised the model being used envisions a committee to work on it. Cathy advised that the SB needs to have everything written down and again asked Gail to commit to preparing a written procedure for all functions (what’s in her head). Gail did not commit to a time frame, but will work on it as time allows.

Town Meeting 2021 – The virtual informational meeting will be held on Saturday, February 27th via Gotomeeting, need to ensure that all who want to participate can ‘attend’. Board approved warning for town meeting – tax due dates, highway and general budgets, and officers to be elected. Board will stop at the town office to sign. Cathy moved, Michael 2nded, all voted in favor.

Select Board Report for the Town Report – Board reviewed Frank’s draft as edited by Cathy. Frank noted that he wanted to thank town employees and volunteers, highlight the positives in the community and its dealing with the pandemic. Michael suggested adding acknowledging the Building Committee and its efforts to help the Select Board with the proposed town garage and salt/sand shed. Board agreed. Cathy will finalize edits and submit it.

Members Concerns – None

Mail/Correspondence – None

Executive Session – Frank moved to enter executive session at 9:37 PM for the purpose of discussing a potential right of way, Cathy 2nded, all voted in favor. Invited into the session was Doug Fontein, Chair of the Conservation Commission and Gail Fallar, Town Clerk. Board exited at 9:45 PM. Cathy moved and Michael 2nded to give the Conservation Commission permission to begin preliminary discussion of right of way opportunities with land owners. All voted in favor. The CC was advised that they could not give a commitment from the town without further Select Board approval.

Next Meetings Schedule ~ January 21 (Executive Session); January 26th; and February 10th.

Meeting adjourned at 9:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Fallar
Select Board Assistant