

**Townshend Select Board
Minutes
August 20, 2012**

Present: Select Board: Hedy Harris; David Dezendorf; Kit Martin; Jeff Russ; Chad Greenwood

In Attendance: Kim Ellison; Joe Daigneault; Kurt Bostrom; Cynthia Davis; Janet Stowell; Rick Hege; Kathy Hege; Richard Lucier; Paula Newton; Deputy Tyler Cook; David Marazoff; Richard Melanson; Craig Hunt

1. Call to Order: Harris called the Meeting to Order at 6:04 P.M.

2. Approval of Minutes: Martin made a motion: **To approve the Minutes of August 6, 2012, as corrected,** seconded by Dezendorf and carried by those present.

3. Additions and Deletions: Format of the Agenda was added under New Business and Constable Duties under Old Business.

4. Warrants: Dezendorf made a motion: **To approve the Warrants for August 20, 2012,** seconded by Martin and carried by those present with Dezendorf abstaining from a Warrant for supplies reimbursing him for the purchase.

General Fund	\$ 258,099.57
(includes line of credit payoff @ \$251,716.32)	
Highway Department	\$ 8,845.80
Payroll	None at this time.

5. Reports: Highway Department Report: Bostrom reported that fog line painting bids and winter sand bids would go out soon and that roadside mowing had begun on schedule. He updated the Board on the progress of the culvert replacement on Plumb Road, indicating that it should be completed and the road re-opened by Thursday. Route 35 shoulder work, he said, would be undertaken on Thursday when everyone was back from vacation. And beaver deceivers were being fabricated to keep culverts open.

A letter to the Select Board from Jon Bellstrom requesting that a gate be installed on the road to the gravel pit to limit target practice there was read and discussed. Bostrom agreed to see if there was a suitable location along the road to hang a gate and get prices on materials.

Law Enforcement & Constable's Report: Deputy Cook briefed the Board on Sheriff's activities during the past few weeks including the on-going investigation of thefts in the area.

Town Clerk's Report: The Board reviewed the Town Clerk's cash-journal reports from the prior two weeks.

Bookkeeper's / Treasurer's Report: Ellison reported that Tropical Storm Irene last August was going to cost the taxpayer about \$70,000 for repairs after anticipated payment of approximately \$94,000 that was being withheld by FEMA for the Dam Road culvert repairs until all paperwork was completed. She reported that an appeal to FEMA for reimbursement of the remaining costs did not appear as if it was going to be successful and would add to the Town's expense. Upgrade demands by Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources, which the Town abided by, FEMA has decided not to pay for. Ellison asked the Board if it was considering taking legal action against the State and the Board said it might be considered.

Ellison also informed the Board that because of Irene and Federal reimbursements, Townshend was obliged to have its financial records audited before March. This, she speculated, would likely cost more than \$10,000.

Martin suggested that Ellison inquire what other municipalities would also have to be doing an audit and see if Townshend might join with them for bidding out the auditing work as a group.

Emergency Management Director's Report: Dezendorf informed the Board that bid packets were out for the Townshend Fire Department Furnace alteration; that he was working on the Holland/Bixby Cemetery bid proposal and that a meeting for the clean up of Mill Brook behind Leland & Gray was scheduled for August 29th.

Dezendorf informed the Board that he would be attending the up-coming meeting of the Townshend Business Association to discuss traffic control at the Pumpkin Festival and, in an unrelated matter, planned to set up a general information booth at that event.

He requested again that the Board have a discussion to better clarify the role of Townshend's Emergency Management Director

6. Members of the Public: David Marazoff, of Marazoff Appraisals, was recognized and provided the Board with an update on his efforts to conduct a town-wide reappraisal. He said that 10% to 15% had been completed, so, and that he was on schedule for completion of the task by May of 2013. From September through November he will be measuring land and buildings, including all residential, municipal, commercial, institutional government and utility properties. In January, he will be conducting the sales analysis comparisons and, in February, developing formulas to benchmark those sales. In March, he will complete all of his field reviews in preparation for presentations and meetings during an April review of his findings.

Asked by Martin how he intended to complete all of the work in the time remaining without the aid of Townshend's Listers in the field with him, Marazoff said that he works better alone without someone looking over his shoulder. "The fewer people involved in the process, he said, the better the product."

Harris noted that many residents these days were unlikely to welcome someone they didn't know into their homes for a look around. Marazoff countered that he'd try to make appointments in advance. Lengthy discussion ensued on this topic with comments from Kathy and Rick Hege, Janet Stowell, Richard Lucier and David Dezendorf.

Harris remained adamant that residents would feel more comfortable being appraised with a locally elected official present, and Martin questioned why accompaniment by someone from the Listers office would slow down the process.

When Marazoff suggested that he'd have to explain what he was doing to the Listers, Dezendorf reminded him that it was of utmost importance that those being appraised be treated respectfully, and that working with our Listers should not be an encumbrance but opportunity for more efficiency and accuracy.

Marazoff agreed to work with the Listers as best he could and the conversation then turned his intent to discuss re-evaluations with homeowners following notifications of change next Spring. The Hege's believed that residents should speak only with the Listers about changes, not directly with the appraiser and that any notifications should come only from the Listers office.

7. Correspondence: None at this time.

8. Old Business: Cemetery Rights of Way: Harris reported that work continued on proposals for obtaining Rights of Way into a certain few of Townshend's cemeteries

which are accessible only by crossing private land, and Dezendorf reported that he was seeking landowner permission for repairs to the Holland Bixby cemetery damaged by tropical storm Irene.

Ancient Roads: Harris requested that before the next meeting measurement be taken of the lengths of Brookline and Riverdale Roads.

Municipal Fuels: Following discussion, Martin made a motion: **To purchase propane from Deerfield Valley Cooperative,** seconded by Dezendorf and carried by those present.

Dezendorf made a motion: **To continue to purchase heating oil for all municipal buildings from Kearley Fuel,** seconded by Greenwood and carried by those present.

Fuel Metering System: Dezendorf said that he would try to have present current estimates on the cost of installing a diesel fuel metering system at the Town Garage at the next meeting and will be preparing a draft Memorandum of Understanding with RESCUE for its purchasing fuel from the Town.

Constables' Duties: Martin noted that the Constables' duties are clearly proscribed by Vermont Statute, but felt that the Select Board should have direct discussions with Townshend's Constables about what to emphasize.

VTA Grant Application: Dezendorf summarized a possible opportunity presented by the Vermont Telecommunications Authority for designating a municipal building in Townshend as a hub for cell phone service which would be unaffected by natural disaster. The service that is supposed to be in place within the next year will be mostly limited to the Route 30 corridor and rely upon small antennas attached to utility poles, subject to adverse weather and accidents.

Dezendorf explained that the VTA was offering a grant to municipalities for back-up solar array generating equipment that would keep cell phones in service during emergencies and needed an expression of interest from the Town immediately. Such letter would have to include a designation of the likely location for this equipment.

Following brief discussion, Dezendorf made a motion: If the grant was awarded, to install a back-up generating system at the Townshend Town Hall, subject to the appearance of the equipment not interfering with the Town Hall's historic designation, seconded by Russ and carried by those present. Hunt was then instructed to communicate this decision to the VTA.

9. New Business: Agenda: Martin requested that the Select Board Agenda include a time to take up Other Business, explaining that often there is a need for Board members to discuss matters which are not specifically itemized. It was also requested that the posted Agenda include the at time which the meeting is to start.

Warrants: Ellison was requested to categorize and number the WARRANTS in some fashion so that they could be discussed and accepted or rejected by the Select Board distinctly.

Tax Payments to Schools: Ellison discussed with the Board whether early pre-payments of a portion of the taxes owed to the schools should be a matter of annual requests or a standing policy. For the last few years, the schools have received some funds immediately following tax collection, with the balance due, by law, within twenty days.

The Board feels that it should not be set policy, but should be annually renewed, as necessary.

10. Executive Session: Harris made a motion: **To enter into Executive Session for Personnel Evaluations at 8:32 P.M.**

At 9:05 P.M., the Board left Executive Session and, as a result, no action was taken.

11. Meeting Schedules:

Regular Meeting: September 4th at 6:00 P.M.

12. Adjournment: Martin made a motion: **To adjourn at 9:06 P.M.,** carried by those present.

Respectfully submitted:

Craig K. Hunt, assistant