

approved: 09/02/14

## TOWNSHEND SELECT BOARD

Meeting Minutes

August 18, 2014

Present: Kathy Hege; Robert LeCours; Dale West; Carole Melis; Kyle LaPointe

In Attendance: Joe Daigneault; Kurt Bostrom; Rick Hege; Tad Montgomery; Brad Boucher; Laura Richardson; John Synder; Richard Melanson; Craig Hunt

**1. Call To Order:** Hege called the meeting to Order at 6:01 p.m.

**2. Approval of the Minutes:** Melis made a motion: **To approve the Minutes of August 4, 2014, as corrected,** seconded by West and carried by those present.

**3. Additions and Deletions:** None at this time.

**4. Warrants:** West made motions to approve the following Warrants, all seconded by Melis:

**81801 Payroll**        \$ **10,443.33**, carried by those present with one abstention.

**81802 Payroll Tax** \$ **4,123.90**, carried by those present.

**81803 Equipment** \$ **1,322.40**, carried by those present.

**81804 Highway**     \$ **1,086.78**, carried by those present.

**81805 General**        \$ **10,802.18**. Discussion ensued with Melis amending the motion: **To pay the Warrant, which includes a bill from Property Valuation and Review for \$300.00, but have the two Listers who did not attend the training session reimburse the General Fund for costs of the training they missed,** seconded by LaPointe and carried by those present.

**5. Reports: Highway: Tree Cutting:** Bostrom explained that it was unnecessary to request new bids for tree cutting on Route 35, since Mayotte had quoted the lowest price in May and that bid was good for a year. By general consent, the Board approved Mayotte for the cutting, which Bostrom said would be done this fall.

**Gravel Pit Stumping:** In preparation for gravel crushing, LeCours made a motion: **To put out a Bid Request for stumping the hillside at the gravel pit,** seconded by Melis and carried by those present.

**Fuel Pump:** LeCours explained that completion of the electrical work wiring was part of the hold-up on activating the new fuel pump at the Highway Garage, but that

Beattie Electric would soon be completing the work. Bostrom informed the Board that a new computer would need to be purchased to manage the fuel system.

**Employee Evaluations:** Bostrom told the Board that employee evaluations would be completed before September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Signage:** Bostrom reported that a list of new road signs had been completed, but that he was having difficulty in sending out e-mail in order to get bids.

**Grader Blades:** LeCours told Hege that pricing on new grader blades from TENCO in excess of what was quoted would be sorted out before the next meeting.

**Answering Machine:** Bostrom reported that the answering machine at the Highway Garage, which was unable to accept messages for more than a week, was working fine. Hege received confirmation that a log of in-coming calls to the Garage was being kept.

**L&G Right-of-Way:** Bostrom reported that he had talked with Ed McGrath at Leland & Gray and that the right-of-way behind Dutton Gym and the parking area behind Town Hall would be constructed this week.

**Grafton Road Culvert:** Bostrom assured West that the culvert on Grafton Road at the intersection with Deer Ridge Road would be repaired this week.

**New Plow Truck:** Bostrom informed the Board that the new truck would be arriving at TENCO for body fabrication on September 6<sup>th</sup> and should be complete and delivered to Townshend by November.

**Winter Sand:** Bostrom said that he would be requesting that the Board review bids and approve the purchase of winter sand at the meeting on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Winter Salt:** A contract for winter salt from last years supplier was unaccepted and tabled by the Board until Bostrom can explain why the quote per ton is \$30 higher than the State price.

**Uniform Service:** Bostrom encouraged the Board to continue the Town's contract with Unifirst for the delivery of Highway Department uniforms. Due to a substantial price increase by Unifirst, the contract has become open for renewal.

**Law Enforcement Report:** Nothing at this time.

**Town Clerk's Report:** The Board reviewed the Town Clerk's cash-journal reports for the previous weeks.

**Treasurer's Report:** Daigneault reported that the General Fund checking account currently held a balance of \$464,176.73.

**6. Members of the Public: Land Sale:** Brad Boucher was welcomed and Hege explained to those present that the Select Board had become aware of a petition to stop the sale of a parcel of municipal property to Boucher during the required 30-day Public Notice period. Though the Town had not yet received that petition with signatures from at least 5.0% of the registered voters, and though the Town is prohibited from realizing any gain on the sale above the price offered by Boucher, Hege indicated that receipt of the petition was anticipated and would effectively bar the sale.

Boucher then withdrew his offer to purchase the land, saying that he believed that the petition and the campaign of those promoting the petition was misleading to many

who had signed. He also expressed his belief that the petition had emanated from the Listers office and said that he had received a direct request from the Listers office to discuss his offer.

Hege questioned why the Listers office would have any legitimate involvement in a sale pending between a private individual and the Town. The Select Board, she explained, had to seriously entertain the only offer made by anyone to buy this land in almost two decades. Why would the Town incur the expense of holding a public auction to maximize the sale price, if anything more than simply recovering the Town's investment had to be returned to the people who abandoned the property in the mid 1990's, or be sent to Montpelier?

Lengthy discussion ensued with comments including apologies to Boucher and reflection on how personal and political motives by some elected officials continue to hamper good governance.

Hege then made a motion: **To acknowledge and accept the withdrawal of Boucher's offer to purchase a parcel of municipal land**, seconded by Melis and carried by those present.

**Solarize Townshend:** Tad Montgomery of Solarize Windham was welcomed and offered to Craig Hunt, in particular, and the Select Board, generally, his apology for a proposal to construct a 150kW community solar farm that would encumber elected and appointed officials time and incur at taxpayer expense with no advantage to the municipality. He then requested that the Select Board endorse his efforts to create a program within Townshend to bring the advantages of solar power to residents.

Hege asked at what level he was requesting that the Town officially participate? Montgomery said that any endorsement by local government helped to provide legitimacy and enhance the marketability of his program in the formation of a viable and effective local energy committee.

Melis expressed her belief that any statement of support by the Select Board might be construed as the involvement and warranty of government in the program.

Lengthy discussion ensued, centering on the fact that Townshend is already committed to an exclusive with SOVEREN Solar, at great benefit to the Town and many individuals in the community.

Rick Hege reminded the Board that any new committee, sanctioned by the Select Board, would have to comply with all of the requirements of the Open Meeting laws.

Kathy Hege then made a motion: **To have the Select Board acknowledge the presence of Solarize Windham in the Town of Townshend**, seconded by Melis and carried by those present.

**Holiday of Horses:** Laura Richardson was welcomed and requested that the Select Board permit the second annual Holiday of Horses Parade on the second Sunday after Thanksgiving. Following brief discussion, Melis made a motion: **To permit the Holiday of Horses Parade in December 2014**, seconded by LeCours and carried by those present.

**7. Correspondence:** Hege read a letter from Deborah Luskin, submitted to the Select Board on advise from the Listers office, requesting that the evaluation of property on

Route 30 owned by Luskin and Shafer be lowered to the stated re-appraisal value set in 2013. Hege explained that because the Listers office had submitted no request for Select Board action in this matter, no authority to consider it was conveyed. The issue, Hege continued, was one of misunderstanding, since the Listers office, during last years reappraisal, had sent out Notices of Preliminary Valuation, many of which were subsequently changed. These Notices did not relay the official reappraisal values. Hege expressed Townshend's apology to all who were confused by the Listers correspondence last year, which the Listers apparently was unable to explain in recent and direct conversations with Luskin.

**8. Old Business: Errors and Omissions:** The Select Board reviewed a request from the Listers Office to change the appraisal of land owned by Michael Charles for a second time, and because no new explanatory documentation attended the request, LaPointe made a motion: **To table the request until better explanations from the Listers office was forthcoming**, seconded by Melis and carried by those present.

**SOVEREN Solar Net Metering Agreement:** After brief discussion, Melis made a motion: **To table the Net Metering Agreement with SOVEREN Solar, Inc., until changes in language are reflected in the document**, seconded by West and carried by those present.

**Parking Ordinance:** Melis made a motion: **To adopt Townshend's Parking Ordinance as revised, effective immediately**, seconded by West and carried by those present.

**Personnel Policy: Highway Department Uniforms:** West urged that further research be done on the cost of supplying the Highway Department with uniforms and Melis made a motion: **To table the approval of any contract with Unifirst until other options for providing uniforms can be explored and inform Unifirst that Townshend is not renewing its contract, at this time**, seconded by West and carried by those present.

**VTA Resiliency Program:** Hege relayed the context of communications with David Malko of the Vermont Telecommunications Authority regarding a proposal, in the making for two years, to install a back-up cell phone antenna and related hardware in Town Hall. Following discussion, West made a motion: **To discontinue any further consideration by the VTA for the installation of a cell phone system in Town Hall**, seconded by Melis and carried by those present.

**9. New Business: Select Board E-Mail Policy:** Hege requested that in order to avoid the possibility of Select Board members conducting an electronic meeting be conversing via e-mail, (a meeting that is illegal under the rules of the Open Meeting Law), that all correspondence be sent to Hunt, as the Select Board assistant, for him to disseminate generally.

**Town Hall Roof:** West forwarded an opportunity to have Mike Cutts assess the condition of and undertake any necessary repairs to the Town Hall roof during the next

week, as Cutts will have a lift available. Following brief discussion, Melis made a motion: **To authorize Mike Cutts the conduct repairs on the Town Hall roof for a sum not to exceed \$1500.00**, seconded by LaPointe and carried by those present.

**10. Other Business:** None at this time.

**11. Executive Session:** None at this time.

**12. Meeting Schedules:** Ancient Roads Site Visits: August 23, 2014 @ 10:00 a.m.  
BCA Meeting : September 2, 2014 @ 5:30 p.m.  
Regular Meeting: September 2, 2014 @ 6:00 p.m.  
Ancient Roads Site Visits: September 6, 2014 @ 10: a.m.

**13. Adjournment:** Melis made a motion: **To adjourn at 9:21 p.m.**, carried by those present.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig K. Hunt