

TOWN OF JEFFERSON
SELECT BOARD
August 26, 2019

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen for the Town of Jefferson was held at the Select Board Office Monday, August 26, 2019.

PRESENT: Kevin Meehan, Chair; Tom Brady, and Cindy Silver--members comprising a quorum of the Board

OTHERS PRESENT: Kathi Marshall, Assistant to the Selectmen and Linda Cushman, outgoing Assistant to the Selectmen. Also present were Christian Gainer, Kenny Gianlorenzo, Rosemary Jacobs, Julia Gilmore, Lawrence Brady and Lisa Savage

Prior to the meeting the members met at the town office to sign the letter for Jefferson's new "oldest citizen," Mrs. Stella Paschal. The three board members and the two assistants went to Mrs. Paschal's home where Kevin presented her with a clock that featured the town logo. Kevin also read the letter the board members had signed and presented that to her as well.

The group then returned to the town office where Kevin Meehan opened the regular Select Board meeting at 7:00 pm.

The Board reviewed, approved and signed 3 building permits (James Hicks 12 x 20 shed, Santa's Village addition to the Humbug Building and Jack Andrews and Empire Telecom's installation of antennas). Members of the board also signed warrants for payroll and accounts payable. Invoices were approved for payment September 2, 2019. The Board signed the updated agreement for Whitefield's police coverage at Santa's Village, and Kevin signed the papers for Kathi's enrollment into the NH Retirement System. There were also two corrected abatement items that were signed by the board.

Meeting Minutes Approval: Cindy motioned to accept the Select Board public meeting minutes for August 12, 2019, and Tom seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Kevin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Input

Mr. Kenny Gianlorenzo addressed the board regarding a culvert behind his garage that Mr. Jean Paul Couture raised up 12 inches about 25 years ago. Ever since that time his cellar floods once a year, damaging his firewood. He said the culvert is currently building up with debris on one end and he needs someone to clean it out. He is currently pumping water out of his basement. He was quite ardent about his request and asked that the Fire Department come and pump it out. The board members acknowledged his complaint.

Report of Departments and/or Boards

Kathi reported she is now answering the phone all the time, handling assessment cards, doing payroll and invoices. She has been able to answer some questions from the public and is much more comfortable with moving forward and adapting to the workflow. She acknowledged there is still much to learn, but each day she listens to Linda when she deals with the public, and each encounter helps to enhance her job knowledge.

Mark Dubois gave the highway report. He said the new truck will be probably be here within the next 2-4 weeks. He has been told that delivery is still on schedule. The crew has been doing work on Walker Road. They changed the culvert and added gravel to the road. They will grade it, then move on to Sunset or Valley Road. He plans on raising up the road in the area of Carter's bridge so the river doesn't run over it when we have high water. He spoke with Carroll Concrete about winter sand. It will be \$11/ton delivered, which is up from last year by 50-cents per ton. He is going to check with Beattie to compare prices.

Kevin asked him if he was familiar with the culvert on Kenny Gianlorenzo's property and Mark said they cleared out both ends a couple weeks ago. He believes it should be okay for another couple years. He said it's not a perfect situation, but there is no dire need to replace it. Kevin mentioned that Kenny said it had collapsed on one side, but Mark said it has not, that there is plenty of daylight through there. Tom asked when Turnpike Road and Whipple Road were last graded. Mark said it was a while ago, but they were in pretty good shape. Linda said it was graded July 1.

Public Input Continued

Christian Gainer reported that a traffic and pedestrian count was done for Santa's Village over a weekend (Friday morning through Sunday night). The report focused on the employee parking lot, the visitors' parking lot and the crosswalk. They are now doing a traffic study. Christian said he has been quite surprised at the scope of the study the state has requested. It will estimate the traffic looking forward through 2020-2030 as long as Santa's Village is still in operation. It will estimate traffic based on whether Santa's Village makes major improvements/changes to the park and if they make none. The state will then make suggestions as to what needs to be done regarding traffic flow. The cost of the engineering study alone could be north of six figures. Christian said he would be happy to share more in-depth information if the board would be interested, and he invited members of the board to contact him if they would like more information regarding the study and its costs.

Lisa Savage had reached out to Kevin with regard to updating maps. She presented a proposal that included her work history in the tax collector's office in Lancaster, the Planning Board, and the work she did for USDA Farm Services for one year. She has experience working with the GIS Computer Program (mapping). She understands that Cartographics is updating maps but will only do so for another year or year-and-a-half unless we go digital. Cartographics would charge about \$75,000 to recompile all the data to digitize our records. That would not include any information needed from the Registry of Deeds—the town would have to provide those materials. She mentioned that we might want to speak with Windham, New Hampshire since they have updated to **paper, pdf** (so they can upload to their website) and **GIS** so they can digitize and reproduce the shape of lots.

Lisa referenced RSA 31:95-A which indicates that tax maps should be updated annually to indicate ownership. She expressed an interest in doing some freelance work for the town. She would keep the paper maps updated, adding owners' names to the maps. She would use a dedicated computer and would work approximately 5-10 hours a week at a rate of \$12 per hour (\$2,400 annually). She would work 40 weeks a year, with summers off to be with her children. She assured the board that her work would be much more cost effective than that of Cartographics. Cindy thanked her for her time and proposal and said the board would keep it in mind, and they appreciated Lisa's consideration of the town's budget.

Julia Gilmore was present to follow up on an earlier meeting discussing the topic of internet service in the town. She was hopeful for an update on what the board had done. She was asking about the response from Spectrum. She was also curious about what alternatives might be available if Spectrum

does not respond. Kevin told her we have tried to contact them and we get referred to one person after another. Kathi let them know we do have a new negotiator for Spectrum and after several attempts by phone and e-mail he did finally contact her. He is three-and-a-half hours away and would like to set up a phone meeting with the board to begin the negotiations. Linda had contacted other companies, but some were not available in the area, and others had specific stipulations. Lawrence Brady asked if what actions would take place if Spectrum does not negotiate. Kevin said things would just continue as they are. Lawrence felt what is happening is discriminatory. Internet service used to be a luxury of sorts, but it is a necessity now—for emergencies, for schools, for home businesses, etc.

Tom let them know that Spectrum currently provides service to some areas of Jefferson. Years ago Spectrum wanted to run service to Lancaster, and they had to go through Jefferson to get there. So service is basically off the main road with a couple other places getting service, including the school. Lawrence asked if people on Route 2 were getting taxed more, since they receive upgraded internet service while other residences have no coverage. Tom suggested that people who live on a road seeking service sign a petition so it can be presented to the negotiator. Numbers speak.

Tom also informed everyone that Linda had written to the State of New Hampshire asking what would happen if the Spectrum contract was not renegotiated, but allowed to lapse. Would Spectrum be allowed to continue their service. Is there something in the regulations that would allow this. The State replied, "If their franchise has expired they can continue to operate under the Evergreen Clause. Unless you tell them to take down their wire, which I guess would cause a riot with the residents getting the service. Many towns allow their agreements to lapse. In these cases they would continue to provide service but will not commit to any new buildouts or any use of government channels without a renewal."

Julia said this was unacceptable. School kids need the internet for their work. What pressure can be brought to bear, or what alternative can we explore. Tom said he would like a list of what Spectrum has done since 2004 and who asked for the service. Right now there is service in several places, but some of those places don't comply with their specification that they would only set up service if there were at least 30 houses per mile. Julia said they were holding the town hostage. Tom said it appears that we are not important enough for the negotiator to come up here, but only to negotiate by phone because he is over 3 hours away. Tom reiterated that it would help if we had letters from residents on particular roads in town to express their desire for service or their disappointment in not receiving it when others in town have it.

Kevin reassured everyone that the town has followed through on trying to set up these negotiations as well as reaching out to other providers. Tom mentioned we don't have the funds in the budget to hire an effective independent negotiator. Rosemary Jacobs mentioned that in Vermont there are several municipalities who have banded together and initiated their own internet service provider. They pay an annual fee to join. They work together as a cooperative. Is that possible here? Linda had spoken with Carol Miller and believes what Rosemary is talking about is the Municipal Association. You can get their advice, but they won't get involved.

Julia said it all comes down to the fact that the entire town needs to have internet access and how do we accomplish that. Linda said we should give this negotiator the benefit of the doubt until we see how he addresses the situation. Discussion continued regarding raising the taxes of those who are on Route 2 or who have internet access. Julia said we need more businesses in town to curtail tax rates, and that's what most people want. They want lower taxes. Businesses are not going to invest in Jefferson if their phone calls are dropped and they can't access the internet.

Cindy said we need to know what other towns have upgraded internet service, what was the outcome if they did receive service, what were the contract specifications, and if they didn't get coverage what alternative did they select? Linda said it all comes down to having the money to hire attorneys.

Julia said we should explore the possibility with Argent. Milan has two internet providers. They have Argent and Consolidated Communications. She said it is a similar situation, and Argent did not say no to Milan. From what she understands, the service is fast and reliable. But Kevin spoke to some people who said Argent is difficult to deal with and the service is questionable. Kevin said we will follow up with some of the queries that were sent in January to Verizon, etc.

Unfinished Business: Kathi had the board initial the journal entry that was made to correct the deposit of a tax check that was returned for insufficient funds. She also presented an updated payroll report since her original payroll information had an error. She gave Kevin the sealed TAN Note Proposal from Passumpsic Bank. Cindy moved to accept Passumpsic's offer for a line of credit up to \$750,000 in anticipation of taxes, at a fixed rate of 2.03%, to be paid on or by December 31, 2019 with no pre-payment penalty on this loan or any documentation fees. Tom seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The board members also signed a distribution request to go to the Trustee of Trust Funds for the upcoming payment of \$214,000 for the new town truck which is due to arrive in two to four weeks.

Kathi presented the information that was given to the board weeks previous that concerned mowing prices. There are several different rates and Tom mentioned it would be better if we had a specific rate per cemetery. He said right now people have different rates for mowing jobs and it didn't seem fair that they were not all the same. Linda mentioned that the only cemetery that was being mowed on an hourly basis was Kilkenny Cemetery. The other jobs were done for a particular fee. Kevin suggested that we think about this pricing and take some more time to reflect on it. Tom mentioned that the season was short with only a few more weeks of mowing, so basically they were talking about next year's pricing. Cindy said they also needed to look at the sports field pricing and services. Kathi mentioned they were given a new proposal for next year's services for the ball field, but it was on the agenda for the upcoming week. Tom suggested they delay a decision and perhaps he could come by the office during the week and compile information to help make a more-informed decision. They agreed to gather more information before making a decision.

Kathi informed the board that she had spoken with three different Electric Companies (Affinity, Rockingham and Royal), and provided them with a list of the thirty lights (and their wattage) we would like to have replaced with LED. All three companies are preparing estimates and will get back to us with their proposals. There was no other unfinished business.

New Business: Kathi informed the board that Kate Savage is representing Taproot Farm, an environmental education center. They would like to be a part of the discussion on plans for the new school. They are especially interested in leasing space to put in a community garden. Cindy said we should e-mail her back and invite her to a board meeting.

Kathi gave Cindy and Kevin the list of typed alarm codes for the school. Cindy mentioned we might want to put a copy of this next to each code pad in the school. Cindy said she did not need another copy.

The Board of Adjustment has requested that Charlene Wheeler be given the same hourly salary as she is making on the Planning Board. Linda mentioned there were plenty of funds to cover that. This was

an item for the board's information only. No motion was needed.

Information was given to each member concerning information on Airbnbs that was given to them by Charlene. Linda mentioned that NBC News had a story on the safety issues and fire codes for Airbnbs and Kevin mentioned those subjects have been discussed more than once by the board. Kevin read that in some states Airbnbs asking to set up in certain areas and are wanting to know how much they will have to pay in taxes to do that. After negotiations the Airbnbs are paying a certain rate to the state and the town never sees any of the income.

Linda mentioned the board had wanted to discuss her salary change, but there was so much on the agenda we could put it off until the next meeting.

There was no other business.

Non-Public RSA-91-A:3 (if needed): None

Any Other Business: No other business.

The next meeting will be September 2, 2019.

Adjournment:

Cindy made a motion to adjourn. Tom seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,