

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 21, 2021

PRESENT: Cindy Silver: Select Board Chair and Norman Brown: Select Board member, both comprising a quorum of the board. Kevin Meehan was not able to attend the meeting.

ALSO PRESENT: Kathi Marshall: Assistant to the Select Board, Jeff McIver: Manager of Consumer Product for Consolidated Communications, Jason Call: Trustees of the Trust Funds Chair, Joe Marshall and Julia Gilmore: Jefferson Representatives to Coös County Broadband Committee

Cindy Silver called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE/PAYROLL

Norm made a motion to approve Accounts Payable and Payroll items for the week ending June 14, 2021 and to authorize Kathi to pay invoices and payroll. Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed, and accounts payable and payroll were approved.

PUBLIC INPUT

Jeff McIver/Consolidated Communications: Currently fourteen towns have voted to bond in order to bring internet access into underserved areas of New Hampshire. These towns generally take out a bond for ten or twenty years to cover the cost of bringing the service to all. These agreements usually result in a monthly \$8-\$14 fee added to each customer invoice. This charge is called a fiber infrastructure fee. Once Consolidated Communications begins work, which they usually begin in September, the service is usually installed and ready to go within six months (September—January).

There are two different types of fiber: Commercial, which is the type that is being run all over the state, and residential fiber. The difference is the commercial fiber has all the bells and whistles and serves big businesses, while the residential offers 1 gig over 1 gig, which is excellent service for small businesses and homes. Jeff said that means Consolidated Communications can bring internet service to any road where there are poles—right to the very last home on the street. And Consolidated does not charge to bring the service to the home. They pay for the connection from the pole on the street to each house. Consolidated wants to offer the best service, with excellent technology and great customer service.

Norm asked what towns were bonding for, and Jeff said it was all the areas that are underserved or where service is not currently available. The great thing about a fiber network is that distance has no impact on quality. The very last house on the road gets the same service and speed as the first house on the block. Old copper lines varied in quality depending on the distance.

Norm wanted to know when the loan or bond was fully paid, who owned the equipment that was paid for. Jeff said the town would own the same percentage of the equipment that was built to serve those without any internet service or those with spotty or weak service. In addition, the town will have three options once the contract is up. They can run the network themselves, they could renegotiate the contract with Consolidated Communications, or they could inquire of another company to serve the community.

Jeff said he will send information about the entire process to Joe and Julia. It will contain the RFI and RFP templates, a complete list of contacts, and a layout of the process once a town signs on. Joe said there are currently three providers in town, and they all appear to be very competitive. Norm said we are having some trouble getting one

of the providers to respond to our RFI. He asked what happens if they don't answer. Jeff said that provider will become null and void. That means Consolidated Communications could try to pick up those customers. It would make things much more attractive for a provider to want to work with the town and could be an advantage for the town financially.

Joe asked about GOFFER funds. These are recovery funds from the US Treasury to be used by individual towns for a number of things, including broadband infrastructure. Kathi had the topic on the agenda and handed out the paperwork that had come in relation to the funds, as well as the application to apply for the money that has been allocated to Jefferson, which totals \$109,000.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR 6.14.2021

Norm made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 6.14.2021 as recorded. Cindy seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

NON-PUBLIC RSA 91-A: 3 (None)

REPORT OF DEPARTMENTS AND/OR BOARDS

Board members read and accepted the Highway and Business Office reports for the week.

NEW BUSINESS

Building Permit/Tibbetts: This permit was presented to the board for the second time since the estimated value of the proposed pole barn had not been included on the application. The applicant did estimate the new building would be valued at approximately \$25,000, and the board members signed the application.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

GOFFER Recovery Funds: The Recovery Funds were on the agenda and Kathi passed out the related information. Cindy said she thought Kevin should be there to discuss these funds so Kathi moved the topic to the following week's agenda.

Underground Tank Inspection: Kathi informed the board that the preliminary inspection of the underground tanks was completed and the state will do its inspection when they return on the 29th of the month. Norm said the estimate to pull that tank out when we change over to propane will be between \$8,000 to \$10,000. Years ago they used to fill the tank with a concrete mix and leave it in the ground. Today, for environmental reasons, they don't do that. Norm explained they will get rid of the tank at no cost, but the town is responsible for digging it out. Once it has been exposed enough, a portion of the contents need to be taken out and sent for testing. Then soil samples have to be taken around the tank and those samples need to be sent out for testing as well. It's just to make certain there have been no leaks.

Photocopier: Kathi said the photocopier is ready to be delivered as soon as the file contents are on site. Before she asks for the delivery she will verify the copier is also a scanner.

New Dispatch: Kathi presented a letter for the board members to sign that will be sent to Casey Gordon, the 911 Field Representative, just to confirm the board is aware of the upcoming change in dispatch services. The DOT will no longer dispatch emergency services from Lancaster, but those services will now be done by the Grafton

County Sheriff's Office. Board members signed the letter.

Transfer Station Container: Kathi confirmed that the transfer station container had been painted. Cindy said she saw it and it looked great. The employees at the transfer station were also happy with the work.

Health Officer: The Health Officer was in the office that day and handed in his letter of resignation as well as the Health Officer's Handbook. Norm said he would like an ad posted for the position. He said to make sure it was listed as an "extremely on-call position." Norm said the ad should also reflect that mileage will be covered and the pay will be between \$15-\$20 hourly depending on experience. The current annual stipend of \$100 should be removed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Veterans' Memorial Update: Cherie Marshall was not able to attend the meeting so Kathi gave a brief update on the current donations. A resident of Jefferson gave a very generous donation of \$2,000 during the week. Along with a couple other financial gifts, the current balance is just under \$6,000.

Auditor's Letters: Kathi presented two letters from the auditor requesting specific information from Primex Insurance and Nobis Engineering (they monitor our transfer station). Kathi told the board she quotes the template exactly as submitted by the auditor. The recipients of the letters then fill in the information requested and they return the letters to the auditors. Cindy and Norm signed the letters.

Photocopy Volunteers: There has not been a response to the request for volunteers to help photocopy the documents from the old office. Cindy thought perhaps some kids who were out of school might help when we were ready. Norm said it was going to have to be a very organized process.

Starr King Parking: Kathi said there is a new forest ranger who would be very much interested in meeting with board to discuss a solution to the parking issue on Starr King Road. He sent two rangers up there last weekend and they said the amount of vehicles presented a hazard, and where and how people parked made safe passage very difficult. Board members said they were happy to meet with the forest ranger, and Kathi said she would contact him to set up a time he would be available for a board meeting.

Outside sign: Kathi gave board members several examples for the outside sign in front of the Jefferson Community Center Building. The sign is 70 inches by 14 3/8 inches and Kathi provided color and printing examples. Cindy and Norm decided on a dark green background with white print. The sign will say **Town of Jefferson, Offices & Community Center**. If possible, Kathi will have them add the Jefferson seal in the same green and white.

PUBLIC INPUT

Jason said we're all set for the fireworks. The field is mowed, there's plenty of space, and it's being advertised online. Sherri is happy to provide the insurance paperwork, the contract, and the fire marshal is already set to inspect the fireworks location.

Norm said the County Commissioner would like to be able to hold some monthly meetings in the Community Center in the future as they move around the county. Norm said he would let them know the building will be under construction at some point.

Norm is still going over the plans and costs of the renovations to the Community Center, particularly for the library. The changes they asked for have been made to the plan. Norm says we should follow a process to discuss the changes, and then to have a memorandum of understanding to sign before any money gets spent.

NON-PUBLIC RSA 91-A:3 II (None)

ADJOURNMENT

Cindy made a motion to adjourn the weekly Select Board meeting. Norm seconded the motion. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

The next meeting of the Select Board will be Monday, June 28, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in person at the Jefferson Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,