

Jamaica Selectboard Minutes

January 27, 2019

Selectboard Present: Paul Fraser (chair), Andy Coyne (vice-chair), Judy Flower, Tom Tolbert and Greg Meulemans

Public Present: Joel Bluming, Rebecca Ohm, Bob Stomski (fire chief), Chris Robbins, Jessica Pollack and Austin Rice (BCTV)

Paul called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Call for any late additions to the agenda.

Technology upgrades

2. Approve the minutes of the Jan 13th Selectboard meeting.

Greg made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Andy.

Under #5, "pending agreement" should be added.

Under #7, Andrea Ansevin-Allen is from the USDA office in Brattleboro.

3. Approve time sheets for: town office, Listers, highway, and transfer station.

Moved to the end of the session.

4. Sign Selectboard orders.

Moved to the end of the session.

5. Hear a report on the new proposed State Broadband initiative.

Chris Robbins gave a presentation on the broadband meeting presented by Windham Regional Commission. They are looking to bring broadband to underserved and unserved areas across the state.

Our town plan supports this under policy 4 and 7.

A feasibility study would help determine how many people will sign up; they would need 30% participation to start in a town. Another part of the study would be location by home and how much bandwidth people would want. It would also look at what people would be willing to pay. This project would be zero cost to the taxpayer. There are two ways to join: the town could vote to start a Communications Union District at a Town Meeting or the Selectboard can choose to join an existing one. The town would also have to appoint one rep for the town.

A survey mailing will be done. Windham Regional will create the survey and will be due by March 17, 2020.

Greg made a motion "I move that the Selectboard authorize Jamaica's participation in the Windham Regional Commission's Broadband Feasibility Study Project, and that Chris Robbins be appointed to serve as the town's official designated representative to that project. This action does not constitute a commitment to participate in a Communications Union District, or to expend any public funds, except for the cost of distributing a survey questionnaire to each Jamaica property owner." Seconded by Tom, passed.

6. Meeting with Representative Kelly Pajala.

Kelly came to talk about the tax rate issue and anything else that people wanted to ask or discuss. She said that the budget would have to be lowered in order to lower the tax rate.

Jamaica is looking at a tax increase of 19% if the purposed school budget passes. Jamaica is not eligible for the 5% cap. The number of students in the district went down and the cost per student went up.

The way that students are weighted is being looked at through a comprehensive study. The system that is being used may be incorrect.

Act 250 is getting a lot of attention and needs a more uniform system to make sure the law is applied more consistently.

7. Review over weight permit request.

Tom made a motion to have the road commissioner sign the overweight permit for Carroll Concrete, seconded by Judy. Passed.

8. Review and sign the Certificate of Mileage for the Agency of Transportation.

There are 14.6 highway miles in Jamaica. The total mileage for class 1, 2 and 3 roads is 64.135 and there are 19.6 miles of legal trails.

Judy made a motion for the Selectboard to sign the certificate of mileage. Seconded by Greg, passed.

9. Review and sign the Warning for the March Town Meeting.

Tom made a motion to accept the Warning for Town Meeting as written. Seconded by Andy, passed.

Late Additions:

Tom has looked into upgrading the operating systems in the town office from Windows 7 to Windows 10. He recommends that we upgrade Microsoft office to a more current version.

Judy made a motion to spend \$1,000 to upgrade computer software in the town office. Seconded by Greg, passed.

10. Time for public concerns.

Electric cars are one of the things that support our energy plan. There is an RFP for super chargers and Jamaica is one place they are looking into.

Judy gave an update on the town hall. Stewart Barker is working on the water and the ceiling painting should start in a couple of days.

Tom made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Judy.

Submitted by Sara Wiswall