

Selectboard Minutes

May 23, 2022

Selectboard Present: Tom Tolbert, Kate Ullman, Greg Meulemans, Andy Coyne and Jessica Pollack

Public Present: Paul Fraser, Jacki Brown, Erica Bowman, Clara Robinson, Grace Coyne, Karen Ameden, Patti Dickson, Chrissy Haskins, Derek Ahl, Susan Ahl, Michael Connor, Anne Connor and Norma O'Brien.

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

1. *Late additions*

- A. Patti Dickson-update on school
- B. Discussion on covid protocol
- C. Overweight permit

2. *Minutes*

Tom made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 9th Selectboard meeting, seconded by Jessica.

Item 8, there was a hanging sentence, "she also said that," should be followed by "if the bid is accepted, money could be budgeted for next fiscal year."

The accepted bid was \$356,000.

The roads that were recommended not to change: Skinner Swamp Road, White Road and Mill Brook.

Hollow Road recommended to change to a legal trail.

Turkey Mountain Road and Legal Trail 10 were recommended to be discontinue the portion that lies in the state park lands.

Tom made a motion to accept with changes, second by Jessica. All in favor.

3. *Report on Rescue Inc*

Tom went to the meeting last week. There was a proposal by Drew Hazelton explaining the services they provide. He talked about the finances; Brattleboro is leaving Rescue Inc. Drew said that they are going to honor the contracts for the next 3 years. No increase this year with 1% increase the following 2 years. What it means for us is nothing is going to change for Jamaica, we will continue to use their services and our contract will not increase at this time.

4. *Water Street Property owned by Town*

A wildflower garden was approved last year, as well as 5 trees to be planted.

There was a petition passed around asking that the land be left alone. Greg read it, "We the undersigned residents and voters of the Town of Jamaica, VT petition the Jamaica

Selectboard to keep the vacant properties on Water Street, damaged by Tropical Storm Irene, in their natural state. The area is now a haven for deer, birds, turkeys, fox and bear. Taking away the vegetation that has been established will be detrimental to wildlife and adjoining property owners.” The petition was signed by 43 voters.

The property is between the Tolbert’s and the Coyne’s homes on Water Street. Jackie Brown was looking out her window and wanted to see something more attractive in the space. She reached out to the Selectboard to see if they could make a wildflower garden. It was not as successful as she hoped it to be. The next year Karen Ameden wanted to plant trees in memory of the houses that were lost during Hurricane Irene. Jackie invited Erica Bowman to participate in this discussion because she has a lot of expertise in the area. Erica said there are invasive species like knotweed and black locust in the area. Jackie would like to see it as a natural habitat and make the front a wildflower garden. She would like the invasive species to be taken care of.

Grace Coyne has lived in her home for 54 years. She would like some trees with a good root system and other than that she would like the property left alone.

Norma O’Brien lives in the area as well. She likes it as is but would be okay to weed whack the invasive species. She feels we spent enough on the property buying out the homes after Irene.

Erica Bowman said the first step would be speaking very specifically how it would be done. They would take out the invasive species, the knotweed would be dug out and taken away. After that, the way to maintain a wild meadow is to do a yearly mow. They would remove everything down so someone with a normal brush hog could go in and mow it once a year. In our Town Plan, it says we will preserve habitats and prevent the spread to stop invasive species. This plan is specifically to remove the invasive species. There is not a lot that can be done with the property, but the town is not responsible to maintain the property.

Andy said no one requested any memorial trees or anything else, one person said they didn’t want to remember it.

Clara Robinson asked who will maintain it?

Tom Tolbert said he noticed a lot of poison parsnip that he pulled 30 plants, then 10 the next year, and this year he has not seen any. Those types of species do take over if nothing is done. He agrees with Erica’s proposal to get rid of the invasive species. He would like a plan to keep it a natural space.

Norma said she would not want any of the trees of greenery cut back. Tom agreed and said none of the maples, oaks or desirable trees would be removed.

Kate would like to know how far back the field would be brush hogged.

The petition does not really speak to a proposal.

Jessica thinks the petition wants the same thing that was proposed at the last meeting. She asked Erica to clarify.

Erica said the proposal does not specify the time. There would be a one-day invasive species removal in preparation for a yearly mowing. The boundaries would be determined by a town agent. The natural line might be where the land turns into a

marshland. Most of the future mowing would be where there are currently grasses and goldenrod.

Grace would like the work to be put out to bid if it is going to be done and she would like people to know more about what is happening.

Clara feels that there are mixed messages coming from the board. Jessica said we are just having a discussion of what could happen.

Susan Ahl is a master gardener and she said that if people want to address the invasive species in the space, the town should look at the invasive species throughout the town. There are a lot of opportunities to look at the species in the town and how to deal with invasive species. She thinks there should be a lot of discussion about the town in general and not just the specific piece of land.

Greg feels we are not ready to take an action currently but does support dealing with invasive species.

Andy made a motion that we take no action now on the property on Water Street. There was no second.

Kate would like to see information put on the website and create a committee.

Jessica made a motion to establish a committee of interested parties, to address the invasive species and the work that could be done, which would go out to bid. The committee would make a recommendation to the Selectboard that took into consideration the wishes of the adjacent landowners. The original proposal should be put it on the website, seconded by Tom.

Andy is against doing anything on the property.

Jessica said it would be up to the committee to make recommendations, but the main focus is on the invasive species. 4 in favor, 1 opposed. Motion passes. After the meeting, come forward if you want to join the committee.

5. Overweight Permit for Consolidated Communications

Tom made a motion to approve the overweight permit for consolidated communications, seconded by Jessica. All in favor.

6. Update of School Board

Patti Dickson said that last summer the school board began working with a long-term planning committee that includes an outside party to help come to a consensus. There are now two committees, one is the elementary task force. There will be a presentation to the schoolboard on June 6th at 7:00 p.m. The meeting will be in person and on zoom. You can reach out to Drew Hazelton or Dana West for more information. Since merging, kitchen items and such have been taken out of the Jamaica school and sent to Townshend. They have also let the pre-K license for Jamaica expire so there is no pre-K at JVS now. She is encouraging everyone to go on the school website and go to the future planning and read more about what is happening.

Clara would like the Selectboard to attend a schoolboard meeting or write a letter about the concerns of our school.

7. Discussion on covid protocol

Kate would like some type of protocol to let others know if someone has tested positive. Tom made a motion, if an employee or town official has covid, that the town clerk is notified so others that were potentially exposed could be notified. Seconded by Jessica. Motion passes 4-1

8. Review time sheets and pay orders

9. Public Concerns

Karen asked about the Rawsonville Schoolhouse being used for the Rawson reunion as it had been done in the past.

The boy scouts are meeting tomorrow to put the new flag on the common, the road crew put up a solar light for the pole, and the boy scouts will also be putting flags in the cemetery.

Clara Robinson said there is still graffiti on the Tewksbury house. Clara would like them to contact the owners again and ask if they can paint over the graffiti. Andy tried to reach out to the owner but had no response.

Tom made a motion to adjourn at 8:34 p.m.