

CORNWALL SELECT BOARD
Regular Meeting
Cornwall Route 30 Fire Department
November 15, 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ben Wood, Ben Marks, Magna Dodge, Brian Kemp

ABSENT: John Roberts

GUESTS: Sue Johnson, Mike Sunderland, Sue Burdick, Liam English, Holly Noordsy, Rodney Cadoret, Bobbie Carnwath

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00pm

Quorum—Established

Agenda—Ben W MOVED, Magna SECONDED, to hear the Listers' Report and the Delinquent Tax Collector first, and approve the Agenda as changed. Motion passed —4 in favor, 0 opposed

General Fund and Highway Orders—*Signed*

Bank Statement Reconciliation —*None this month*

1. MINUTES—November 1, postponed to next meeting;

2. CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW

- Letter acknowledging Cornwall's participation in the Harper hearing.
- Ben M invited to participate in Addison County Court Budget
- VLCT sent information related to municipal budget setting.

3. LISTERS' REPORT (from New Business)—*[Sue B, Liam]*

- **IN PURSUIT OF AN "ASSESSOR"**—There will be one or more Lister vacancies to be filled at the March elections; the two current Listers have found the work load to be unwieldy for them and have been approaching potential Lister candidates to encourage them to run in March. Efforts thus far have been unsuccessful; also pursued has been the possibility of replacing Listers with one or more Assessors, an approach adopted by a number of towns. Both Listers indicated a desire to make themselves available to newly elected or appointed office holders to assist in the learning curve, and it is possible that one of them will remain in place.
 - **Assessor Funding**—Ben M noted that prior research indicated that surrounding towns use a part time Assessor. It's possible that several towns could share the services of one person. Sue J noted that there has been a line item in the budget (and funds) in anticipation of the move toward eliminating the Listers' role in favor of an Assessor.
 - **Process and Criteria**—Liam, Sue B, and Ben M will work jointly to develop criteria and a process for establishing an Assessor, possibly eliminating the Lister role. They will, however, continue to search for candidates for the Lister positions. It was mentioned that Weybridge currently has an Assessor and might bear checking with. The Listers will contact the State's District Supervisor—Terry Gildersleeve—for input, and can put a notice of the Lister position availability on the Lister' listserve. Liam and Sue B agreed to return for the next Selectboard meeting.
- **PROBLEMS**—There are a couple of issues the Listers wished to bring to the Selectboard:

- **Current Sales**—There has been a trend for high-end properties to sell at higher than appraised values, while low-end properties have sold at lower than appraised values. They have worked with residents to try to explain, the discrepancies in appraisals—primarily those of purchasers who want appraisals lowered according to the lower than appraised value of their purchase. At this point there is little they are able to do about lowering appraisals.
- **Permits**—issues can arise when a property owner does work without acquiring the appropriate permit, or expands the scope of work for which a permit was granted. There is a frequent offender in this regard, and the Listers wondered if anything could be done vis-a-vis the permit process.

4. DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR (from New Business)—[Rodney]

- **TAX SALES**—Rodney is looking toward May of 2017 for holding Tax Sales. He has a couple of issues he would like resolved prior to the sales:
 - **Swamp Lots**—There is an ongoing issue from a sale two years ago involving swamp lots. Apparently there is no map which defines the boundaries of all swamp lots. The Listers concurred that only about 1/3 of the known lots have defined bounds and Parcel Ids. At issue is how to tax a swamp lot owner if the location and size of the lot(s) owned are unknown. Discussion on several possibilities for resolving the ID issue, nothing defined. Listers will work on it.
 - **Failure to uphold Payment Agreement**— There is a property whose owners entered into an agreement—two years ago— regarding payment of the owed taxes. Although they have attempted to make payments, for several reasons, the owners have been unable to keep up and are now roughly \$9,000.00 in arrears. Discussion ensued, with no resolution. Ben W MOVED, Brian SECONDED, to table further consideration of this specific issue. Motion passed; 4 in the affirmative, 0 opposed.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS —Holly expressed interest in attending the budgeting sessions when they begin.

6. TOWN CLERK / TOWN TREASURER'S REPORT—[Sue]

- **UPDATE ON TRAILER OFFICE**—Some utilities are on, but phone is still lacking. Most of her work has been moved into the trailer, however, lack of phone service has kept computer work in the Town Office building. She has been notified that she must vacate that building by Thursday as construction necessitates a large hole in the wall of the office. She has decided that she will close the office all of Thanksgiving week due to the holiday and personal issues. Her hope is that something can be worked out so that on her return to work November 28 the necessary phone and DSL hook-ups will have been made. If not, they will have to wait until she returns.
- **Computer Network**— Sue wants Silloway to install and set up the computer and network components, so this will wait until after the holiday.
- **Water**—Due to water issues at the Highway Office, Sue suggests a water service be established. It will cost \$10/month, with the bottles at \$6.50 (plus \$7 deposit). She would also like to have this service at the Town Office when it reopens. Additionally, when she returns after Thanksgiving, she plans to order a Porta-Potty for the trailer. The Board agreed with, and authorized, both plans.

- **TREASURER'S REPORT**—An insurance premium refund of \$1,078.00 has been for the coverage on the covered bridge. Cornwall will receive monthly invoices as work progresses on the bridge demolition, and will pay the full amount. The Town will then re-bill Salisbury for 50%.

7. ROAD REPORT—The new computer has been installed and the furnishings for the office have been re-installed.

- **Salt & sand** are stock-piled; equipment maintenance is ongoing. Tree work, sign installation, and road work are on the schedule. Mike noted that both he and Ken will be attending an Road Workshop.
- **FIRE DEPARTMENT REQUEST**—Ben M presented a request to the Board from the Fire Department. They would like to know if Mike can be called upon for emergency tanker driving if the department is short-handed. The Board agreed that this would be a good thing.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- **LISTERS REPORT**—see above, #3
- **DELINQUENT TAXES**—see above, #4
- **ENERGY**—Ben M brought the State's new "*Energy Planning Standards*" to the Board's attention. He noted that if the Town follows the *Standards* and has their siting regulations approved by the Regional Planning Commission and the Public Service Board, the PSB will give a significantly higher level of deference to the Town's wished than if the Town's regulations are not approved. The Town must decide how closely it wishes to mirror the State, as it goes through the checklist of items in the Standard.
 - Holly noted that—referencing the RPC and a meeting with Adam Lougee—the RPC plans to break the guidelines out to committees to come up with some guidance for towns. Towns will have to prove why, and what basis exists for, varying from the State. The *Standards* cover many other aspects of energy in addition to renewables siting. Workshops will be offered to towns to assist them.
- **INSECT CONTROL DISTRICT BUDGET**—No treatment done last year. The budget contains funds for possible treatment in 2017 of \$8,000.00 to be split among the three towns who are members. Ben W MOVED, Brian SECONDED, to approve the budget as presented. Motion passed; 3 affirmative, Magna abstained.

9. OLD BUSINESS—

- **BRIDGE PROJECT**—[Brian] Wright has indicated that approximately 90% of the work will be done from the public right-of-way on the Cornwall side. Wright has declined to respond to a Salisbury resident who wants them to pay for access to the work site via a private right-of-way. This may result in some delay, as rubble disposal to a Salisbury site will entail an additional 15–20 miles per trip.
- **WATER REPORT**—Sue passed along the results of the most recent testing to the Board.
- **HARPER/WOOSTER ROAD HEARING**—The request for a Hearing was granted. John will represent the Board and present traffic data; Wooster Road residents will be advised so they can attend if they wish. The Hearing will be held at the Shoreham Town Office on Monday, November 28. at 10:00am, preceded by a site visit at 9:00.

10. OTHER BUSINESS—None

ADJOURNMENT—Magna. MOVED / Ben W SECONDED, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed— 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Conway, Substitute Minute-Taker