

Approved January 5, 2021

CORNWALL SELECT BOARD

Regular Meeting
Via Zoom Teleconference
December 15, 2020

NOTE: Today's Select Board meeting was held by teleconference and all Cornwall meetings will be held by teleconference until further notice.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Kemp, Ben Wood, Magna Dodge, Ben Marks, John Roberts
ALSO PRESENT: Mike Sunderland, Don Burns, Sue Johnson, Theresa Dessureault, Alex Carver, Katherine Branch, Mary Dodge, and Peter Conlon

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm.

Technical Difficulties

Chair Ben Marks expressed regret that he inadvertently posted the agenda with incorrect Meeting ID and Passcode numbers. After being alerted to this error at 7 pm by the Town Clerk and members of the Select Board, he sent the correct codes in a second email, to known attendees. Later, Sue J. reported that no calls from the public, asking for assistance in accessing the meeting were received at the Town office, where she was sitting for this meeting.

Recording of meeting - announced
Quorum - established
General Fund and Highway Orders - signed

AGENDA - Brian K. MOVED / Magna D. SECONDED a motion to approve the agenda as modified - in Approve Minutes: deleting the words "Special Meeting" after December 1, 2020 and deleting "November 17, 2020" (already approved at last meeting), and deleting "Review Report on Reconciled Bank Statement" (already approved at last meeting). Motion passed - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

MINUTES

- **December 1, 2020** - John R. MOVED / Magna D. SECONDED a motion to approve the minutes as thus amended - In Approve Minutes of October 30, fix typo by deleting the word "not."

CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW

- Notice regarding Addison County budgeting process vote scheduled for Monday January 11 at 10am via Zoom.
- Notice from the Agency of Transportation announcing a new process for certification of highway mileage.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - Peter Conlon, Cornwall's representative to the Vermont legislature, relayed some information about the upcoming legislative session that begins on January 6. During the first two weeks, it is anticipated that legislation will be passed that will give Towns more options in how Town Meeting is conducted. Options may include allowing for mail-in balloting, delaying Town Meeting until it can be held outside, and allowing the Secretary of State to issue new regulations about Town Meeting. Mr. Conlon said that this legislation will not allow for virtual Town Meetings. The Governor plans to propose that the use of carried-over funds be designated for mail-in balloting expenses. Mr. Conlon addressed concerns

expressed by Board members about a projected 9% increase in education taxes, by saying that historically the final numbers, when an increase is projected, are usually less, as a result of the subsequent work of school districts to pare their budgets. He hopes this will be the case again.

TOWN CLERK / TOWN TREASURER'S REPORT - Sue Johnson

- **School Presentation** - Sue J. spoke with 4th and 5th grade students about her role as Town Clerk, and said she really enjoyed the student's questions and the dialogue she had with them.
- **Online records** - Cornwall land records from November 2014 through the present day are now available online. This represents 10 1/2 books. Sue will complete the grant-funded part of this project by working for about 40 more hours scanning documents, before the end of the year. After that, the project will continue as Sue's other duties allow. The ultimate goal for this project is to have 40 years of Cornwall land records available online. The Town pays a \$160 / month contract fee for the use of the online land records software.
- A WiFi hot spot was installed last Friday in the parking lot outside of the Town Hall.

ROAD COMMISSIONER / ROAD FOREMAN'S REPORT - Brian Kemp and Michael Sunderland

- **Median Line Painting** - Mike S. reported on his findings about roads that qualify for painting of median lines by the State. The State does not paint Class III roads. If a road is classified as Class II, the State could paint the median line by request of the Town, and also the road would be eligible for certain State grants. Roads are classified on the basis of their traffic. For a road to be re-classified, a traffic study would need to be done, and then if appropriate, a request made in writing. Lemon Fair Road is currently a Class III road. The cost for the Town to have a private contractor paint the median line is estimated at \$2,500.
- **Mutual Aid Contract** - an agreement to formalize the mutual aid that highway departments in Addison County have been providing to one another for years, has now been formalized in a written agreement. Mike Winslow, Transportation Planner from Addison County Regional Planning Commission, is expected to present the proposal to the Select Board for approval. Such a contract would allow FEMA to reimburse the towns in the event of a declared disaster in which mutual aid was provided according to this contract.
- **Road Work** - roads were salted a couple of times.
- **Culvert on Mountain Road** - Culvert failure on Mountain Road will be fixed this Friday, and the Town can be reimbursed for that work later on.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Status of Maple Broadband (Addison County Communications Union District)** - Magna Dodge reported that the project continues to move ahead, and the annual report and budget has been sent to Towns (Ben M. circulated this report to the Board). WiFi hot spots are being identified and signs will be put up at these locations. An outreach tool is being tested, business plan is in process, and grants and business investments are being sought.
- **Discussion of possible conservation funding sources** - Katherine Branch and Mary Dodge talked about the outreach and data gathering done by the Conservation Commission (CCC) since the last Select Board meeting, and described the short term and long term priorities regarding conservation in Cornwall and a proposed budget for 2021-22. The CCC plans to submit a petition for an Article to be placed on the Town Meeting warning asking the voters to approve \$3,500 (\$900 for short term activities such as outreach and data gathering and \$2,600 as a catalyst fund for long term projects such as easements and preserving land for farming). A long discussion between Katherine B., Mary D. and members of the Select Board ensued, including concerns by some Board members about the timing of presenting such a request during the pandemic, and suggestions about options such as requesting private donations before approaching the voters, or modifying the Article to ask for a Town match of

private donations, up to a certain amount. By Statute, a petition with the required signatures for an Article on the Town Meeting warning, must be honored by the Town, so decision for an Article, is up to the CCC.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Discussion of Format for Town Meeting 2021** - after discussion of options, all agreed that the only viable option for voting is the Australian Ballot. Having a mail-in ballot would increase participation. More people would be needed if hand counting was done, and more expense would be incurred if the tabulator was used. Sue J. will research the cost of using the tabulator and will see if there is a way to have an informational “meeting” prior to Town Meeting Day. Sue and Ben Marks will be attending a webinar in the new requirements for Town Meeting. Magna D. MOVED / Ben W. SECONDED a motion to, as a Covid-19 measure, conduct Cornwall’s 2021 Town Meeting voting by Australian Ballot, consistent with powers granted to the Town by the Vermont State Legislature. Motion passed - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.
- **Discussion about Section 1111 petition from Green Mountain Power** - Theresa Dessureault, Distribution Designer from Green Mountain Power and Alex Carver, project builder, described in detail the proposed work to be done on DeLong Road to complete line extension construction. The proposed work was the last option considered. After 6 months of exploring other options with the neighbors, no other option was possible. Lines will be buried under an existing ditch in the Town right of way, and will not go under the traveled surface of the road. Power will be transmitted across the road to the home that needs it, over pre-existing overhead lines. Brian K. added that he did a site visit and that both he and the Road Foreman are comfortable with the work proposed.

After a long discussion, John R. MOVED / Magna D. SECONDED a motion to grant the Section 1111 permit to Green Mountain Power, to complete the line extension construction, with plans submitted, such permit to be effective on Wednesday, December 23 at 8 am, unless the Select Board hears from an interested person that they tried to have access to the December 15 Select Board meeting, but were unable to do so, due to having the incorrect access codes. Motion passed - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

ADJOURNMENT

Magna D. MOVED / Ben W. SECONDED a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Secretary of the Select Board