

CORNWALL SELECT BOARD
Regular Meeting
Via Zoom Teleconference
May 18, 2021

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Magna Dodge, Tanya Byker, Ben Marks, John Roberts

ALSO PRESENT: Sue Johnson, Mike Sunderland, Don Burns

Recording of meeting—announced

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Ben Marks, Chair

QUORUM—established

AGENDA—Tanya MOVED, John SECONDED to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion passed—4 in favor, 0 opposed.

GENERAL FUND AND HIGHWAY ORDERS—signed

RECONCILED BANK STATEMENT—reviewed

MINUTES

May 4, 2021—John MOVED, Tanya SECONDED, to approve the minutes as amended with the correction of a misspelling (in *Correspondence*) ***Motion passed***—4 in favor, 0 opposed.

CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW

- ***Town Garage Water Test Results***—Latest results received. John brought up some background information on the salt contamination around the Town Shed as Tanya was unfamiliar with this. He explained that storage of winter sand and salt had leached into the groundwater near the Shed and two neighboring properties. A pipe was laid down Wooster Road, with a State permit to pump water from the Shed area to the Lemon Fair. The water is tested periodically to see where it stands in relation to State limits (re the salt content). To date there has been no sign of a reduction in the amount of salt, despite this having been done for the past 30 or 35 years. He noted tests tend to be higher in summer than winter, likely due to frozen ground during the latter season. A short discussion centered on investigating what changes, if any, may have occurred over the ensuing years. John will contact ANR to see what steps need to be taken to pursue this.
- ***Country Store***—Cass Chlodnicki sent a copy of the warning regarding a hearing scheduled for June 2 for review of his request for a waiver so he can proceed with

plans to revitalize the country store property.

PUBLIC COMMENTS—none

TOWN CLERK / TOWN TREASURER'S REPORT—Sue Johnson

- **ACSD**—Sue reminded the Board of the meeting on the 19th of the State Education Board to discuss Ripton's withdrawal from the Addison Central School District. Ben noted he plans to attend.
- **Delinquent Taxes**—Information and Warrants have been sent to Rodney for action.
- **Utilities**—Sue explained how all Town property utilities came to be bundled together under "Town Properties" in the General Fund report (page 2). They can easily be un-bundled if the Board wishes. She went on to note a couple of the...
- **Over-budget Items**—There were three items that were a bit over-budget:
 - Town Meeting was about \$3,000 over due to COVID, primarily in costs for mailing ballots, programing memory cards and using the tabulator. The State reimbursement came to \$2,722.
 - Town Property expenses were related to COVID (installing the window shield, and additional annex for record books in the vault. For these the Town received a grant of \$1,336.
 - The CARES Act digitization project cost \$10,841.54 and was reimbursed by the State at \$11,841.54.

ROAD COMMISSIONER / ROAD FOREMAN'S REPORT—Mike Sunderland

- **Road Maintenance**—Grading just about finished, roads are looking good. There are some culverts to be replaced and some new ones to install, also ditching is being scheduled in.
- **Mowing**—Should begin in about two weeks, after ditching is done.
- **Equipment**—
 - The "14" is back. The anticipated expense of \$1,400 is now expected to see a steep increase. Mike had spoken with the service vendor and sent in some information to get the process started, but between then and now the truck slipped out of warranty.
 - The "18" has developed problems with the sensors of its DES ("Diesel Exhaust System") system. This a State mandated system, and will require a trip to the service center in Essex Junction.
- **Signs**—Both "slow down" and horse warning signs were ordered a couple of weeks ago. Requests for both have come in from several residents. Enough signs have been received for 6 roads.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Update Maple Broadband**—Magna—The build-out is being accelerated. RFPs had originally been sent out only for bids on the high-level design portion of the build out. As it became more apparent that there might be sufficient funding,

revised RFPs were sent to four bidders calling for bids on four pre-construction activities. Those bids are due on the 19th. The group is hoping word comes soon from the State as to precisely how much funding will be allocated by the Legislature.

- ***Discussion and Possible Subcommittee Appointment re: Cornwall Town Solar***—John asked for assistance in analyzing solar project options. ***Tanya*** expressed interest but declined due to possible conflicts of interest. ***Don*** volunteered to help and was immediately ushered in. ***John*** will put together a spreadsheet of the information he has collected so far. A proposed solar array in Bristol is currently the primary focus, although other options are being searched out. Anyone knowing of a possible solar project that would meet the needs is welcome to submit the information to the Board. The Bristol array would require roughly \$40,000 for the purchase of shares sufficient to cover the Town's electric needs. The array will have a lifetime of about 22 years, with payback in the range of 13-14 years.
- ***Discussion re: American Rescue Plan Act Funding Priorities***—The Board is examining the setting of priorities for use of the funds allocated to the Town. Broadband and childcare are high on the list. Short discussion of setting up another small subcommittee to look into the use of non-broadband related funds. Tanya volunteered to help with this and will reach out to a PC member who also has a high interest in childcare issues. Additionally, it was suggested that having a broadband presentation related to use of the Rescue Plan funding at the next meeting might be a good idea. The use of these funds for non-covered COVID expenses was another suggestion.
- ***Discussion and Possible Vote re: Cider Mill Road Liquor Permit Recommendation***—Noted was the quality and strength of the Pink House contract required for events. Magna MOVED, John SECONDED that the Board recommend granting of the liquor license. ***Motion passed***—4 in favor, 0 opposed.
- ***Completion of Fire Warden Appointment Form***—Ben indicated that he and Sue would handle this tomorrow in the Office.

NEW BUSINESS

- ***Zoom Meetings***—Should they continue?— Discussion brought up the following comments, concerns, and issues: A degree of discomfort with large group meetings was generally agreed upon, as was waiting until September to revisit in-person meetings, especially as the Board is about to embark on its summer schedule of reduced meetings. Concerns expressed that there is no way of knowing who has/has not received the full vaccination. Zoom was generally agreed upon as a good option to keep, as it may offer more opportunity for participation by the public and an increase in transparency. It was noted that the Fire Department has been holding hybrid meetings and feels they have been successful. It was mentioned that in-person meetings with a Zoom option are planned by several groups to begin in September. A number of comments have been received indicating public affirmation for keeping Zoom. It was suggested, as a possibility to enhance the meetings, that a video monitor be installed on the west wall of the conference room

and integrated with Zoom. The possibility of using COVID money to help defray costs was noted. **Tanya** will see if she can find someone at the College who would be willing to help them find useful, cost-effective video options.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Executive Session**—At 8:18 Ben called for an Executive Session to discuss legal options in the tax appeal case.

John R. MOVED / Magna D SECONDED a motion that premature disclosure of the Town's legal strategy and of legal advice from the Town's attorney would put the town at a disadvantage in current tax litigation. **Motion passed** - 4 in favor, 0 opposed

John R. then MOVED/ Magna D SECONDED a motion that the Select Board go into executive session to discuss those legal matters. **Motion passed** - 4 in favor, 0 opposed

The Executive Session ended at 8:30 pm. No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

John R. MOVED/ Magna D. SECONDED a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Motion passed**—4 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Submitted by Robin Conway, Substitute Minute-Taker