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**CORNWALL SELECT BOARD**

Regular Meeting

Location: via Zoom and at Town Hall  
December 21, 2021

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Magna Dodge, Tanya Byker, Ben Marks, Brian Kemp

**ALSO PRESENT:** Sue Johnson, Don Burns, Steven Rheaume, T Tall

**Recording of meeting**—announced

**The meeting was called to order** at 7:05 pm

**QUORUM**—established

**General Fund and Highway Orders** - have been circulated for signing, either by email or in person.

**AGENDA**

Magna D. MOVED / Brian K. SECONDED a motion to approve the agenda as amended, with addition of “Discussion of Prospective Contract with NEMRC” added under NEW BUSINESS.

***Motion passed***—4 in favor, 0 opposed.

**MINUTES** - December 7, 2021

Magna D. MOVED / Tanya B. SECONDED a motion to approve the minutes as posted. ***Motion passed*** - 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

**CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW**

- Invitation from the Addison County assistant judges to a public meeting on their annual budget on January 14;
- Notice from Vermont Land Trust of the conservation of 170.8 acres of the Hodges Farm, on North Bingham Road. The application was approved on December 11 and the above mentioned land is now in a conservation trust held jointly by the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing Conservation Board.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** - T Tall, long-time Cornwall resident, expressed his concerns about dwindling attendance at Town Meeting and cited attendance statistics in Cornwall at Town Meeting over the past 11 years. He would like the Town to consider moving Town Meeting to the Saturday preceding the first Tuesday in March. This would take an Article on the warning for the 2022 Town Meeting for the voters to consider and vote upon. If approved, the change would be effective starting in 2023, and would remain in effect until such time as a vote was taken to make another change. Sue J. suggested that prior to Town Meeting, information about the issue could be published in the Town newsletter, should Mr. Tall or someone else wish to write an article.

**TOWN CLERK / TOWN TREASURER’S REPORT** - Sue Johnson

1. Sue J. has been working for the past two weeks to prepare for the outside audit.
2. The Town Office will be closed on Friday and all next week for the holidays.
3. Sue sent municipal board members up for re-election a copy of the petition that is required to run again.

4. Sue added a reminder that board and committee reports are due for the Town Report and that submissions for the newsletter are also due.

#### **ROAD COMMISSIONER'S REPORT - Brian Kemp and Steven Rheaume**

- **Road maintenance** - Steve R. said that road clearing during and after the recent weekend storm went well. There was some plow damage on the gravel roads, that could not be avoided, due to the warm weather prior to the storm. That will need to be repaired in the spring.
- **Equipment** - thanks to the efforts of Stu and Sue Johnson, the Town has received a \$4,500 equipment grant that will enable the purchase of a new buffalo turbine leaf blower. The Town of Shoreham will be buying out Cornwall's share in the older leaf blower that the two towns now own jointly. The amount of the buy-out from Shoreham will cover the 20% Town match required for the grant, and then some, so it is a good deal for the Town. The Board was in agreement to proceed and sign the grant for the new leaf blower.
- **Equipment Sharing Possibility** - Steve R. reported that Brian Nolan from Bridport is seeking 4 other towns to share in the purchase and use of a crack sealer. This proposal is in the idea stage, at this point in time, with details to be forthcoming, and no decision from Cornwall is needed at this time. Brian K. spoke in support of the concept, as it would pay for itself by year 3 and this type of equipment would last a good many years.
- **Laptop** - Steve R. now has a laptop that is linked to files on the desktop computer at the Town Garage. He is very pleased with it.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Update - Maple Broadband** - Magna D. reported that three more member towns have allocated ARPA funds: Ferrisburgh (\$50,000), Panton (\$50,000), and Salisbury (\$30,000). This brings the total amount allocated to date from member towns to \$245,000. There is a proposal before the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) to provide matching funds until April 15, to match Town allocations 1:1. 25% of the pre-construction grant has now been received from VCBB. Maple Broadband now has a line of credit with the National Bank of Middlebury, backed up by Middlebury College, so that materials can be purchased for construction in 2022. Maple Broadband is participating in a group buying program for cable, through the Vermont Communication District Union Association, as the only option available at this time. Work force and construction labor is the next hurdle to be faced.
- **Update - Swamp Road Bridge replacement status** - Brian K. and John Robert attended the scoping meeting with together with three Select Board members from Salisbury. The meeting was facilitated by Laura Stone from Vermont Agency of Transportation. Discussion included options for bridge design, construction timeline, and option to close the zone during construction or keep open with a temporary bridge. The State would need to collect a 10% match from the towns if a temporary bridge was put in place, versus 5% if the road was closed during construction. Brian K. said that the State and the Town of Salisbury understand and respect Cornwall's concern about extra traffic and the weight limit on Swamp Road, and the issue of visibility on the Cornwall side of the bridge. The next step is to have a meeting between the Select Boards of the two towns. Brian K. will coordinate the scheduling of this meeting in early January.
- **Solar Project options for Town Hall/Garage** - (Ben Marks recused himself from this discussion) the Board discussed whether it would be better to present an Article to the voters at the 2022 Town Meeting, or put the issue on pause and wait for future funding opportunities to emerge. It was the consensus of the Board to put the issue on pause.
- **Discussion of 2022-2023 Budget Line Items / Town Meeting Venue** - tabled until next meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Discussion of Prospective Contract with NEMRC** - tabled until the next meeting.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ben M. reported that the Town has permission from the School District to hold Town Meeting at the school.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION made that premature general public knowledge regarding employee compensation matters would clearly put the Town at a disadvantage. ***Motion passed*** - 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

MOTION made to go into Executive Session to discuss employee compensation matters. ***Motion passed*** - 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:00 pm.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:43 pm.

Brian K. MOVED / Tanya B. SECONDED a motion that the Town pay the cost of family medical insurance for Road Foreman Stephen Rheaume and that his weekly contribution remain \$30 as originally agreed. ***Motion passed*** - 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Magna D. MOVED / Tanya B. SECONDED a motion to adjourn the meeting. ***Motion passed*** - 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Secretary of the Select Board