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## **CORNWALL SELECT BOARD**

Regular Meeting

Location: via Zoom and at Town

Hall

January 16, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tanya Byker, Don Burns, Ben Marks, Brian Kemp, John Roberts

**ALSO PRESENT:** Sue Johnson, Kate Gieges, Ian Gill, Shawn Fetterolf, Jean Terwilliger

Recording of meeting—announced

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by the Chair.

**QUORUM**—established

General Fund and Highway Orders - signed

Reconciled Bank Statement - reviewed

**AGENDA** -Brian K. MOVED / Ben M. SECONDED a motion to approve the agenda as modified, by moving the discussion with the Auditors to the top of the agenda.

***Motion passed—5 in favor, 0 opposed.***

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Town Auditors to discuss outside audit and logistics for transition to new Clerk and Treasurer**

Cornwall's volunteer auditors - Kate Gieges, Ian Gill, and Shawn Fetterolf were present for the discussion.

Highlights:

- Shawn Fetterolf announced that he will step down from being an Auditor in Cornwall, because of a conflict of interest as his wife Laura will be appointed as Town Clerk in March. He added that his federal government job requires, every 6 months, that he certify that he has no conflicts of interest. Shawn F. has been an Auditor in Cornwall for the past 20 years. He is willing to be available as a mentor to the Auditors, but will not be able to do auditing tasks.
- The current auditing system in Cornwall is on a 3-year cycle, uses 3 volunteer auditors to review the books and procedures, and includes a full audit by outside professional auditors once every 3 years, at the cost of \$14,000. The firm that the Town uses has changed their policy. If the Town continues to use this firm, the firm's policy requires in an annual full audit at the cost of \$14,000. Kate G. said she has identified the names of several other professional auditors in Vermont. She will bring the names to a meeting of the Auditors scheduled for this Thursday.

- It was agreed that it is important to prepare for the transition to a new Town Clerk and new Town Treasurer well before March 6. Laura Fetterolf has already been appointed Assistant Town Clerk, and has been in training for the past few weeks. Sue will appoint Nicholas Gill as Assistant Town Treasurer for the transition period. A meeting that includes the new Town Clerk and the new Town Treasurer to focus on the logistics of transition will be scheduled soon.

### **APPROVE MINUTES**

December 19, 2023 - Don B. MOVED / Brian K. SECONDED a motion to approve the minutes as posted. ***Motion passed—5 in favor, 0 opposed.***

### **CORRESPONDENCE REVIEW**

Notice from the Vermont Department of Taxes regarding the 2023 Equalization Study results. For Cornwall, the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is 70.6 and the Coefficient of Dispersion (COD) is 25.48. These results mean that Cornwall is due for a reappraisal, and that reappraisal is in process.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS** - Jean Terwilliger was present to follow up on her letter regarding the services of the Climate Economy Action Committee (CEAC) available to the municipalities. If the Town applies for and receives the \$4,000 mini grant from the Municipal Energy Resilience Program, it could cover CEAC services. Don B. said that Gary Barnett is in support of using the mini grant for CEAC services. Ben M. invited Jean T. to submit a written proposal. Jean will send this proposal to Tanya B. with a copy to the Town Clerk.

Don B. added that he wants to see what kind of a response Gary Barnett gets at Town Meeting from people interested in being on an Energy Committee. Don is encouraged about citizen engagement in working groups in Cornwall, because 20 people showed up at the recent first meeting of a housing working group, a subcommittee of the Planning Commission.

### **TOWN CLERK / TOWN TREASURER'S REPORT** - Sue Johnson

- Sue has been focusing on the following:
  - End of year financials;
  - FEMA paperwork with the Road Foreman;
  - Sent out nominating petitions;
  - Sent out requests for Town reports;
- Has Presidential primary ballots.
- No requests yet for military or overseas ballots - deadline is this Friday to send out.
- Will provide absentee ballots as requested.
- Laura Fetterolf has been coming in weekly for training. Sue will continue to be available to answer Laura's questions after March 6. If someone comes in with a request that Laura does not yet know how to respond to, she can simply take the person's name and contact information, tell them she will get back to them, consult with Sue, and then

follow up.

### **ROAD COMMISSIONER'S REPORT - Brian Kemp**

- Brian K. said he met with Steve R, Road Foreman, yesterday.
- The road crew has been busy with the last two storms and is out plowing tonight during this storm.
- One town truck went off the road and needed towing, but there were no injuries and no damage to the truck.
- Nick built a whole new frame for the roller. He is a talented welder and big asset for the Town.
- Sand and salt supply is holding up well.
- Swamp Road was covered with water for 2 weeks, even after the water in Otter Creek went back down. This is highly unusual. Brian is concerned that some debris dams are holding the water in Cornwall Swamp back so it does not drain as normal.
- Concrete barriers are being used when Swamp Road is closed. The wooden Road Closed sign was damaged by a vehicle driving into it. The stop sign at the bridge is gone again, after being replaced 5 times.

### **OLD BUSINESS: 2024/2025 Budget Working Session**

The Board and Town Clerk discussed and came to agreement on line items in the General Fund budget and the Highway Fund budget. A meeting to approve the proposed budgets will be scheduled for later in the month.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Ben M. MOVED / Don B. SECONDED a motion that premature general public knowledge regarding non-public information related to employee performance would clearly put the Town and the employee at a disadvantage. **Motion passed** - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

Ben M. MOVED / Don B. SECONDED a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss non-public employee matters. **Motion passed** - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:15 pm. The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:53 pm.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Brian K. MOVED / Don B. SECONDED a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Motion passed** - 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 pm.

Submitted by Sharon Tierra, Secretary of the Select Board