

MINUTES
SELECT BOARD MEETING
TOWN OF COVENTRY

Monday March 20th, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

Board Members Present:

Michael Marcotte / Chairman; Bradley Maxwell; Scott Morley

Town Officials Present:

Amanda Carlson/Town Administrator; David Gallup/Road Commissioner

Lyell Reed/Lister; Gary Petit/Lister

David Barlow/Trustee of Cemetery Funds

Guests:

Jeff Graham ; Adam Messier; Joshua Griffes; Maurice Jacobs; Skip Gosselin; Dan Introcaso ;
Viola Poirier

Press:

Robin Smith/Caledonia Record; Elizabeth Trail/Barton Chronicle

1. Mike Marcotte called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Approve the minutes of the March 13th, 2017 meeting

- Brad Maxwell made the motion to approve the minutes of the March 13th, 2017 meeting.
- Seconded by Scott Morley. The Board signed and approved the minutes as written.

3. Allow for public comment

- Joshua Griffes expressed his appreciation for the new town website; however, he stated that he felt improvements could be made for ease of use and access to information. Joshua was encouraged by the Board to contact Amanda Carlson directly with specific suggestions.

4. Jeff Graham review of VLCT Claim

****Please see attached report as presented to the Board****

- Jeff Graham presented the Board with the report of missing funds calculated for the years 2004 through 2016.

- The report shows taxes billed based on the Grand List and Educational Tax Rates; payments received from the State towards property taxes; the Treasurer's report of monies collected; and for year 2009 through 2016, the total deposited to the Community National Bank Account. Years 2004 through 2008 were calculated at a ratio from evidence produced for the subsequent years.
- The amount of missing funds discovered between 1/1/2009 and 12/31/2016 is \$583,991.76
- The calculated balance of missing funds for the period of 2004 to 2008 is \$369,392.00
- Based on Graham & Graham's Investigations and averages, there is an estimated \$77,000 in receivables for delinquent taxes owed.
- The total missing funds as of 12/31/2016 is \$876,383.96 before any collected penalties and interest due.
- This is the total claim amount that will be submitted the Vermont League of Cities and Towns Insurance Division. The Town is covered for loss up to a maximum of \$500,000.
- Based on the total the Treasurer reported as collected for taxes and the amounts deposited into the bank account for the years 2009 through 2016, there is a total of \$1,430,608.74 unaccounted. The difference will not be included in the insurance claim, only the \$876,383.96 will be claimed as a conservative amount that can be supported by Jeff Grahams work.
- The claim amount of missing monies was based solely on property taxes collected. It did not account for collected Town Clerk's Fees or penalties and interest charged.
- Resident David Barlow questioned Jeff Graham on the significant increase in missing funds since the 2014/15 forensic audit that was presented to the Board showing approximately \$30,000.
- Jeff responded that this has been a lengthy process and he had been waiting on key pieces of evidence and verification of bank deposits.
- The Board granted Amanda Carlson unanimous authority to contact Kelly Kindestin at the VLCT to discuss the report and to submit for official claim. Amanda was also asked by the Board to obtain more information on the coverage should the claim be accepted and determine if the Town will still be insured and what the provisions might be.
- The Town Treasurer was not present to comment.

5. Discussion of Treasurer's refusal to process approved Board Warrants

- The Board approved a warrant on February 6th, 2017 to transfer funds into the savings accounts as approved by voters in the 2015/2016 budget. The transfer was not completed as of the meeting date.
- The Town Treasurer provided the Board with a written response outlining the three reasons why this transfer had not been completed.
- The Treasurer stated that the new restrictions on the accounts did not allow for transfers to be completed through the online banking.

- The Board granted Amanda Carlson unanimous authority to contact Jane Clark at Community National Bank for information on how to complete transfers with the new safety restrictions in place.
- Scott Morley noted that the other two reasons listed by the Treasurer were not accurate statements.
- The Treasurer was not present to offer comment or explanation.

6. Discuss request to former Delinquent Tax Collector for files

- Under the Boards authority for Mike Marcotte to request files from the former Delinquent Tax Collector, the request was made the previous week.
- The former Delinquent Tax Collector provided the Board with a written letter and the delinquent tax list of outstanding totals.
- The Board noted that the backup paperwork was not provided and no notes of verbal payment agreements were included.
- Scott Morley stated the data was incomplete and inconsistent. The Board granted Scott Morley unanimous authority to speak with Attorney Paul Gillies and Auditor Jeff Graham to discuss the Boards quandary with the delinquent tax collection status and to seek advice on how best to move forward.
- The former Delinquent Tax Collector stated in the letter to the Board that she will be submitting an invoice for the 8% penalty paid on all delinquent taxes collected during her term of office. The Board should expect to receive the invoice for the March 27th, 2017 meeting.

***Mike Marcotte departed the meeting at 6:10 p.m.*

7. Jane Lazorchak, Land Acquisition Coordinator Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department

- Jane Lazorchak presented the Board with information on the donation of the 8.6-acre Dew/Havlock property in Coventry that sits along the Barton River.
- The owners would like to donate the parcel to the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife.
- The department offers to meet with Towns to discuss any concerns and answer any questions.
- Jane stated that there will be no change in tax revenue for the Town. The recent changes to PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) assures the Town the same funds as was being received from private land owners.
- The Board reviewed the information presented and did not have any additional questions.
- A letter of support will be signed by the Chairman, Mike Marcotte, at the next meeting.

8. Board of Listers

- Lyell Reed stated his intentions to get the Office of Listers back up and running on a regular schedule to keep current on the duties of the office.

- Lyell asked the Board to address the following: the need for a lap top and access to the NEMRC software; a camera that is compatible with the lap top; approval to spend funds on training; and to define an office space/meeting space for the Listers moving forward.
- Scott Morley stated that the Listers have seen the many problems the Town has been faced with recently and that the Board has had to play goalie on many issues. There has been a single pivot point in all of the concerns and the Board will not support the processes of the Listers office that have been conducted in the past. The Board must be very cautious about the computer system and access granted to it. Many questions will be asked and options will need to be researched before lap top access can be granted.
- Scott stated that the Select Board will do everything they can to support the Board of Listers, however, they will not allow the data inputting to continue to be done by the Town Clerk.
- Lyell Reed stated that Cynthia Diaz will not have access to the Listers software and will not be utilized to input data into the NEMRC system.
- Lyell stated that the Clerk, Cynthia Diaz, has a lot of the information needed by the Listers for updating; however, the information will be obtained and no system access will be granted.
- Lyell confirmed that it will be Anita Gariepy or Gary Petit that will be conducting the data inputting and a meeting will be arranged to discuss.
- Resident David Barlow volunteered to assist the Listers with the immediate technical needs. Lyell Reed accepted his assistance on behalf of the Board of Listers.
- David Barlow and Gary Petit will be signed up for the NEMRC Grand List Training Seminar in Burlington this coming Friday March 24, 2017. Anita Gariepy will be contacted and asked if she should like to attend as well.
- The Board stated that if/when the Listers office needed something then they should come to a Select Board meeting so it can be addressed immediately.
- The Select Board and the Board of Listers present granted Amanda Carlson authority to set up a meeting with the Listers, David Barlow, State Advisor Doug Lay and Chris Miele from NEMRC to discuss options, conduct training on data inputting and overall Listers Duties.

9. Official Town newspaper

- Scott Morley made the motion to designate the Caledonia Record and the Barton Chronicle as the official newspapers for Town announcements and postings.
- Motion seconded by Brad Maxwell.

10. Request Treasurer's report to include detailed list of Town revenue for preceding calendar week including all source documents.

- The Board reviewed the income report presented by the Treasurer for the week of 03/13/17 to 03/17/17. Total receive: \$1,306.36 *Cash \$37.20; Checks \$1,269.16*

- The Board noted that some tax payments had been listed as received that week. The Board unanimously decided at the previous meeting to have all payments accepted in the Select Board Office by the Town Administrator until a new Delinquent Tax Collector was appointed. The Board requested this notice be placed in the newspaper and posted on the office door to notify residents that until further notice tax payments can be made to the Town Administrator. No cash will be accepted in the Select Board office.

11. Other Business

- David Barlow stated that as Trustee of Cemetery Funds he would like to obtain a read-only access to those bank accounts and investment accounts.
- Scott Morley stated that since the Cemetery Association is its own entity with a tax identification number, that the Town does not have access to the bank accounts to grant the request.
- The Board asked Amanda Carlson to contact Passumpsic Bank for information on how the access can be obtained and to inform David of the process.
- Scott Morley and David Barlow discussed the setup of the Cemetery Association and agreed that a meeting will be arranged next month with the Cemetery Association and the Select Board to discuss the organization and funding going forward.
- Resident Viola Poirier stated that there is a constant noise problem with her neighbor's dogs. They must leave their TV on all the time to diffuse some of the noise from the barking dogs.
- The neighbor was identified as Darryl Beaumont.
- The Town does not have a noise ordinance outside of the village limits.
- The Board asked Amanda Carlson to research adoption of an ordinance and prepare a draft for Board review.
- Scott Morley will speak with the dog owners about the situation.
- The Board approved the purchase of rugs for the community center hallway to be purchased at Carpet One in Newport. Cost of rugs was quoted at \$209 each for two 4' x 14' rugs; \$76.90 for one 4' x 8' rug for outside the door.
- Rugs will be delivered in approximately 4 weeks.
- Amanda Carlson researched and prepared information regarding the lease buy-outs for the Highway Department. At the time the buyout amount was requested from the financing companies, the Town would have saved \$12,955.07 to pay off the two leases early. Funds were not accessible to complete the buyout; therefore new amounts will need to be requested and discussed by the Board at a later time.
- This information was requested by a Town resident. Scott Morley will arrange to meet with them and review.

12. Sign Orders

Accounts Payable	AP#19 – 03/20/2017	\$4,052.12
Payroll	For week ending 03/18/2017	\$2,535.83
Signed by the Board for the Treasurer to draw checks totaling		\$ 6,587.95

13. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

- The next Select Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday March 27th, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

Select Board meetings for Monday April 3rd and Monday April 10th, 2017 have been cancelled by the Board. Weekly meetings will resume on Monday April 17th, 2017.

Michael Marcotte / Chairman

Bradley Maxwell

Scott Morley

Amanda Carlson / Town Administrator