

# MINUTES FROM THE Alburgh Selectboard Regular Meeting 09/22/2021

The meeting was held in person in the Bingo Hall and was not able to be held via Zoom.

PRESENT: Chairperson, Josie Henry, Russell Duchaine, Chuck Pease, Shawn Creller, Nick Palmer, Clerk, Donna L. Bohannon

GUESTS: Matthew LeFluer, Terry Tatro, Connie Boutin, Koleigh Vachereau, LaWayne Clary, Laurie Clary, Reeni Murphy, Ed Murphy, Brian Tjelta, Katherine Timmer, Aaron Vincelette, Adam Vincelette, Damien Henry, Leo Henry, Staci Roslansky, John Morrissette, Mindy Gagne, Gilbert Gagne, Carol Behrman, Jason Reynolds, Alton Brusio, Jerid Creller

## 1) 7:00PM – Call to Order

- Called to order at 7pm by Chair, Josie Henry

## 2) 7:05PM – Adjustments to the Agenda – 6 adjustments made

- **Adjustment #1** – “ARPA Funds Process Discussion” will be moved to the next budget meeting, currently scheduled for 09/29/2021.
- **Adjustment #2** – NEMRC contract” will be moved to the next budget meeting, currently scheduled for 09/29/2021.
- **Adjustment #3** – “722 Alburgh Springs Road – driveway permit” will be removed from the agenda.
- **Adjustment #4** – Rec trail mowing at the trailhead on Industrial Park Road will be added and discussed with “Mowing and Tree Trimming” item already on the agenda.
- **Adjustment #5** – EMS in Alburgh will be added under “New Business”.
- **Adjustment #6** – Reimbursement for the Health Officer for pest control will be added under “Vantine Avenue Property Complaint”.

## 3) 7:10PM – Minutes

- September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, regular meeting
  - i. *Russell Duchaine made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 09/08/2021 with one amendment – seconded by Shawn Creller – all in favor – motion carried.*
  - ii. Minutes approved with the addition of a letter from the Center Bay residents which will be attached to the minutes as a link.

## 4) 7:20PM – New Business

- Investing in Alburgh – Mr. Adam Vincelette has requested time to introduce multiple initiatives he is working on and to inquire about economic incentives.
  - i. Aaron Vincelette introduced himself and his brother Adam and explained that they are interested in investing Alburgh help the town grow.
  - ii. They have purchased the laundry mat and “the old Sunoco station” and will be working on getting those properties cleaned up and functioning as profitable businesses.

- iii. They are also looking at purchasing “Kay’s restaurant” and another village property.
  - iv. Terry Tatro informed them that there are Village designation grants available.
  - v. Josie Henry informed them that there are beautification grants available especially for village and downtown areas.
  - vi. They were thanked for what they are doing and their efforts to help bring business to Alburgh.
- Tax Rate – The listers have lodged the Grand List/the ~~2022-23~~ 2021-22 tax rate needs to be set.
- i. The tax rate being set is for 2021-22 NOT 2022-23.
  - ii. The Grand List has been lodged and filed with the Town Clerk.
  - iii. The education tax rates have been set by the state as follow:
    - Residential – 1.4725
    - Non-residential – 1.5855
  - iv. The treasurer has established that the municipal tax rate should be 0.4497, which includes the general fund (0.2307), highway fund (0.2168) and the local agreement (0.0022).
  - v. She asks that the Board approve and adopt the total tax rates as follows:
    - Residential – 1.9222
    - Non-residential – 2.0352
  - vi. ***Nick Palmer made a motion to adopt the tax rates as presented – seconded by Chuck Pease – all in favor – motion carried.***
- Planning Commission – There is a new chair and a board vacancy.
- i. Josie Henry informed all that she resigned from the Planning Commission and that the Planning Commission appointed Donna Boumil as the Chair of that board.
  - ii. She also informed all that there is now a vacant seat on the Planning Commission Board and stated that there is possibly one person interested but asked that other interested parties are welcome to express that interest.
  - iii. The Selectboard will appoint a person to fill the vacancy at the next regular meeting, currently scheduled for 10/13/2021.
- Mowing and Tree Trimming – residents have asked for mowing and tree trimming in a couple of areas that will be briefed/discussed.
- i. Katherine Timmer was present to talk to the Board about Poor Farm Road.
  - ii. She expressed her concerns about the speed limit and asked if it could be lowered to 25mph and asked when the roadsides will be cut.
  - iii. She also expressed concerns about potholes on the road and that there are no center or side lines on that road.
  - iv. Russell Duchaine explained that he spoke with someone at the State about lowering the speed limit to 25mph and he was told that the lowest a town can set is 35pmh.
  - v. Katherine was also informed that the roadsides are being cut but the mower is broken, and they are using a side arm mower that isn’t designed for the type of mowing that is needed.

- vi. A new mower is being discussed and the topic will be added as a topic of discussion at the budget meetings.
  - vii. A speed study was conducted in 2019 – Clerk Bohannon will email this to the Board members as a guide to determine if another study needs to be done.
  - viii. Russell Duchaine will continue to research state rules pertaining to speed limits.
  - ix. Tabled until the next regular meeting, currently scheduled for 13 October 2021.
- **Adjustment #4** – Rec trail mowing at the trailhead on Industrial Park Road will be added and discussed with “Mowing and Tree Trimming” item already on the agenda.
    - i. Carol Behrman asked that the entrance to the rail trail, at the west end be mowed.
    - ii. She was informed that it had already been done.
    - iii. She also asked that the bike rack, that is near the railhead and overgrown, be moved to possibly the town office.
    - iv. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.
    - v. Lastly, Carol informed the Board that the two benches near the office will be getting stained soon and asked if they could be moved into the town office for the winter.
    - vi. Room will be made for the benches in the entry to the town offices.
  - **Local Democracy Intern** – Alburgh has been assigned an intern from UVM who will be supporting the selectboard throughout the fall semester.
    - i. Chairperson Henry introduced Koleigh Vachereau as an intern from UVM. She explained that she is currently helping with the Center Bay Beach research.
    - ii. Koleigh explained that she is a senior at UVM, studying anthropology and sociology.
    - iii. She will be assisting the town remotely as she learns about local government.
  - **Adjustment #5** – EMS in Alburgh will be added under “New Business”.
    - i. The Board was informed that Alburgh Fire and EMS may be splitting into two separate entities which will create a new set of allocation requests for the budget.
    - ii. Russell Duchaine asked what is causing the split.
    - iii. All were informed that EMS may have to convert to a paid staff and the fire department will stay volunteer.
    - iv. This will create a need for additional funding and the fire department and EMS need to keep separate accounting for the revenues and expenses.

Public comments welcome following board discussion on each issue (5 min per issue).

#### 5) 8:00PM – Old Business

- **317 South Main Street** – the contractor reports property cleanup is complete. Next steps will be discussed.
  - i. Gilbert Gagne was present to inform the Board of his progress on the cleanup of 317 South Main St.
  - ii. He explained that the work has been completed except for the travel trailer that is in the yard. This is being disassembled so it can be moved.

- iii. He stated that he won't pick up the check for the work until that has been done and the Board is satisfied with what has been done.
  - iv. The Selectboard will meet at 6pm on Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at 317 South Main Street to inspect the work before authorizing the Treasurer to pay Mr. Gagne.
  - v. If satisfied with the work performed, they will approve payment.
- Center Bay Town Beach – The residents of Center Bay have written the board requesting action on issues associated with lack of parking, trespassing, property damage, control, enforcement, and beach ownership in the Center Bay Beach area.
- i. Josie Henry has been expanding on the research done by the Listers office and believes she has isolated the boundaries of the town beach at the end of Center Bay Road, based on deed research and research done in the past by attorneys and surveyors.
  - ii. There was some discussion about erecting a temporary fence, possibly a rope fence, that would delineate the boundaries of the Town beach, but this was looked on unfavorably by at least one of the residents of that area.
  - iii. Ed Murphy commented that the letter given to the Selectboard prior to the last meeting was not meant to act as a specific request of action but was simply the residents of the area expressing what they felt were the problems they have seen in the past. He said that the letter was intended as a start to working with the Selectboard to resolve the issues.
  - iv. He also commented that the letter from the residents did not intend to infer there was a lack of parking but “not enough space available to provide for responsible public parking”.
  - v. This topic will continue to be discussed with the ultimate conclusion being an understanding between the town of Alburgh and residents that live in that area.
  - vi. ***Russell Duchaine made a motion that a temporary fence be erected to mark the area of the Town beach at the end of Center Bay Road – seconded by Nick Palmer – all in favor – motion carried.***
  - vii. A separate meeting to discuss the issue with residents will possibly be scheduled.
- Broadband Access – The Matrix proposal pre-subscription period is underway. An update on pre-subscription numbers and a timeline for execution will be discussed.
- i. The MOU between Matrix and the Town has been signed by both parties and a copy has been returned to the Town office.
  - ii. There was an email update from Ken Millman, that Russell Duchaine read to all present.
  - iii. The updates were as follows (Copied directly from the email update):
    - 1. • As of 9/20/2021, there are 92 “pre-subscribers” (pre-registration sign-ups at no obligation), 20% of the 460 “pre-subscribers” required for Matrix to move forward with the network build.
    - 2. • Matrix has set the end of the year (12/31/2021) as the deadline to reach the required 460 early subscribers.
    - 3. • To receive the “first-come / first-served” VEC Tariff Adjustment discount for the rights to attach to their poles — an estimated \$460,000 savings — Matrix is encouraging the Town to authorize Matrix to prepare the necessary paperwork on

behalf of the Town and submit our filing application to VEC. The fees for this are \$75k (VEC-\$35k and Matrix \$40k).

4. • The Broadband Committee’s Finance Sub-Committee met with Matrix on 9/21 to discuss Matrix’s proposal to finance the \$75k referenced above. (See attached “Offer Letter” from Matrix.)
5. • The NWCUD is willing to discuss a matching grant arrangement with the Town to cover any pre-planning/pre-construction costs.
6. • The Broadband Committee’s Operations Sub-Committee is continuing work on a budget for the “housing and powering” of the network electronics.
7. • Matrix will soon be sending a “presubscription” solicitation flier via USPS to Alburgh residents, and will be holding an info session in Town, date/s TBD.

iv. A letter to the Broadband Committee from Matrix was also included – link here:



MATRIX LETTER TO  
BROADBAND COMM

- v. In the letter, Matrix offers to loan \$35,000 to the town to make the utility pole attachment application to VEC.
  - vi. There was some discussion about whether the town wants to borrow money for this project.
  - vii. Josie Henry expressed concerns that the town was doing work on behalf of Matrix to get the number of pre-subscribers needed.
  - viii. Josie will contact the town attorney to get assurance that the process is being handled in a legal manner.
- 34-4A Vantine Avenue Property Complaint – the property owner has not acted. A registered letter has been sent and coordination with the health officer continues.
- i. Josie Henry informed the Board that a letter had not been sent to date but that she had talked to the property owner who stated she would get the property cleaned up.
  - ii. A letter will be sent to the owner of the property stating that on September 29<sup>th</sup>, appropriate town officials will be inspecting the property and a letter will be sent to the owner, detailing specific items that the town would like to have done.
  - iii. Tabled until the next regular meeting, currently scheduled for 13 October 2021.
- **Adjustment #6** – Reimbursement for the Health Officer for pest control.
- i. Jane Dwinell, Health Officer paid for Pest-Pro to set traps on Milk Street due to a rat infestation caused by a neighbor’s dumpster.
  - ii. The rats had also been seen by the town clerk’s office due to the dumpster.
  - iii. The total paid to Pest-Pro for the initial set up and subsequent checks was \$440.
  - iv. *Shawn Creller made a motion that the town would reimburse the Health Officer the amount of \$440 for the cost of the work done by Pest-Pro – seconded by Chuck Pease – all in favor – motion carried.*

- v. Similar instances will be handled differently in the future.
- Transfer Station – The board discussed hiring two employees at the last meeting. Progress on hiring and other transfer station issues will be discussed.
  - i. There was some discussion about the number of hours worked by the employees at the transfer station and the number of hours an employee can work before they have to be offered the benefits of a full-time employee.
  - ii. The Board agreed that there should be a cap on the number of hours that can be worked by one individual at the transfer station.
  - iii. ***Russell Duchaine made a motion that beginning September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, no transfer station employee can work in excess of 30 hours per week without written approval from the transfer station lead, Shawn Creller – seconded by Shawn Creller – all in favor – motion carried.***
  - iv. Josie Henry will relay this information to the transfer station employees.
- Auditor Position – The position has been advertised.
  - i. Two letters of interest were received and reviewed by the Board members.
  - ii. Margaret Brescia submitted a letter of interest with a resume.
  - iii. Alton Brusco submitted a letter of interest.
  - iv. Interviews for both parties will be scheduled for Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup> to begin at 6:30pm and the Board will make a decision that night.
  - v. Tabled until Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Public comments welcome following board discussion on each issue (5 min per issue).

#### 6) 9:00PM - Budget Topics

- Treasurer's September Report
- Town Fair – VLCT's Town Fair will be held on Sept 29<sup>th</sup> and from Oct 4-8<sup>th</sup>. Interested officials need to register online.
- Highway equipment upgrades – the board agreed to move forward on purchasing a new payloader and is working toward finalizing the details of the purchase.
- APRA Funds Process Discussion – The town has received just under \$500,000 in American Rescue Act funds. A process for appropriating those funds will be discussed.
  - a. **Adjustment #1** – “ARPA Funds Process Discussion” will be moved to the next budget meeting, currently scheduled for 09/29/2021.
- NEMRC Contract – Board review of the annual NEMRC contract.
  - a. **Adjustment #2** – NEMRC contract” will be moved to the next budget meeting, currently scheduled for 09/29/2021.
- Next Budget Meeting Date/Time
  - a. Scheduled and set for 09/29/2021 to begin at 7PM.

Public comments welcome following board discussion on each issue (5 min per issue).

9:15PM – Correspondence

a. 722 Alburgh Springs Road – driveway permit application

- a. **Adjustment #3** – “722 Alburgh Springs Road – driveway permit” will be removed from the agenda.

b. Letter re: Garfield trailer

- a. This item was not addressed.  
b. Tabled until the next regular meeting, currently scheduled for 13 October 2021.

9:30PM – ADJORN

- a. *At 9:45pm Russell Duchaine made a motion to adjourn – seconded by Nick Palmer – all in favor – motion carried – meeting adjourned.*

TABLED Items:

- Speed studies – there are several areas where speed studies have been or will be conducted.
  - This item was discussed under new business - *Mowing/Tree Trimming/Speed Limits*
- Recreation grant application – VORAC grant letter of interest was submitted on August 27<sup>th</sup>. The town has requested \$200,000 to build a boardwalk path focused on wetlands education and to add an outdoor classroom, signage, and benches to the existing rail trail. A decision on what towns will be invited to submit a full application is scheduled to be announced the week of September 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Library requirement: ADA compliant ramp quote pending.
- Alburgh Springs Community Hall – the town is looking for funding opportunities to restore the historic church.
- New Town Sign – the fire department has ordered an electronic sign, using grant funds, that will be placed in front of the municipal building.
  - These four items were not addressed.

Respectfully submitted, Donna L. Bohannon Alburgh Town Clerk

Please note the above minutes HAVE NOT been approved. Approval or changes to the minutes will be addressed at the next regular meeting, currently scheduled for 10/13/2021.