

Town of Alburgh
Regular Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Municipal Conference Room
11/13/2023

Present: Russell Duchaine, Elliot Knight, Danielle James Choiniere, Jim Hokenberg, Cindy Sweeney, Matthew Lefluer, Paul Fortin, Terry Tatro, Alton Brusio, George Hakey, Maeve Bissonnette, and Josie Henry, Donna Boumil, Alex Goddard (briefly) via Zoom

Vice-Chair Duchaine opened the meeting at 6:01 PM as Chair Henry was attending via phone.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Added under transfer station- state visit, cardboard, employee absence under executive session. Table Verizon phone and Emergency Management Plan (edit: table revoked after Josie Henry connected on Zoom to fill in topic summaries)

APPROVE 10/23/2023 MINUTES

Under Town Office heading- remove motion by Donna Boumil re: Assistant Clerk salary. The board's consensus was raises for the role are under purview of the Town Clerk if such amounts are within budget.

- **Elliot Knight motioned to approve 10/23 minutes as amended. Jim Hokenberg seconded. Russell Duchaine abstained (not present at the 10/23 meeting). Rest in favor. So approved.**

DEPARTMENT/ COMMITTEE UPDATES

Highway Department

-Raise Discussion- Move to executive session.

Road Commissioner Duchaine reported the highway department's sand and salt is stockpiled.

Transfer Station

-Northwest Solid Waste District Visit 11/8- Some district members came to view Alburgh's facilities and have discussion with some selectboard members regarding the district running the transfer station as one of their locations. Elliot Knight was a 'definite maybe', wanting to see at least a rough agreement before voting. Russell Duchaine was not really in favor but is not opposed to hearing more. Jim Hokenberg was on track with both Elliot and Russell's point of views, especially now that improvements on site have been made. Donna Boumil would like to see a sustainable plan for both options, especially when Russell Duchaine won't always be there to guide it. Russell did not want to see the site downsized to resemble North Hero—Josie said the town can include what they wish in the agreement, or they could just work more closely with the district.

-State Visit- A representative from the state will be on site watching a brush burn.

-Cardboard- The Chittenden Solid Waste District refused Alburgh's recycling because of our box size. Russell Duchaine explained a lot of recycling is cardboard, which is hard to compact. Talk occurred about baling it like we used to. It is tedious and consumes a lot of man hours to bale but perhaps would be worth it.

Town Office

-Emergency Management Plan- Not updated in 7 years. Board should be able to review 11/27.

-BRIC Grant for Local Hazard Mitigation Plan- Grant is just to pay for the application process, which is reported to be difficult but able to be handled by the town if they wish. The grant is \$11K with a \$3K town match. Though not necessary, having such a plan generates more reimbursable funding in case of a natural disaster. The treasurer will be asked where funds could come from. Elliot Knight asked how long is the plan good for? Donna Boumil said it could be incorporated into the Town Plan, or at least on the same update schedule as the Town Plan.

-Employee Handbook Review- Specifically the callout hours for the highway department. Russell Duchaine said there used to be a highway section which then got blended in an edit. Some highway crew took a floating holiday for Veterans Day on Thursday, then had a callout. Donna Boumil said it would be 4-hour minimum callout pay, plus time and half. She will proof when payroll is done next.

-Verizon VOIP- Town Admin. Alex Goddard has been researching this venture to have call forwarding, multiple lines, automated directory, etc. for \$150 +/- a month with free installation. Quote to be presented 12/11.

-MVP Healthcare- Open enrollment or policy changes for 2024 are due by 1/15/24. Josie Henry reminded board members to look over the cost increases for voting on the 12/11 meeting.

-Alburgh Family Clubhouse- Town Administrator Alex Goddard working on subgrant for the childcare center with Regional Planning.

-VT-ALERT Training- Town Clerk and Town Administrator attending free training in January for this program to help with emergency alerts that may arise in the community i.e. chemical spills, severe weather, algae blooms, etc. These alerts go to mobile devices, house phones, and email. Other town officials were welcome to attend if desired.

NEW BUSINESS

-Treasurer Request to join VT Clerks & Treasurers Association- For \$35 per year Alburgh Town can be a member.

- **Elliot Knight motioned for the town to join and pay from the training budget. Jim Hokenberg seconded, all in favor. So approved.**

-Payroll Approval Authority- Currently Donna Boumil but adding another would be beneficial.

- **Russell Duchaine motioned to appoint Josie Henry as a secondary payroll authorization authority. Elliot Knight seconded, all in favor. So approved.**

-Emergency Invoice Authorization- In advance of a full board meeting when an invoice may need quicker approval, Josie Henry suggested each department head have authorization for paying urgent bills, which will then be presented at the next board meeting for review. Elliot asked if this should be a policy instead of just within minutes. The board can ask the Town Administrator to draft a procedure on where the funds are coming from, defining what's considered time sensitive, etc.

OLD BUSINESS

Speed Study Results- Truck Route and Center Bay Road in September had studies done by NW Regional Planning (attached to these minutes). Cindy Sweeney of Center Bay Road noted the study was placed where most people would be slowing down to turn and didn't capture the speeders she believes reside along the road. The board is going to compile the last several studies done and, after discussion, to have it for the 12/11 meeting. This would be advertised in the Islander and the town's Facebook group to try and reach the public.

Road Commissioner Position- Josie Henry suggested Jim Hokenberg for the Road Commissioner role because Russell Duchaine currently oversees both highway department and transfer station and may be too busy. She also expressed concern for how he appeared at a past meeting to ask the highway department, at a public meeting, how he should vote during a highway department topic for consideration. He should be focused on the will of the people, not a few town employees. Donna Boumil agreed about acting in the interests of all townspeople. Russell Duchaine responded at the meeting in question he intended to ensure the highway department employees' voices were heard but phrased it poorly. Elliot Knight said [both positions] didn't seem to interfere with his duties. Jim Hokenberg said he himself is knowledgeable and has no problem taking on a Road Commissioner role but didn't want to step on toes. Josie Henry sought the members of the public who were at the meeting in question. Terry Tatro said generally, unless there's clear wrongdoing, that a board waits until March when the town roles reorganization meeting is. Matthew Lefluer suggested executive session for further discussion. Russell Duchaine remained Road Commissioner.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- **At 7:30 PM Elliot Knight motioned to enter executive session per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) for the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public employee... and to invite Paul Fortin and George Hakey to remain.**

Terry Tatro thought highway raises were already done? There was some confusion as to what the executive session was for, nothing could be found in the employee handbook. Since both men were there, **Josie Henry seconded Elliot's motion. All in favor.**

- **At 8:38 PM Jim Hokenberg motioned to leave executive session. Elliot Knight seconded, all in favor. So voted.**
- **Elliot Knight motioned to issue another written warning to Colby Hemond and to be reevaluated in six months. Jim Hokenberg seconded, all in favor. So voted.**

The current transfer station job opening will be advertised until filled.

WARRANTS

- **Donna Boumil motioned to have a budget meeting on 11/20 at 6 PM. Elliot Knight seconded, all in favor. So voted.**

The board needed clarity on a Peterbilt invoice and Irick Excavating bill they will ask the highway foreman about. Otherwise, invoices were observed and warrants signed.

ADJOURN

- **Elliot Knight motioned to adjourn at 9:10 PM. Jim Hokenberg seconded, all in favor. So adjourned.**

Respectfully Submitted,
Danielle James Choiniere

~*~ These are draft minutes not slated for approval until the next regular board meeting ~*~