

UNAPPROVED  
SELECTBOARD MINUTES  
APRIL 9, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Debbie Baker, Charlie Rockwell, Phil Mazzucco, Tom Wilson  
OTHERS PRESENT: Bill Meyer, Arlene Bentley, Don Lewis, Jim Henderson, Christina Cosgrove, Susan Nichols, Andrea Lenhardt

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

Minutes from the Selectboard meetings held March 12<sup>th</sup>., March 26<sup>th</sup>. and minutes from the Pre-Town Informational Meeting held on March 4<sup>th</sup>. were reviewed by the Board. Motion was made by Tom Wilson, seconded by Debbie Baker to approve minutes with minor corrections. Motion carried.

TOWN CLERK REPORT:

1. Animal Control Officer Kelli Raymond received a complaint of feral felines near the Cole residence on East Street. The Cole's found it necessary to euthanize their cat due to being exposed to feline leukemia. It is most likely the exposure came from the feral cats in the area. Since this could end up a problem for other cats in the neighborhood, Kelli and the Cole's feel it would be best to capture the feral cats and have them euthanized. It was the consensus of the Board to approve this action.
2. Clerk reported that the town office sign was blow down due to the recent windstorm. Highway crew will take care of repairs and reinstall the sign.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

1. General Financial statement was reviewed by the Board as follows:

CASH ON HAND March 1 <sup>st</sup> .	\$642,889.45
RECEIVABLES	\$133,417.58
DISBURSEMENTS	\$149,702.98
CASH ON HAND March 31 <sup>st</sup> .	\$626,604.05

Accounts Payable, Payroll, and Budget Status reports were also reviewed.

2. Discussion followed on the need to convert the APRA funds into Town Office Restoration.
3. Treasurer spoke to auditor John Mudgett. He would like confirmation on how many years the town wishes to have audited. A two-year audit would be more costly. He offered to do a one-year audit now and then maybe do another one year audit in the next fiscal year. It was the consensus of the Board to the one-year audit now and will decide next year on the possibility of another audit.

COMMUNICATIONS:

1. Jim Henderson of the Bennington County Regional Commission took the floor to update the Board on the D & H Rail Trail grant.
  - a. The newly formed Rail Trail Council is seeking representatives from each town. It was suggested that John Lavecchia might be willing to serve. Motion was made by Tom Wilson, seconded by Phil Mazzucco to appoint John Lavecchia to represent the Town of Rupert at the Rail Trail Council. Motions carried.
  - b. The Rail Trail Outdoor Recreation Grant specifies that it is to be used for parking, infrastructure, and signage to accommodate the towns of Rupert and Pawlet. Jim suggested areas where parking and no parking signs could be placed. He is looking into vendors to make the signs and may also contact the State for suggestions. VTRANS will take on the installation of the signs. Discussion followed on whether or not these signs will meet Rupert Zoning Bylaw regulation. This will need to be looked into.
  - c. Grant also included funding to convert a small building in West Pawlet into a visitors' center for the rail trail. After inspection, it was determined that the structure was not up to standard.

Now consideration needs to be made as to how to redirect those funds. Some ideas were – kiosk with a bench, information map, picnic tables, a bike repair station, or the possibility of another vacant building in that area. However, Henderson feels that signage should be a priority. Don Lewis commented that the D&H Railroad creation was around the 1850's. He went on to talk about the location of the major drainage break along the trail where water flows north to Lake Champlain and south to the Hudson River. Since this is an unusual watershed division, Don suggests having a sign placed on the trail to designate that spot. He believes that the town had already received permission from D&H to do so.

- d. The Selectboard asks that a written management plan, including maps, be drawn up for them to review.
2. Announcement received that there will be a webinar on April 17<sup>th</sup>. from 10:00 – 11:30 to address the changes to Vermont's Open Meeting Laws.
3. Charlie announced that the Rupert Library newsletter is available on their website and is very informative.
4. Debbie and Charlie informed the Board that they have modified the agenda format to accommodate issues needing to be addressed at the meetings.

#### HIGHWAY REPORT:

1. Recent storms have been keeping the highway crew busy.
2. Tom gave an update on the town truck fire damage. Insurance settlement from the incident came in at \$75,474 which includes the \$1,000 deductible. The damaged truck was totaled with no salvage value. The town will keep the dump body which is valued at \$16,000 and the snowplow will be modified. Contents inside the truck and vehicle loss of use is still being considered. After discussion on purchasing a new 2024 truck, a motion was made by Debbie Baker, seconded by Phil Mazzucco to buy the 2024 Dodge Cab and Chassis, from Stephens in Bennington, for a purchase price of no more than \$78,000. Motion carried.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

1. Bill Meyer presented the Board with the annual CUD Resolution that lists Bill Meyer, Arlene Bentley and Jed Rubin as town representatives. Bill further explained that the since the Town of Woodford has been unable to find a representative for their town, they have appointed Arlene Bentley to represent them. Rupert Selectboard agreed to the Rupert's appointees. Town Clerk signed the resolution and Bill Meyer will bring it to their next CUD meeting.
2. Tom announced that the two safes at the town office have been sold. One going for \$600 and the other for \$800.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

1. Charlie will go to Merck on Wednesday in hopes to meet with them on Merck / Town of Rupert matters.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

At 7:42 P.M. the Board moved into Executive Session to address personnel matters.

Board came out of Executive Session at 7:47 P.M.

Motion was made by Tom Wilson to adjourn this meeting, seconded by Phil Mazzucco. Motions carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:48 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Lenhardt, Rupert Town Clerk

