

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 14, 2020 meeting held at Millstream Community Center

Present: Chairman Steve Diorio, Selectman Bernie Rideout, Selectman Mike Carrier, Selectman Megan Kondrat, Selectman Richard Johnson; and Kim Worden. T.A. Collins was excused.

6:00 p.m. Chairman Diorio called the meeting to order at the Community Center.

Selectman Kondrat made a **motion to approve** the manifests of 9/7/20 and 9/14/20 and public and non-public minutes of 8/31/20, second by Rideout. Motion passes unanimously.

New Business:

First presented was agreements with Evergreen Communities LLC. Discussion followed that there were agreements and related abatements as follows:

1. Agreement with Evergreen Communities LLC for Relocation and Disposal of Abandoned Manufactured Home re: 43 Robbins Street
2. Agreement with Evergreen Communities LLC for Relocation and Disposal of Abandoned Manufactured Home re: 3 Springbrook Street
3. Abatement for 43 Robbins Street in the amount of \$123.53 (50% of abatement after demo and remaining 50% to be abated after new construction)
4. Abatement for 3 Springbrook Street in the amount of \$1744.94 (50% of abatement after demo and remaining 50% to be abated after new construction)

It was mentioned that this had been discussed previously and all were in agreement.

Selectman Rideout made a **motion to approve** all (two agreements and two abatements), second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

Next presented was a Grant Agreement with State of New Hampshire re: election costs in the amount of \$6731.47. Selectman Rideout made a **motion to accept** and approve the Grant Agreement, second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

Board Comments:

Comments from Board Members were as follows:

Selectman Carrier has a Library Trustees Meeting on Wednesday.

Selectman Kondrat indicated that she will have a non-public re: personnel.

Chair Diorio noted that a copy of T.A.'s review has not been provided yet. He expects the copy to be brought with her when she is at the next meeting and of his preference of the form with more comment. The Board will need to talk of merit raises soon as T.A. Collins will be in for discussion in two weeks with department heads re: employees. He noted that there was no COLA previously and now he understands there is a 1% COLA. They will need to come up with a number to figure merits and review recommendations. He suggested they also think about part-time merit consideration.

Chair Diorio will have a Fire Department Building Committee meeting this week.

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Chief Rataj introduced new Officer David Upton. Chair Diorio read the appointment and took the oath of Officer Upton. The Board congratulated him.

Citizen Comments:

Chair Diorio noted that he and Sean Leary had a quick discussion this week and decided to postpone the joint meeting between the Selectmen and School Board which was scheduled for the 21st. There is not enough information available for discussion. Sean added that they have been busy reopening schools, and busy with remote learning and combo classes. Selectman Johnson asked if it would make sense to pick a new date. Sean will check with the Board and Tom for a possible date.

Chair Diorio noted that last Tuesday voting went well, that Selectman Kondrat reminded him to mention that this building may be too small for the general election. He asked for thoughts on using the gymnasium. Issues and concerns were discussed for using the gym which included, school being in session, contractual PE days being moved already to the beginning of the year, parking, and contractual obligations brought to his attention by the Teacher's Union. Chair Diorio will discuss these concerns with the Moderator.

Kathryn Lynch, Community Development Coordinator, reminded everyone of Outdoor Hinsdale events this weekend. This year will be on a smaller scale and events are offered for hiking, kayaking, and bike riding. Sign-ups can be done online and she commended Sean Leary on the wonderful website.

Selectman Johnson asked if Falvey is still looking at the kiddy pool and on course with it. It was noted that he should ask Sarah Hudon, Program Director, the status.

Jon Muise introduced himself as Area Director for Rural Development with USDA covering VT and NH and that he was here as moral support for Michael Kowalczyk (conducting Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative presentation).

Mike Kowalczyk introduced himself as presenter of Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative. He noted that he lives in Swanzey and originally started working on the Swanzey trails. They now have an informal group with representatives of local municipalities and volunteers. Their mission is to restore rail trails throughout the Monadnock Region and expand to the Tri-State Region and make connections to towns. They would like to make the connection with 3 states, 13 municipalities that trails run through, and 7 trails. The presentation included The Big Picture Plan totaling 82 miles of trails plus connections, Points of Interest Along These Trails, Challenges, Rail Trail Benefits, Potential Funding Areas, and Maintenance: Preserving the Investment. He noted a group formed in this area include Kathryn from Hinsdale, Margaret Sharra from Winchester, Stephen Dotson from Brattleboro and Jon Muise and Christine Kimball with USDA.

Piecing together the Project include the big picture, funding sources, municipal commitment, resolving private rights of way and encroachment issues, commitment of federal and state agencies, maintenance plans, working teams and cost estimates with matching funds.

Chair Diorio thought it was a nice slideshow. Selectman Kondrat noted that continued maintenance was mentioned. Mike said that restored trail sections are maintained and mentioned the need to work with clubs. Chief Rataj asked what bridges are planned to cross over into Brattleboro. Jon noted the bridges crossing the island are to be decommissioned for traffic but perfect for this. Kathryn Lynch noted experiences sitting in on Existing Bridge Committee

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meetings and many meetings on this subject. She asked for permission to move forward, to continue to work with Monadnock Region Rail Trail Collaborative and look for grants and ways to come up with matching funds. She and Margaret Sharra have worked on a Letter of Intent that was sent to Northern Borders Grant and noted that there will be a match to any grant, usually 80/20. USDA can help to find the matching components. If the match is in a Warrant Article, townspeople give approval. Chief Rataj sees use of the trails as beneficial.

Selectman Carrier **made a motion** to allow Kathryn Lynch to move forward working on this, looking for grants and matches, second by Kondrat. Motion passes unanimously.

Citizens Comments (continued):

Chief Rataj noted that DTF approached with a \$60,000 grant to put someone on the task force (with the 28th being a deadline) We would pay \$30,000 and get \$60,000 back and pay no health, no benefits, no retirement. He would like to put a full-time officer on the task force and replace by filling/hiring two part time positions. He felt having an officer dedicated to the task force would be positive action in drug enforcement. It would be a revenue builder for us and could include seizure property. Discussion followed. It was noted that a decision didn't have to be made tonight. Chief Rataj indicated that he will be putting this in his budget.

Chief Rataj updated the spotlight on community-oriented business program with the radio ads. RoBust Valley was featured this week and Bacon Me Crazy last month.

Chief Rataj has had positive feedback on the parking lot near the trail. They are trying to have some success near Mt. Wantastiquet with no parking but have gotten some pushback re: conflicting signs. It was suggested to pull some of the signs and it was asked if there was anything in the Ordinance. He will call Frank and discuss this with him.

Chief Rataj noted that even with added staffing and cars crossing bridges and reporting, he is having a hard time cleaning up island issues. He is concerned once bridges are closed. He fully supports what the Rail Trail Collaborative is trying to do and acknowledged that bike riding through there is fantastic and cleaning up the parking area has helped. He expressed concern of foot traffic coming from Brattleboro.

Kathryn Lynch discussed the Existing Bridge Committee concerns and that there needs to be a plan in place. They are working with the Town of Brattleboro and know it is a huge problem. She noted reasons that the island cannot be clear cut and noted that UMass students are putting together a plan of thought. Sean Leary spoke of island erosion comparisons and erosion concern. It was pointed out that whether the state takes over the bridges or the town does, the town still maintains and there is concern over how we are going to light the bridges. Chief Rataj was invited to sit in on the meetings. A lack of bridge inspections was mentioned as one concern. Selectman Johnson and Chief Rataj agreed that island visibility would be helpful.

Chief Rataj stated that he will be sending two new officers to school in NJ for three days.

Public portion of the meeting ended.

7:10 p.m. Selectman Kondrat made a **motion** to enter into non-public under RSA 91-A:3, II (a) personnel, second by Carrier. The vote is as follows: Diorio-I; Rideout-I; Carrier-I; Kondrat-I; and Johnson-I; Motion passes unanimously.

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7:19 p.m. Regular meeting reconvened.

Selectman Carrier made a **motion** to seal the non-public minutes, second by Kondrat. The vote was as follows: Diorio-I; Rideout-I; Carrier-I; Kondrat-I and Johnson-I; Motion passes unanimously.

There was discussion on proceeding to adjourning, and non-meeting.

7:23 p.m. Selectman Kondrat made a **motion** to adjourn, second by Carrier. Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kim P. Worden
Secretary