

Town of Mendon

Selectboard

August 10, 2020

Members of Selectboard present: Richard Wilcox, Geoff Wells

Town Officers and employees present: Sara Tully, Town Administrator & Health Officer, Bill Ellis, Road Commissioner, Nancy Gondella, Town Clerk & Treasurer, Teri Corsones, Planning Commission, Justin Lindholm, Planning Commission

Visitors present: Harvey Zara, Helvi Hill Road, Dr. David St. Germain, Barstow Principal

The Selectboard Meeting was called to order at 5:04 PM with all present participating remotely.

In response to COVID-19, the Selectboard strongly encourages the public to participate in this meeting by video or teleconferencing. The public can follow the directions on the agenda and posted publicly on the Mendon website at www.mendonvt.org.

As Chair of the Town of Mendon Selectboard I find that, due to the State of Emergency declared by Governor Scott as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and pursuant to Addendum 6 to Executive Order 01-20 and Act 92, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

In accordance with Act 92, there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting. However, in accordance with the temporary amendments to the Open Meeting Law, I confirm that we are:

Providing public access to the meeting by video with additional access offered through telephone. We are using Gotomeeting.com for this remote meeting. All members of the Selectboard have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if desired, participate in this meeting by **joining the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**

Selectboard Meeting August 10, 2020
Mon, Aug 10, 2020 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM (EDT)

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/917987405>

You can also dial in using your phone.
United States: [+1 \(646\) 749-3122](tel:+16467493122)

Access Code: 917-987-405

- a) Providing public notice of instructions for accessing the meeting. We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing this meeting, including how to access

the meeting using telephone and video in our posted meeting agenda. Instructions have also been provided on the town website at: www.mendonvt.org.

- b) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access. If anybody has a problem, please *e-mail mendonclerk@comcast.net* and
- c) Continuing the meeting if necessary. In the event the public is unable to access this meeting, it will be continued to a time and place certain.

Please note that all votes taken during this meeting that are not unanimous will be done by roll call vote, in accordance with the law.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance of all members participating in the meeting.

Roll call: Richard Wilcox, Geoff Wells and Scott Bradley

Agenda: R. Wilcox moved to approve the agenda. Motion seconded by G. Wells. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Announcement

Primary Election August 11, 2020. Polls are open at the Town Office from 8 AM to 7 PM. Please wear a mask to the polls and observe social distancing and safety procedures put in place to limit the exposure to COVID-19.

The Town of Mendon is accepting applications for a Highway Maintenance/Equipment Operator and Building/Grounds Maintenance. This is a full-time position. Information can be found on the town website at www.mendonvt.org.

Administrative Matters

Selectmen's Orders were reviewed. Motion by R. Wilcox to approve pay orders for the period ending 8/10/2020 in the amounts of \$4,394.93 and \$5,853.75. Motion seconded by G. Wells. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion. Motion by R. Wilcox to approve payroll for the period 8/8/2020 in the amount of \$9,430.04. Motion seconded by G. Wells. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: R. Wilcox moved to approve the minutes of July 27, 2020. Motion seconded by G. Wells. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Business

Barstow Principal -Dr. St. Germain The Selectboard welcome Dr. St. Germain as the new Principal at Barstow. Dr. St. Germain it has been a pleasure to work with Jean Collins the Superintendent of Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union and the other schools that include Neshobe and Lothrop in order to open school this fall with safety precautions in place. Dr. St. Germaine provided an overview of the plan to reopen school this Fall with Pre-K to 2nd grade starting with an abbreviated schedule in the school and 3rd – 8th grade working remotely. The plan is fluid and subject to change. If the start of school goes well, additional grades 3rd -8th will be phased in after 4-5 weeks. G. Wells asked Dr. St. Germain if communication could go out about what a weekly structure will look like. He responded that communication is being finalized now. G. Wells also asked about the status of fall sports. Dr. St. Germain responded that the Governor Said we could go ahead with fall sports with restrictions however we have not received guidance to date regarding those restrictions. We believe we will be able to offer a soccer program through the Barstow Youth Club, but it is unclear whether we will be able to have games with other teams. G. Wells asked about the number of students that may be switching to a homeschooling program rather than working remotely with Barstow and whether that will have a significant impact on the budget or how we retain those students as members of the Barstow School. Dr. St. Germain has only heard of a few students pursuing homeschooling although he added that we really won't know until September when we see which students arrive. S. Tully discussed emergency management and the coordination of Mendon and Chittenden with the school to plan for an emergency shelter at Barstow. We look forward to continuing to plan for emergencies with the support of school. Dr. St. Germain agreed and mentioned he has a meeting set up regarding the shelter in the upcoming weeks.

Setting Tax Rate The final cash amount from year ending June 30, 2020 is \$155,109. The Selectboard discussed retaining \$100,000 and asking the voters at Town Meeting 2021 to deposit these funds in a reserve fund. S. Tully recommended the Bridge and Culvert Fund because state grants are currently on hold due to the uncertainty of the State's budget due to lack of revenue from COVID-19. The Town has received an average of \$100,000 for at least the past 5 years to perform infrastructure repairs meeting the State's mandated codes and standards. G. Wells recommended the Contingency Fund for the flexibility to use the funds where needed in the future. The Selectboard agreed to ask the voters to deposit the reserved surplus in the Contingency Fund. The remaining \$55,109 will reduce the amount to be collected in taxes for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Motion by R. Wilcox to set the 2020-2021 Tax Rates:

2020/2021 Tax Rate:

Homestead = \$2.0576
(\$.5466+\$1.5092+\$0.0018)

Non-Residential = \$2.2472
(\$.5466+\$1.6988+\$0.0018)

Municipal Tax Rate: \$.5466

2020-2021 Amount to be raised by taxes \$960,319 (rollover \$55,109)

2020-2021 Municipal Grand List \$1,756,838

Education Tax Rate:

Homestead = \$1.5092

Non-Residential = \$1.6988

2020-2021 Summary:

Municipal Tax Rate= \$.0308 decrease or 5.4% decrease

Education Tax Rate:

Homestead = \$1.5092 a \$.1427 increase or 10.4% increase

Non-Residential = \$1.6988 a \$.1441 increase or 9.3% increase

Total Homestead = \$. 1123 increase or 5.8% increase

Total Non-Residential = \$.1137 increase or 5.3% increase

Local Agreement Tax: \$.0018

Eligible properties (7)

Voter approved Property Assessment Exemption \$40,000 = 280,000/100

Total Exemption \$2,800

2020-2021 Municipal Grand List \$1,756,838

Motion seconded by G. Wells. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Helvi Hill Harvey Zara attended the meeting as a representative for Helvi Hill Road. S. Tully Provided a history of erosion Issues from water coming of Helvi Hill Rd, a private road, on to Sherwood Drive, a town highway. Over the years the town has tried to negotiate a solution for diverting water with two land property owners that border the intersection of Helvi Hill and Sherwood Drive. One property has new owners and are performing some improvements to their driveway. B. Ellis and S. Tully feel it's a good time to try and implement a solution and are requesting permission to entertain discussions with the landowners. The Selectboard agreed and authorized B. Ellis, S. Tully and S. Bradley to represent the Town to determine a solution.

Municipal Grants N. Gondella reported about two municipal grants available. A grant that will allow for digitalization of land records is available for up to \$20,000. N. Gondella has solicited quotes from three different companies. She will present this information to the Selectboard once it is received. The grant requirement is to digitize at least five years of land records. A typical title search is at least 40 years. It is Mendon's goal to digitize 40 years of records so a full title

search can be completed remotely. There will be a monthly cost to provide the service of approximately \$350.00 per month. Any additional funds required in excess of the grant funds received would come out of the Preservation Reserve Fund. The next grant available is for COVID related costs to municipalities. Currently the town of Mendon has expended approximately \$11,000 in labor, equipment and supplies to respond to the COVID pandemic. In order to qualify for the grant expenses must not be eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

COVID-19 Response & Town Government Operations S. Tully reported that VLCT provided guidance regarding eligibility for workman compensation in response to COVID. Employers could be responsible if COVID safety guidelines are not followed.

Equipment Grant S. Tully reported the Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program for equipment purchasing is available for the Otter Creek Watershed. This grant rotates around the state and allows funding for specific equipment purchases at 80% funding up to a capped amount.. This opportunity will not be available for another 5 years. B. Ellis recommends purchasing a roller for grader that will compact gravel after spreading to hold it in place. B. Ellis is currently seeking quotes on rollers and will provide this information to the Selectboard once received. The Selectboard approved submitting an application before August 28th.

Fitzsimmons Access Permit B. Ellis has met with the Fitzsimmons to discuss work they have done on Clark Mason Road and creating various access points from their property to Clark Mason. The Fitzsimmons decided not to continue the use of the access points. No Access Permit is required at this time, but the Fitzsimmons have been advised that any work on the road or in the right of way in the future requires an Access Permit. S. Tully will follow up in writing with this information.

Falls Road Right of Way B. Ellis reported that M. Larson is having an issue with people accessing McLaughlin Falls located on his private property. Mr. Larson has posted the property no trespassing, but has frequently experienced people removing the signs. In order to discourage parking, he placed large trees on the edge of the Falls Road, a town right of way. B. Ellis explained this creates a safety issue for cars that need to pull over to allow another car to pass safely. B. Ellis will contact Mr. Larson to move the logs back onto his property so cars can safely travel the road. He will also advise Mr. Larson to contact the Town Constable and Rutland County Sheriff to make them aware of the issue he has with trespassers. S. Tully will follow up with a letter to Mr. Larson.

Update 07-42 Culvert Replacement A preconstruction site visit occurred on 8/6/20. S. Tully provided an update on the culvert replacement on Wheelerville Road. Construction is scheduled to start the first week of September and is expected to take two weeks. The project is weather dependent and therefore the road is expected to be closed to through traffic for three weeks.

Journeys End B. Ellis discussed he must do some ditch work at the end section of Journeys End before winter. The water issue crossing Journeys end was discussed. The Selectboard authorized S. Bradley, B. Ellis and S. Tully to work on the solution and present to the property owners.

Helvi Hill H. Zara attended the Selectboard meeting to discuss the water issue on Helvi Hill road and to work with the town to help solve the problem along with Kevin Stevens. H. Zara handles the costs associated with the road maintenance and collection of fees from the property owners along the private road. K. Steven is in charge of determining the maintenance required for the road. The water that comes off Helvi Hill Road intersects with Sherwood Drive and washing gravel and sediment into the roadway and traveling down the side of Sherwood Drive. New property owners Kukulka have done a lot of ditch work on their driveway and along Helvi Hill. The town would like to help facilitate discussions to complete the necessary work to eliminate the issue on Sherwood Drive. The Selectboard authorized S. Bradley, B. Ellis and S. Tully to work on the solution and present to the property owners.

AT&T T. Corsones reported the town has received multiple documents filed with the Public Utility Commission as of 4:30 PM today. The Town is unable to facilitate a knowledgeable discussion on how to proceed without the opportunity to review the updated information. T. Corsones requested to table the discussion until the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment have an opportunity to review the updated proposal submitted by AT&T. The Selectboard agreed.

There being no further business, R. Wilcox moved to adjourn at 6:40 PM. Motion seconded by G. Wells. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Date Approved _____

Richard Wilcox

Sara Tully - Clerk of the Board

Geoff Wells