

# Town of Mendon

## Selectboard

January 11, 2021

Members of Selectboard present: Richard Wilcox, Geoff Wells, Larry Courcelle

Town Officers and employees present: Sara Tully, Town Administrator & Health Officer, Nancy Gondella, Town Clerk & Treasurer, Bill Ellis, Road Commissioner

Visitors present: Representative Jim Harrison, Val Taylor

The Selectboard Meeting was called to order at 5:30 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](http://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**.

- 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](http://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.

Selectboard Meeting 1/11/21

Mon, Jan 11, 2021 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM (EST)

**Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.**

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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, Larry Courcelle

Agenda: R. Wilcox moved to approve the agenda with the addition of Garage Roof Snow Load. Motion seconded by L. Courcelle. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

#### Announcement

There will be a Special Selectboard Meeting January 14, 2021 at 5:30 PM to discuss and finalize the proposed budget for 2021-2022 to be presented to the voters at Town Meeting 2021.

The Town of Mendon is accepting applications for an Assistant Road Commissioner- Highway Maintenance/Equipment Operator and Building/Grounds Maintenance. This one full-time position. Information can be found on the town website at [www.mendonvt.org](http://www.mendonvt.org).

#### Administrative Matters

*Selectmen's Orders* were reviewed. Motion by R. Wilcox to approve payroll in the amount of \$9,345.09 for the period ending December 26, 2020 and to approve pay orders for January 11, 2021 for \$34,627.54 and \$533.93. Motion seconded by G. Wells. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion. Motion by L. Courcelle to approve payroll in the amount of \$9,569.90 for the period ending January 9, 2021. Motion seconded by G. Wells. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

*2020-2021 Year to Date Financial Update* N. Gondella provided an overview of the current budget status. There are a few increases in revenue attributed to COVID-19 reimbursement from expenses that occurred in the 2019/2020 budget. Ordinance fine income is at \$5,250 to help offset the Rutland City Fire Department cost currently at \$22,000. Recording fees are at \$10,000 and it is anticipated this to double by year end. The town received \$5,000 in grant funds for election expenses. There are \$1,800 remaining to help pay for election expenses for Town Meeting 2021. Appraisal expenses are overbudget as anticipated due to a contract increase with Vermont Municipal Assessor. Various line items of the budget were discussed.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: R. Wilcox moved to approve the minutes of 12/14/20. Motion seconded by G. Wells. The motion passed.

#### Business

*Representative Jim Harrison* Rep. Harrison welcomed Larry Courcelle back to the Selectboard. Rep. Harrison has been appointed to the House Appropriations Committee. Act 162 allowed municipalities to vote the budget by Australian ballot this year in order to observe COVID-19

safety protocols. There is no petition requirement for candidates running for local office. House Bill 48 allows municipalities and school districts to conduct all mail balloting as an option. This would allow governing bodies to send a ballot to the entire voter checklist. This bill also allows towns to change the date of Town Meeting and elections to further into the spring. It also grants the authority to the Secretary of State to make available options for towns in the future. The State has allocated \$2,000,000 in Cares Act funding to help offset expenses for those that choose all mail balloting. Act 164 is an act that will tax and regulate the sale of marijuana. It is prohibited to open a retail establishment selling marijuana unless the town votes in favor of it at a Town Meeting. Licensing fees have not been determined or what portion of those fees will go to the municipality. Rep. Harrison recommended working with VLCT to determine wording of an article if the Selectboard wanted to include a question on the ballot this year regarding the allowance of retail sales of marijuana in Mendon. N. Gondella asked if the \$2,000,000 in cares Act funding would be available for programming tabulators or paying for postage of post cards to request a ballot to be sent by mail. Rep. Harrison was not sure and to wait for guidance from the Secretary of State's Office. L. Courcelle advocated for funding of the State College Systems specifically Castleton State College. It was discussed that VT spends over the national average educating students through high school, but are far below the national average funding higher education. L. Courcelle also advocated for Castleton State College to keep their name as it is one of the oldest colleges in the country.

*Budget 21-22 & Reserve Funds* The Selectboard reviewed the budget in detail. G. Wells recommended looking at the Goals and Objectives to determine how to streamline projects.

*Town Report 2020* G. Wells also recommended we highlight in bold print the open positions and request volunteers. L. Courcelle stated the Town Plan will be in effect for 8 years or until 2028. N. Gondella discussed that the audit period for Tropical Storm Irene projects is until May 2022. S. Tully will incorporate this information in the Highlights and Objectives Report. The Town Report dedication or recognition was discussed but not determined. L. Courcelle recommended additional information be provided to the voters about each appropriation request because the voters will be voting by Australian ballot rather than from the floor at Town Meeting. Traditionally, representatives from the organization or voters in support of the organization would speak on their behalf and answer questions from the floor at Town Meeting. The Selectboard recommended J. Bridge assist with gathering this information.

*Town Meeting 2021* The Selectboard previously decided the budget will be voted by Australian ballot in order to limit the exposure to COVID-19. The Town will conduct an Informational Meeting on Monday March 1<sup>st</sup> utilizing an online forum. Currently the town uses Gotomeeting.com. N. Gondella is evaluating if the town should remain using this format or switching to a different website.

*COVID-19 Response & Town Government Operations-* COVID-19 continues to sharply rise in VT with daily totals ranging from 140 to 200 cases per day. All departments continue to develop the Continuity of Operations Plan. S. Tully provided an update for the Highway Department. The federal requirements regarding hiring CDL Drivers was discussed. The Town is working with VLCT to follow the required process. All departments will fold their information into the Continuity of Operations Plan. Currently, the Town Clerk, Town Treasurer and Bookkeeper

plan has been updated in the plan. The Selectboard continue to place the plan at a high priority for all departments to complete.

*Salt Shed Maintenance* B. Ellis has received a second estimate for maintenance of the Salt Shed. In accordance with the Purchasing Policy, a minimum of three quotes will be presented to the Selectboard.

*Woodward Road Lot* R. Wilcox provided an overview of a complaint that an adjacent property owner to the lot owned by the Town of Mendon has bulldozed a path to access the pond. It is unclear without conducting a site visit and researching any surveys recorded where the property lines actually exist. The Town had previously referred the property owner to a Wetland Specialist with the State of Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. Following the guidance of ANR and applying for a wetlands permit, the property owner intends to mitigate the width of the path in the spring. If in fact the Town of Mendon owns the property a new work plan would need to be discussed with the Town of Mendon applying for the Wetlands Permit. The Selectboard requested N. Gondella conduct some vault research to gather any recorded information regarding the Town owned lot on Woodward Road and access to the pond.

*Town Garage Roof Snow Load* VLCT PACIF reached out to municipalities warning about the snow load upon municipal buildings due to the large snowstorm that occurred on December 17, 2020 and the rain event to occurred shortly after. Many buildings were threatened to collapse and VLCT recommended removing the snow load. In December, L. Courcelle evaluated the snow load that was on the garage and provided an overview to the Selectboard. Town staff is not trained to work at safely at the height of the garage roof. The Town would need to hire a contractor to clear a large snow load. To date, it is no longer an issue based on the weather pattern and melting of the snow.

There being no further business, R. Wilcox moved to adjourn at 7:35 PM. Motion seconded by G. Wells. The Selectboard approved the motion.

Date Approved \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Wilcox

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Sara Tully - Clerk of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Geoff Wells

\_\_\_\_\_  
Larry Courcelle