

SELECTBOARD MEETING
December 3, 2009

Present:	John Quinn David Tilton Bob Bancroft	Nanette Rogers Charlotte Vincent Gary Estus
Guests:	Maurice Rathbun Abbey Willard Seth Jensen	Robert Pittala Martha Heath

The meeting was called to order by John Quinn at 6:40 p.m.

ZONING VIOLATIONS

Maurice Rathbun, Zoning Administrator, advised the Board that there may be another violation on the Mathieu property. A building permit was issued for a barn to store hay and equipment. He believes the barn is complete. If a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is requested, Maurice will have to deny it because the road is not put in right. If the barn is being used without a CO, a violation notice will need to be issued.

Maurice will send a letter advising that the CO can't be issued until the road is resolved and that usage of the barn is prohibited until the CO is issued.

Ted Pelkey has not responded to the violation notice. The appeal period has expired. He came in to pick up a building permit application but it has not been submitted. Bob Bancroft made a motion to authorize this violation be turned over to the Town's attorney, seconded by Dave Tilton. Motion passed: 3-0.

Tom Murray has not responded to a violation notice and the appeal period has also expired. Dave Tilton made a motion to authorize this violation be turned over to the Town's attorney, seconded by Bob Bancroft. Motion passed: 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Pittala asked for an update on mailing Lister cards to all property owners. The Board advised that the Listers have requested funds in the FY'11 budget to mail cards with the tax bills.

Mr. Pittala would like to determine if the Current Use program is equitable or if other tax payers are subsidizing those in the program. The Board advised that this is a State program and the values are available on the State's website, which he could then compare to the Town's value per acre.

Seth Jensen met with the Board to discuss publishing warnings in the Burlington Free Press rather than Seven Days. He respects the Board's decision however he wanted to make them aware of the fact that proposed additional meetings, such as site visits, were not held due to the cost of the ads. He would like there to be a clear policy that the cost not be a factor when considering an additional meeting which would benefit a Town board or commission or the public. The Selectboard would like to ask the Planning Commission and Development Review Board to provide a figure for warnings in the Burlington Free Press and Seven Days so the Board can decide which paper to choose.

OSGOOD HILL ROAD/MACHIA HILL ROAD CULVERT

Abbey Willard from Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District met with the Board to discuss the culvert at the intersection of Osgood Hill Road and Machia Hill Road. Based on watershed data collected, the WNRCD and U.S. Fish & Wildlife would like to further assess the stream, which travels parallel to Machia Hill and is a tributary to Morgan Brook, to determine if enough habitat will be opened up to justify the project. If implemented, the project would consist of installing weirs to raise the water level and create step pools to enable fish to swim upstream. The dry hydrant will be taken into consideration and maintain its functionality. The Board supported moving forward with the project.

MARTHA HEATH – UPCOMING LEGISLATURE SESSION

Martha met with the Board to find out if there are any issues the Board has in mind regarding the Legislature. Dave inquired if VLCT's lobbying is useful. Martha feels the lobbyists are very knowledgeable and look out for items of interest for towns and cities. Occasionally, she thinks the opinion may not represent the larger Board when if an emergency meeting is held to decide on an issue; it is dependent on who is present. She advised the Board to be cognizant of the make up of VLCT's Board of Directors, paying attention to what community a member represents, meaning that larger communities and cities have different needs than smaller communities.

Bob Pittala spoke with Martha regarding the Current Use program. Martha provided a brief history and explanation of the program. The municipal side is paid by the taxpayer and state. The Town is not hurt if property is assessed at fair market value. The education side is funded by the Education Fund. The statewide rate is determined on how much money is there. She advised that there is program information on the State's website.

John inquired about road construction. It is costly for towns to do projects the right way environmentally and would like to know what resources towns have to assist with the funding. Martha encouraged the Town to apply for State grants for projects. She recognized that environmental requirements for projects are more prominent than they used to be in past years. Regarding healthcare, he would like to know how the State can encourage more health insurance companies to offer plans to Vermonters to be more competitive. Martha explained that Vermont doesn't allow health insurance companies to "cherry pick" their subscribers to prevent discrimination. Unfortunately, many insurance companies won't operate in Vermont given the State's rules.

Seth Jensen asked the status on prohibition of the State Police contracting with towns. Martha advised that there is a recommendation, as in past years, for the consolidation of law enforcement officers (State Police, Sheriff, DMV, Fish & Game, etc.). She stated that State Police departments are stretched due to the town contracts. Even though the officers fulfill the contract in overtime hours it takes away hours from the department.

Seth inquired about Act250 reform regarding growth centers. Martha stated that the State is trying to find a way to lessen the burden of developing growth centers; they are looking at ways to make the application/decision process more predictable.

ROAD SCHEDULE

Bob Bancroft made a motion to approve the December 4, 2009 through December 24, 2009 road schedule, seconded by Dave Tilton. Motion passed: 3-0.

Gary advised there are signs on Seymour Road that give motorists the wrong impression the road is private. The Board will send a letter to the property owners involved.

BILLS/CORRESPONDENCE

Bills were approved and correspondence was read.

Dave Tilton made a motion to pay a financial request of \$75.00 from the Northern Vermont Resource Conservation & Development Council, seconded by Bob Bancroft. Motion passed: 3-0.

STATE POLICE CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

Dave Tilton made a motion to appoint David Dewey to the State Police Citizen Advisory Board, seconded by Bob Bancroft. Motion passed: 3-0.

MUNICIPAL COMCAST SERVICE

Comcast provides free Internet and cable services to one municipal building and schools and libraries. The town office was chosen for the municipal building.

LIBRARY ENERGY GRANT APPLICATION

The Chair signed an application for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant for the Westford Library.

ON-CALL ROAD CREW APPLICATIONS

The Town has received two applications for the on-call road crew employee. The Board may choose to have a primary and a secondary on-call person. Bob Bancroft made a motion for the Road Foreman to conduct the interviews and make a recommendation to the Selectboard, seconded by Dave Tilton. Motion passed: 3-0.

NIMS RESOLUTION

Bob Bancroft made a motion to adopt the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Resolution, seconded by Dave Tilton. Motion passed: 3-0.

ACCESS PERMIT

The Board approved an access permit for Shan Garcia for property located on Allen Irish Road (Betty Allen property).

FEE SCHEDULE

Melissa provided the Board with fees from surrounding towns, which are significantly more than Westford's fees. John will make a spreadsheet with the information for a subsequent meeting.

ADJOURN

Dave Tilton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Bob Bancroft. Motion passed: 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Quinn, Chair
Westford Selectboard

Nanette Rogers
Town Clerk