

**MINUTES OF FRANKLIN SELECTBOARD
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2009 AT 7:00 P. M.
FRANKLIN CENTRAL SCHOOL**

PRESENT: Peter Kittell, Scott Choiniere, Jamie Boudreau, Lynn Paradis, Harvey Bushey and Lisa Larivee, Franklin Town Clerk/Treasurer

GUESTS: Susan Clark, Franklin Historical Society
Bryant J. Reynolds, Franklin Historical Society
Heidi B. Valenta, Franklin Watershed
David Breed, Franklin Watershed
Chief Gary L. Taylor, St. Albans City Police Department
Lt. Judy Dunn, St. Albans City
Michael Lawyer, Franklin Fire Department
Justin Rainville, Franklin Fire Department
Jean Richards, Franklin Lister
Gilbert Dewing, Franklin Lister

Peter called the meeting to order at 6:58 p.m.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

Susan Clark and Bryant Reynolds appeared before the Board. Mrs. Clark informed the Board that the Historical Society is trying to slowly become more visible in the community and do more things with the society which has been dormant. They have talked about several things - doing a membership drive, having the cabin open more in the summer time, doing a historical tour and trying to become more active. She stated that part of their discussion has been operation needs. A lot of things have been stored at Brian Rainville's house. She emphasized that they are not asking for money, but thinking about options. They have been thinking about the Town Hall where there are two bathrooms and area that could be used for storage. She stated they are not asking the Town to turn it over to them, but they are looking at the situation. The Historical Society is looking at grant monies and they would try to clean it up, get a dehumidifier in there and get the moisture problem taken care of. Mr. Reynolds noted they will continue to hold the variety show there and he made a suggestion of removing some boards to make it possible to exit the stage from both the right and left, making the stage much more useable. Again, they are not asking for money, but the Historical Society would work with the Library to do that work. Sue stated there are grants they want to write and they are asking for support from the Selectboard. They are also requesting use of the Town Hall, which they will clean up and make changes, so they can use it for storage of some historical articles. Sue stated they have a lot of stuff that the residents should be able to see.

Scott noted that he would be happy to see more use of the Town Hall.

Mr. Reynolds stated they would like to put a sign in front of the log cabin which will serve to give the Historical Society more recognition.

Selectboard members agreed to the Historical Society's use of the Town Hall. They thanked Mrs. Clark and Mr. Reynolds and they exited the meeting.

FRANKLIN WATERSHED:

Heidi Britch-Valenta and David Breed from Franklin Watershed appeared before the Board. She provided Board members with an agenda for their Thursday night meeting. Mrs. Britch-Valenta informed the Board they had an agriculture meeting on Saturday with a good turn out. One of the other things they have touched on is the septic issue; trying to identify them and starting conversations. She advised they have a gentleman coming in on February 12th to talk about other projects he has done in some small rural communities. She stated anybody who wants to come would be welcome.

She stated there had been discussion in the past with David Breed regarding a mulcher for the Highway Department to use in conjunction with the Watershed. She stated there are different ways we can go about it. Highgate has a mulcher they received through the Agency of Transportation. She stated it cost about \$7,000 and goes on a trailer. They have offered to share it with Franklin if that is something with which Franklin feels comfortable. She also stated David did some research and a group of about eleven towns got together and worked out a plan to share a hydro seeder. She stated we may want to make contact with some of the surrounding towns such as Enosburg, Swanton, etc., to see if it is something we want to do. She noted this particular cooperative effort was apparently well thought out and detailed so there has never been a sharing problem, but these shared projects do not always work out as sharing sometimes becomes an issue. She wondered if that is something that the town would want to try though a Better Back Roads Grant. Peter noted that we would have to apply for that type of grant in the fall (October) with grants being awarded in the spring. She pointed out that this is something they would also like for the Watershed group when they do riverbank projects that require seed restoration. David stated he spoke with Boy who thought it would be useful.

David Breed outlined for the Selectboard a cooperative agreement between towns in Addison County that resulted in the purchase of a piece of equipment that cost about \$18,000, but because of the cooperative effort and number of participants the cost to each individual town was only \$200. Problems with share agreements were discussed.

The Board thanked Heidi and David and they exited the meeting.

DISPATCH FEES:

St. Albans Police Chief Gary Taylor and Lt. Judy Dunn appeared to address questions the Selectboard had regarding the increase in dispatch fees. Peter welcomed them to the meeting and

explained that when Franklin joined we were told to expect an increase of about three percent a year, and the Board is concerned about the increases in the three years we have belonged. Our yearly rate was \$4,600 when we joined, the second year it went to \$6,500 and this year we are looking at \$7,900.

Chief Taylor provided members with printouts regarding Central Dispatch and their budget. He stated they did not expect health care costs to go up twenty-four percent nor did they anticipate the extent of raises that would be necessary so they would stop losing trained people. Chief Taylor described the situation he came into in 2005 when he took over as St. Albans Police Chief. He stated that they took a look at usage and determined that St. Albans should be liable for 60 percent of the calls with the remaining 40 percent divided between the remaining users. He stated he felt the only fair way to do it was by a per capita rate. He pointed out the fees paid by some other towns in the State. He noted that St. Albans is the largest of the four dispatch centers with ten full-time and five part-time dispatchers.

He pointed out that if you look at their budget, \$700,000 of it is fixed over which he has no control. He further noted that he only has control over \$10,000 of the remaining \$97,000 of the budget.

He stated there are no plans for any dramatic increase in their budget, but at the same time he cannot promise there will be no increases in the future since he has no control over health insurance increases, negotiated contracts, etc. He stated they are “on the hook” for the twenty-four percent increase in health insurance and they have to recover a portion of it or cut personnel. He stated they expect to dispatch between 30,000 and 35,000 calls this year. He stated they re-negotiated the employee contract with a fifteen percent across the board raise which they will recoup along with the twenty-four percent increase in insurance rates.

Chief Taylor pointed out that everyone is paying a per capital rate of \$6.25. He also noted they have approximately \$1.8 million of equipment, not counting real estate.

Chief Taylor pointed out that Central Dispatch is a subsidiary of the St. Albans Police Department and the Lieutenant is responsible for it. He noted that things such as heat, lights, office space and the like are pro-rated based upon usage. He also discussed with the Board fees charged by other dispatch centers and the fact that the State Police are wanting to “get out” of the dispatch business because of budget and staffing cuts. He explained that we all benefit from having a minimum of two and a maximum of four dispatchers on duty. He also acknowledged that Central Dispatch receives 911 money from the State and that Grand Isle pays completely for two dispatchers, and those funds are deducted from the budget before the 60-40 split is made. There is no profit for Central Dispatch. Chief Taylor noted that St. Albans’ share of the 60-40 split amounts to about \$345,585.25 and that if they could find a dispatch center that would provide them this service cheaper than they can do it themselves, they would go with the cheaper service.

Chief Taylor invited Board members to visit Central Dispatch. He also outlined the fact that they have improved on the antenna and repeaters so that we have better radio coverage.

Peter asked members if they had any further questions for Chief Taylor and they did not. He thanked the Chief and Lt. Dunn for coming to answer the Board's questions and they exited the meeting.

RE-APPRAISAL:

Jean Richard addressed the Board on behalf of the Listers (Gilbert Dewing joined her after she had started her presentation). Jean advised that we need to have our re-appraisal plan back to the State. She stated the Listers would like to do the re-appraisal themselves. It would be completed for the 2012 Grand List which would mean that after the 2009 Grand List they would start getting ready. They have estimated it can be done by them at a cost of about \$68,000. Hopefully, they will get "the stamp of approval" from the State. She stated she spoke with Roger Kilburn, who is their contact, about the proposal and he feels it would be an acceptable proposal. She outlined some of the costs they came up with - purchase of a new computer and possibly a new camera. She stated the current ones were purchased in 2002 for use in the 2004 re-appraisal. She also stated they would like to use NEMRC rather than ProVal their current provider. She feels that the maintenance contract through ProVal is more expensive and she is not always able to access information quickly on ProVal. Going with NEMRC will allow them to network with Lisa's computer and is less expensive for the maintenance contract. Jean and Lisa explained the need for this software which provides us with backup files should there be a fire or other disaster. They have a backup of all files and should there be a need, they bring up a new computer with all your files on it and you are up and running again quickly. She outlined for the Board the various expenses associated with the re-assessment including computer, camera, NEMRC, software, and consulting. She stated most of 2009 would be spent getting ready for the transfer and taking classes so funds have been allocated for education and training. Salaries will be paid on a per parcel basis, \$60 per parcel. They estimate there will be between 930 and 950 parcels and the Listers prefer to be paid by the hour at \$15 per hour for a projected cost of \$68,000. Jean advised that we ended up spending \$55,000 over a two year period for the last re-appraisal. Peter questioned how much money is in the re-appraisal account and was told \$46,711.98. There is also education money in the amount of \$1,177. It was noted we receive about \$8,000 a year from the State which will give us an additional \$24,000 by the time the re-appraisal is complete. It was noted that the way things go, property values may be up again by the time it is completed and we may have to do it again in four years.

Discussion was held on how the re-appraisal would be done. Jean stated they will most likely do a site visit to every parcel, but probably wouldn't measure again unless what they see does not coincide with their records. There may also be structures out there that have been built without a permit.

It was pointed out that if we do not do the re-appraisal, then we would lose all State Aid

including highway funds and school funding. It was further noted that as long as we have an approved re-appraisal plan in place and follow the plan, we will continue to receive State Aid.

Discussion was held on the CLA and COD. Jean and Gilbert explained that when the sale price of property exceeds the assessed value of the property, then it changes the CLA and COD. In Franklin, vacation homes and vacant land have been the problem as they have been selling above the appraised value. They also noted that Franklin is unique because of the number of camps on leased lands. Scott asked Jean to look at the proposed school budget and she and Gilbert answered his questions about the tax rate. Since the re-appraisal will take a couple of years, Scott asked how the Listers ensure that the first properties done are still assessed correctly by the end of the two years. Jean and Gilbert explained that the information is entered into the computer at the time properties are seen, but the final figures are not plugged in until the final phase of the re-assessment thereby insuring all valuations are current at the completion of the re-assessment.

Peter asked about signing of the proposal and a motion was made by Lynn/Scott authorizing Peter to sign on behalf of the Selectboard. All members voted in favor/Peter signed the proposal.

Jean noted that if the State does not approve the plan we are submitting, then we would have to put a contract out to bid and it could cost more money.

Peter asked if anyone had further questions for the Listers and there were none. The Board thanked Jean and Gilbert and they exited the meeting.

LIQUOR CONTROL MEETING:

Motion by Scott/Lynn to enter Liquor Control Meeting. All members in favor/Liquor Control Meeting opened at 7:58 p.m. Lisa informed the Board that we have applications from Byam's and Franklin General Store to be considered. She noted the applications have been reviewed and all fees received. After discussion, members decided to adjourn the Liquor Control Meeting until next month. Motion by Scott/Jamie to return to the regular Selectboard Meeting. All members in favor/regular Selectboard meeting resumed at 8:05 p.m.

TOWN CLERK'S CONCERNS:

Grand List: Lisa advised that after the first Tuesday in February, the Board needs to sign the Grand List certifying that as far as we know there are no pending lawsuits or appeals. Lisa said to the best of her knowledge there are none. Board members signed the Grand List.

House Bill H103: Lisa informed the Board that this bill has been introduced to get rid of the eight percent delinquency penalty on unpaid taxes. If it passes, then the town would have the responsibility of paying the delinquent tax collector. Concern was expressed over the incentive for people to pay their taxes, other than interest, if the penalty is removed.

Certificate of Highway Mileage: Lisa advised that we have a change this year with the opening of the Scott Road. The deed was signed on August 11th and it adds .06 miles. Discussion was held on the date the road was opened to the public and it was decided that it would be listed as the date the deed was signed. Selectboard members signed the certificate.

Outside Light Town Offices: Scott informed Lisa that it appears the light above the entrance door to the town offices needs to be adjusted as it is staying on. Lisa will check into it and get Gerard to adjust it if needed.

Town Hall Light Bill: Lynn and Scott pointed out that the light bill for the Town Hall remains high. Lynn suggested that we try flipping the breakers to see if the meter still runs.

Stop Sign Ordinance: Lisa provided the Board with the stop sign ordinance. She advised that Boy went out and checked all signs and verified the list. Lisa obtained a draft of a stop sign ordinance from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and “tweaked” it to meet our needs. Lisa stated that if the Board approves and signs the ordinance, it will have to be posted for 14 days and then there is a 60 day period for appeals or petitions. Lisa advised that there does not need to be a special meeting to adopt the ordinance as long as these minutes reflect that the Board accepted and adopted the ordinance. Motion by Jamie/Scott that minutes reflect that members reviewed and adopted the ordinance. Ordinance signed.

Scott once again brought to the Board’s attention what he feels is a dangerous situation at the four corners where the Barnum/Durkee/Brown’s Corners (TH#3) roads meet. He shared with the Board his personal experiences at this intersection and stated he feels we need to take a look at it and possibly make it a four-way stop. Lynn pointed out that the hill side coming from Highgate is sometimes icy and concern was expressed that if a stop sign is put there, cars would have trouble restarting.

Truck Mileage: Lisa provided the Board with the requested truck mileage information. She noted that Boy provided the requested information, but Ron’s information is incomplete as it was lost. Harvey shared with the Board computer print-out information on the trucks and noted that one-third of the hours are used during idling status.

Microfilming of Town Books: Scott and Lisa informed the Board that Scott took the town books down to have them microfilmed. Lisa advised that we are current now. She further advised that the State Microfilming Division is being closed as part of the budget cuts. Microfilm information is being moved to the archives at the Secretary of State’s Office. They will come up with a vendor with whom they will contract to do microfilming and then turn it over to the archives. Lisa noted that the State was charging \$65 per book. They are encouraging Town Clerks to do the whole scan on their own and put it on a disc. Lynn questioned if the copier has the scan option and Lisa stated it does, but requires a chip in the copier. Franklin County Clerks are looking at options hoping to get a better price.

Town Meeting: Scott questioned if Lisa arranges for the set up for Town Meeting - chairs, microphone, etc. Lisa advised that she coordinates with Joyce at the school who arranges for things to be set up and Lisa then goes down to inspect it.

Peter asked members if they had anything further to discuss with Lisa and they did not. Board thanked her and she exited the meeting.

BILLS AND ORDERS:

Reviewed and signed.

MEETING MINUTES:

Peter pointed out that we have two sets of minutes to approve. Motion by Scott/Harvey to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2009 and January 22, 2009 minutes. Peter asked for any discussion and there was none. All members voted in favor/minutes approved as presented.

RECYCLING/GARBAGE:

Scott asked if members are aware of the fact that the Highgate Sub-station will no longer be open on Saturdays. Scott stated he understands their need to cut costs, but feels they should shut down on a weekday and remain open on Saturdays so that working people can bring in their trash/recycling.

OLD BUSINESS:

Tractor: Scott, Harvey and Peter all visited dealerships and obtained quotes on tractors. It was noted that we need the tractor for mowing and to run the weed harvester. Lynn stated we may be able to include part of the cost under the weed harvester grant. The following were quoted: New Holland, 4 W/D, 314 Hour Lease Return, with Loader - \$29,500.

Kubota (new), 4 W/D, with Loader - \$28,750

Massey Ferguson, 4 W/D with Loader - \$30,500 - Without Loader - \$23,500

2 W/D with Loader - \$28,000 - Without Loader - \$21,000

4 W/D with Cab \$31,000

Zetor, 4 W/D with Loader - \$39,500

4 W/D without Loader - \$32,500

2 W/D with Loader - \$36,500

2 W/D without Loader - \$29,500

John Deere, 4 W/D, 75 hp, no cab, older model, but new - \$30,000

4 W/D, with Cab, power shuttle, newer model - \$33,859

4 W/D, 65 hp, same model, new \$28,000

CAT Challenger, 455 Model, 80 hp, 07 or 08 model, but new, 4 W/D - \$31,250

CAT Challenger, 325 Model, 4 W/D, shuttle transmission, with canopy - \$25,650

The Board discussed their needs and the specs of the tractors. After discussion, they decided they would not purchase a bucket at this time. If it is found one is needed, it can always be purchased separately. Harvey pointed out that the CAT and the Massey Ferguson are essentially the same tractor and the Massey Ferguson is priced lower. It was noted that the prices quoted do not include any trade in for the old tractor. Scott expressed his concern over the fact that the school purchased a tractor that they apparently only use to clean snow from a couple of building doors/exits. They do not even use it for mowing or plowing sidewalks and he questioned why taxpayers should pay for two tractors. It was noted that the school tractor is too small for town needs. Scott and Peter will get quotes on the Kubota and Massey Ferguson without the loader and with trade in of our old tractor and the matter will be discussed again at the next meeting.

Trucks: The Board again discussed the condition of our trucks. It was noted that the older of the two trucks is ten years old now and it has been through the fire. Peter had Lisa track spending on the trucks this year and \$21,330 was spent on the International and \$9,500 was spent on the MAC. He noted that both of those figures include tires which would be a routine maintenance cost. Scott noted, however, that he feels we have had to put a lot of money into the MAC when it is a new truck. Discussion was held on trade-in values for the old truck and Scott suggested that we put it on e-bay to see if we get any bites. Harvey reminded that it would only be for the truck, not for the plows, etc.

Quotes obtained to date are: MAC \$106,839

International with Cummins Engine - \$103,452.21

Without Cummins - \$103,021.80

International (different dealer) - \$107,000

It was noted that the above prices do not include the box which will run about \$60,000. Discussion was held on dump boxes, plows, etc.

After discussion, it was decided that Peter and Harvey will get final figures on the trucks including final cost with and without the trade-in. The Board decided it will meet again next Monday to discuss this matter further.

Weed Harvester Grant: Upon inquiry from Peter, Lynn advised she has not yet completed the grant. It is due March 4th and Lynn will complete it this weekend.

SELECTBOARD FOLDER:

Correspondence: Regarding a pending lawsuit regarding fire that occurred in another town. Regarding highway grants which needs to be submitted by March 13th. Scott will address and will contact vendors for quotes on paving.

From Kyle Lothian expressing his interest in operating weed harvester again this summer.

From Vermont Land Trust regarding development rights they have purchased in Franklin.

Regarding comparison of insurance rates.

Employee Overtime: Scott, Lynn and Harvey all spoke with Lisa regarding payment. Harvey doesn't feel that our personnel policy is clear, but Scott disagreed. The policy is very clear.

Street Lights: Scott spoke with Burt regarding request for a street light in the vicinity of the proposed Park and Ride. Scott stated he spoke with Burt who felt it might be better to mount it on the garage. Harvey feels that the light would shine into the Carriage House windows. It was suggested that a street light be mounted on a telephone pole near Apple Tree Lane. Scott will discuss it again with Burt and get back to the Board at the next meeting.

Unlicensed Dogs: Still trying to get the Sheriff to serve warrants. Jamie will call again.

Motion from Scott/Jamie to adjourn. All members in favor/meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

February 11, 2009

Barbara M. Varin

NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the membership at their next regular meeting. These minutes were approved by the Selectboard on March 10, 2009.