

**MINUTES OF FRANKLIN SELECTBOARD
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2009, AT 7:00 P. M.
FRANKLIN CENTRAL SCHOOL**

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

GUESTS: Heidi Britch-Valenta - Franklin Watershed
Frances Tompkins, Franklin resident

Peter called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

SOLID WASTE PLAN:

Peter advised that tonight is the final public hearing on the Solid Waste Plan and the Board must vote on adoption of it. He asked for any comments on the plan.

Ms. Frances Hopkins addressed the Board. She questioned if there is anything actually in the plan regarding the town contracting with one vendor to haul garbage for the town. She asked if anyone has expressed such an interest to the town. Has anyone considered doing so on a contract basis? She feels the cost of garbage removal in this town is unbelievable. She stated that Fairfax has a contractor who picks up all garbage for \$150 per year per citizen and Franklin residents pay three times as much. She stated that Casella (now All Cycle) sent her a letter informing her that they would no longer pick up garbage in Franklin and she shared with the Board the problems and costs associated with finding a new vendor. She also stated that she cares for her mother who is not able to take garbage to the curb and she, herself, is unable to take it to the curb during the winter months. It is very difficult to find a vendor who will back in to pick up garbage. The Board noted that All Cycle still does provide service to some parts of this community. Ms. Hopkins stated she has a friend who lives in a condo in an area of St. Albans where the city does not pick up garbage. Approximately 15 families in the complex got together and put out a bid for garbage services and they were able to find a vendor for \$150 a month. She stated that Fairfax picks up everything that's put out and she does not understand why Franklin doesn't put in any effort to do this. She stated she would be willing to volunteer some time to look into such a plan. She stated the condo complex sought bids and received five bids the lowest bid being Meyers. Peter advised that he is aware of the Fairfax situation and that at one time they had to send all their garbage out of state as they were not in compliance with State regulations. He stated that Franklin may have, at some point, to adopt a plan similar to them or join a solid waste district, but we will administer our own plan as long as we can. He stated that one of the problems is that someone must administer the plan and keep a record of the tonnage, etc. It was noted that the goal is to recycle and that presently Franklin is below the State goal of garbage per person. Peter stated we do not know what the cost of a single vendor would be to the town of Franklin as we are a small community. He pointed out that we have been working on the

plan being considered tonight for several years to get through the process. Right now, Lisa is doing the educational aspect for the town. Ms. Hopkins stated she feels the rates for garbage pickup are out of control and wondered if other residents have the same hassles.

Scott suggested it might be beneficial for her to contact other residents of her neighborhood to see if they want to go in together to put out bids for a neighborhood dumpster. The need to recycle was discussed. Ms. Hopkins stated she would be more than happy to help out as a volunteer and feels a one vendor garbage plan might be cheaper for the whole town. Peter acknowledged that it might be something that the town will have to consider at some point in the future.

Motion by Jamie/Scott to adopt the Solid Waste Plan. Peter asked if there was any further discussion on the garbage plan and there was none. All members voted in favor/motion passed.

The Board thanked Ms. Hopkins and she exited the meeting.

FRANKLIN WATERSHED:

Heidi Britch-Valenta addressed the Board. She advised that she wants to update the Board on a few things that Watershed is doing. She asked if it would be possible for Watershed to have a file cabinet or drawer in the Town Clerk's Office which would be used to hold original grants and certificates. Lisa agreed to provide them with space, indicating that the town should probably have the originals of these documents.

Ms. Britch-Valenta advised that on February 7th there will be a planning session on agriculture issues. Someone will be coming in to talk about incentive programs to reduce phosphorus. She stated they had planned on having the meeting at the Homestead, but another event is being held there and will probably hold it at the school as Peter has agreed to be there to open the building for them.

Last Saturday, they held a planning session on lakeshores. There were a couple of presenters. One of the presentations was on small communities going to municipal septic systems. The very first step is the discussion. They talked about a lot of different things. She noted that Cabot was about ten years in the planning for a municipal system. She stated it was a good day. They went through a list of things and got some volunteers. They are looking at it for the town or the campers, trying to excite lakeshore property owners with a little grant money, co-oping for septic systems which will make the cost lower. Two or three homes on a septic system brings the cost down to about \$6,000 per home rather than \$16,000 per home.

Ms. Britch-Valenta requested that the Selectboard increase the funds given to Franklin Watershed in the 2009 budget to \$1,000, up \$400 from last year's \$600 allocation. She advised that Sue Clark is working on the Treasurer's report and David Breed is working on the written report.

Ms. Britch-Valenta spoke about the Vermont Youth Conservation Corp grant. She asked if Peter has anything he wants done at his place - rake and seed or anything. Peter responded that he has work that needs to be done, but he plans to do it himself.

Peter asked if members had any questions for Ms. Britch-Valenta. Scott asked how they get the word out on their meetings and she responded that notices are put out by the Town Clerk with other meeting warnings. She also provided a copy of a posting that is placed in the post office and general store. She stated she has done some knocking on doors and has talked to as many people as she can. She advised there is a meeting on January 16th regarding cover cropping. It has been successful in the Missisquoi Basin.. She stated they have a grant to fund some farmers to do cover cropping. It is a presentation with lunch at the Swanton House of Pizza. She stated if the Board has any other ideas she would be happy to pursue them. She was asked about contact with the Camper's Association and responded that a couple of the board members are also on the Camper's Association. She noted that many of them are gone this time of the year. The Board thanked Ms. Britch-Valenta and she exited the meeting.

FRANKLIN FIRE AND RESCUE:

Fire Chief Justin Rainville and Rescue Administrative Director Jennifer Wright entered the meeting. Justin provided the Board with a copy of correspondence regarding the increase in the Central Dispatch rates. He advised that the increase was much more than they were told and others have apparently also questioned the increase. The correspondence he provided is the response from Chief Taylor. Justin stated when the decision was made to join the central dispatch, they were told it would cost about 3 percent a year. They were given no hint that it was going up. It has gone up almost 20 percent. It was noted that they sent a proposed bill which was included in the 2009 budget. The charge is \$7,900 for this year. It was also noted that their fiscal year runs from June to July. Justin advised that the Fire Department has a Central Dispatch meeting on Tuesday and they hope to discuss the increase. It was noted that the question is whether these increases are going to continue and when it is going to stop. Justin noted that in our town we don't have a lot of calls to absorb the fees. When asked about the number of calls in 2008, Justin stated the Fire Department had about 60 calls in the past two years, between 25 to 50 calls a year usually. Jennifer stated that Rescue had 154 calls in 2007 and 142 calls in 2008. Justin noted there is really nothing else out there that we can fall back on. The only thing that we can look into is the Sheriff's Department. Justin stated that after the meeting on Tuesday, they will know more.

Discussion was held on the possibility of reverting to the old "red phone" system. Justin pointed out that there was a piece of equipment at the Fire/Rescue Station that was damaged by lightning during a storm a couple of years ago. He thought it might cost about \$3,000 to replace it.

Scott advised that he was able to meet with the Governor and talked about paying our fair share if we could work together, but it didn't sound too reassuring. He stated he also put in a

plug for Rescue for help with the training.

Justin feels it would be good to see the budget for Central Dispatch to see exactly what the justification would be for the large increase. It was noted that Central Dispatch also receives some State funding for the 911 calls that go through them.

It was noted it is a 24/7, 365 days a year operation and that obviously they need more than one person on duty each shift. Peter stated we may have no other option. If we go back to the old system, we would be asking volunteers to put in the red phones and they may not be able to do it. Discussion was held on the equipment needed by Central Dispatch. Harvey stated once the equipment is installed, the cost should be considerably less. Justin stated that there is more than one set up as there are multiple back-ups in case of failures. It is not just one set of equipment in one spot. Justin stated they will come back next month after meeting with Central Dispatch.

The Board thanked Justin and Jennifer and they exited the meeting.

RADIATION MONITORS:

Alan Kirby from the Office of General Services Administration appeared before the Selectboard. He explained they are the landlord for the federal government. He stated they primarily provide office space for the federal government and operate most of the ports of entry. He stated that although CVP owns the Morses Line port of entry, they will be installing the radiation portal monitors at all of our ports of entry including the one at Morses Line. He provided the Board with 90% drawing of the portals. He advised that a company, Pacific Northwest Laboratory, out of Washington, has been hired to make the equipment. The equipment is designed to detect radiation going across the border. Discussion was held on the amount of property owned up there, the installation and the town's ability to keep the road open during winter months. Mr. Kirby stated that portals will be used to monitor incoming traffic, both commercial and non-commercial. He noted that Highgate and Derby Line already have this equipment and at Morses Line they are trying to do it with one set of portals. Concern was expressed over our ability to plow, the expense to replace a portal (about \$35,000 per panel) should it be damaged and a turn around point for our trucks. Mr. Kirby stated they will be situated so that the town can plow through and the actual plowing of the portals will be done by OGS as they now maintain their own buildings. Concern was expressed over the road width and Harvey pointed out they would have to widen the road at their expense should it be necessary to do so. Mr. Kirby responded they are willing to work with the town in whatever way is necessary. Peter pointed out that the last time equipment was installed up there, part of it was installed on private property and, hopefully, it will not be repeated. It was also noted that the potential always exists for someone to bring stuff across at any number of places along the border.

Mr. Kirby stated that the Congress wants these monitors installed at 160 crossings by September of this year. He stated that if we have issues or concerns, they are willing to work

with us. Peter responded that our biggest concern is that there is room for us to plow through on both sides. Mr. Kirby pointed out that a license plate reader will also be installed, but on their property, not ours. It will only read plates on cars.

Mr. Kirby stated he will be the contact person for the town and he left his card with Lisa should we need to contact him. He asked if zoning permits would be required and was told that contact would have to be made with our Zoning Administrator. Mr. Kirby stated that most jurisdictions do not require them to obtain permits. He was questioned as to whether local people would be used on this project and he responded there are two companies, one out of Connecticut and one out of Arizona, who do this work, but he would assume that they would use local contractors when they can. Mr. Kirby left the 90 % drawings with the town, asking that they be destroyed when they have served their purpose.

The Board thanked Mr. Kirby. Motion by Harvey/Jamie to approve the construction of radiation portals at Morses Line. Peter asked if there was further discussion and there was none. All members voted in favor/motion passed.

BILLS AND ORDERS:

Reviewed and signed. Lisa provided members with updated budget information. Scott noted that the light bill for the town hall still remains high. Peter has turned off the hot water heater and the only thing drawing electricity would be the blower on the furnace. Scott asked that Howard be provided with purchase orders. He will be reminded of the need to obtain approval for orders over \$500. It was also suggested that when making purchases, they could ask that quotes be faxed to the Town Clerk's Office.

Board discussed and reviewed specs for bids on a new truck.

FRANKLIN TELEPHONE:

Kim Gates-Maynard entered the meeting. She stated she was asked about Franklin Telephone having the Fire/Rescue dispatch system again. She stated she has a couple of projects that she is working on that need to be completed first. She stated there is also new equipment that would need to be purchased before the system could be switched and discussion needs to happen with Fire/Rescue and the whole town. She feels it will take at least six months before it can happen. She stated that Franklin was also considered to be a PSAP (Public Service Answering Point). She stated she does not know if they gave up that classification when they went with Central Dispatch. She indicated you do not take 911 out of the plan because some of the 911 calls are for police and they hand them off. She stated the first thing we have to do is check with the 911 Board to see if we still have our classification. The box at the Station that was damaged by lightening has to be replaced at a cost she estimates to be between \$1,000 and \$1,500. She discussed the basics of how the "red phone" system worked. Without the PSAP classification, we cannot proceed. If we have lost that, then we have no choice but Central Dispatch. Kim

stated she has no preference either way, but doesn't want to spend money on equipment if the town wants to continue with Central Dispatch. It was noted that the price has gone up from \$4,600 to \$7,900 this year. It is felt we are being held hostage by Central Dispatch. The Board advised Kim that Central Dispatch is scheduled to be here next meeting. Kim stated something has to be put in the warning, but if the voters wanted to go back to the old system and we still have the PSAP classification, they probably could take over by summer. The Board asked that Kim continue to see if the "red phone" system is still a possibility. Our liability with the red phone system was questioned and Kim replied that we would still have the 911 system as a back up. Kim will continue to work on it, but stated she has no idea what Fire/Rescue thinks of it. The Board thanked her for looking into the "red phone" possibility and for coming to the meeting and she exited the meeting.

TOWN CLERK'S CONCERNS:

Lisa advised that many of the things she wanted to discuss have already been discussed.

Budget: Lisa pointed out that we already have budgeted \$600 for the watershed, the same as their last year's allocation so that the additional \$400 isn't going to make a big difference in the budget.

Peter stated we want to hold it close to last year's numbers, hopefully a little below. Lisa stated we need to keep in mind that the CLA is 78 percent which will be a big chunk out of education. She advised that the Governor has sent out a three or four page letter indicating that he wants to do away with Acts 60 and 68. He is proposing a budget freeze for 2010 school year. Special education costs have gone up so much. He wants to drop two cents off the equalized school tax rate and she does not know if the tax prebate will go away or not.

The Board discussed various budget issues, expenditures and projected costs for the coming year. Discussion was held on the equipment fund and the specs to be used for bids on a new truck. Members reviewed the specs and Harvey stated he knows someone who will review them for him to be sure it has what we need and not costly extras. Discussion was held on lowering the horsepower on the trucks to lower fuel consumption. This can be done with a computer.

Scott advised that he obtained a quote for the tractor discussed at a prior meeting. The quote is from Champlain Valley Equipment. Members will stop by and look at it.

It was noted that because of the increase in insurance costs, no raises will be given this year.

Scott stated the only other request from the crew is for a scanner. Scott noted there was an emergency call when the roads were icy and they could not reach the crew. With a scanner, they would be able to reach them.

Discussion was also held on the purchase of a curtain for the front of the salt shed.

The newer of the trucks will need tires at a cost of \$1,350. Discussion was held on mounting of the tires and it was noted that we do not have a cage in the garage for our crew to mount their own tires. It was felt they should take the vehicles to have the tires mounted and balanced to avoid accidents. Harvey suggested also that we contact other vendors to see if we can find tires for a better price.

The Board set January 22, 2009, for the public hearing on the budget.

Lisa stated that in the Selectboard folder there is a letter from November asking the town to consider raising the veteran's exemption from \$10,000 to \$40,000. Lisa checked and she found that both Berkshire and Richford have exemptions higher than ours, however, it would be necessary for the Board to be petitioned to raise the exemption. No change will be made at this time.

The Board thanked Lisa and she exited the meeting.

MEETING MINUTES:

Motion by Scott/Jamie to approve the following minutes - December 8, 2008; December 29, 2008; and, January 6, 2009. Peter asked if there was any discussion/changes and there was none. All members voted in favor/minutes approved as presented.

SELECTBOARD FOLDER:

Town Land: Request received from Steve and Judy Danyow to cut hay on the town property by the Town Garage. They cut it last year and did a good job. Motion by Scott/Jamie to allow them to cut it again this year. Peter asked for discussion and Harvey mentioned that someone he knew had expressed an interest. All members voted to approve/motion passed.

Correspondence: From State regarding posting for overweight on roads.

Regarding Weed Harvester Report.

Regarding sidewalk grant. Shortfall of \$56,000 which will need to be resolved by cutting somewhere. One suggestion was instead of moving utility poles, the road can be moved over. The Board feels that it must be done with the money on hand. Peter suggested members check with Lisa to see what she has found out.

Regarding Weed Harvester Grant which is due on March 4th. Lynn did it last year and it will be referred to her again this year.

Regarding Messier Road complaint. Correspondence had been received in September regarding dirt bikes. The town can't do anything about the riding of dirt bikes. They have now written saying they want that section of the road made private. They claim that people were tearing up their lawn, but the only way anything can be done is if they know the people and are willing to sign a complaint naming who is doing it.

From Vermont emergency management grant due by March 21st for

mitigation of problem spots. Discussion was held on the corner of the Webster Road where water spills over into the road a freezes.

From Division of Property Evaluation and Review regarding reappraisal.

From St. Albans Central Dispatch regarding rate increase which was discussed previously in the meeting.

From Patsy Condor at the Homestead/Carriage House requesting the installation of a street light at the end of their road where it meets the main road. Problem may be resolved when the park and ride in completed. Peter will respond.

Vacation request from Howard.

From Homestead/Carriage House Board supporting Park and Ride proposal.

From Franklin County Court regarding budget allocation to them.

From Vermont League of Cities and Towns. Individual Board members receive personal copies.

From Agriculture and Animal Health Office. Correspondence given to Jamie.

MEMBER CONCERNS:

Unlicensed Dogs: Jamie advised there are still two dogs which remain unlicensed. He is waiting contact from the Sheriff's Office so they can be picked up.

Personnel Matters: Overtime was discussed. Harvey feels that one plow should be set for dirt roads and the other plow for paved roads and that is how the plowing should be divided. He feels that plows need to be set differently for each surface so you should not use the same plow on both paved and unpaved roads.

Motion by Jamie/Harvey to adjourn. All members voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

January 19, 2009

Barbara M. Varin

NOTE: These minutes are not official until approved by the Selectboard at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Note: These minutes were approved by the Selectboard at their February 9, 2009 meeting.