

**TOWN OF RUTLAND SELECT BOARD OPEN MEETING
HELD VIA PUBLICALLY ACCESSABLE CONFERENCE CALL LINE
DECEMBER 8th, 2020**

Out of an abundance of caution around the covid-19 virus, this meeting was held via a conference call line which was made publicly available for anyone to call into.

- Board members present Mary Ashcroft, Sharon Russell, Joe Denardo, and John Paul Faignant

Approval of Orders

The Board will approve the orders as they come into the office.

Approval of Select Board Minutes for November 16th:

- Ms. Russell moved to approve the minutes; Mr. Denardo seconded the motion. The approval of these minutes was delayed so budget calculations included in them could be looked into. The calculations were found to be accurate based on existing practices. The motion passed 4-0.

Approval of Select Board Minutes for November 24th:

- Mr. Faignant moved to approve the minutes; Ms. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

Questions from the Floor; Public Comment:

- Ed Skwira was present and asked for time.
 - Mr. Skwira thanked the Rutland Town Police Department for their efforts in patrols along Post Road.
 - Mr. Skwira read a statement to the board regarding the intersection of Post Road and Post Road Extension. It detailed issues he has had with vehicles leaving the roadway and causing damage to the fence on his property. After multiple accidents over the years which have damaged his fencing, he is asking the board to authorize guard rails being installed at the intersection.
 - Mr. Reed, who also lives near the intersection, commented on the issues he has experienced on his property as well.
 - Mr. Faignant commented he felt the board should have addressed this earlier and would like to see quick action.
 - Byron Hathaway reviewed some of the history of signage and efforts at that intersection to notify drivers. Mr. Hathaway said based on angles and slopes there, it does not warrant a guard rail. He recommended installing a large double arrow sign be placed across the road from the end of the intersection.

- Mr. Faignant commented on doing both. Mr. Denardo commented it should just be the sign and that excessive speed and distracted driving is the issue. Mr. Faignant commented that from a safety and prevention standpoint the guard rails should be installed.
- Mr. Skwira said it costs him \$10 per foot to replace the fence and making repeated claims to his insurance company, is not a good solution. In most cases the responsible parties have left the scene without contacting him to give him their insurance information. Mr. Skwira stated he has asked for stop lines to be painted on the road. It has not been done yet. Mr. Skwira said the signs leading to the intersection are old and faded and he feels are not effective.
- Ms. Russell moved to replace the stop signs, install guard rails and the double arrow sign. Mr. Faignant seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

Bill Sweet Administrative Assistant to the Select Board:

1. Provided an updated meeting schedule and committee agenda list.
2. The contract for generator maintenance is up for renewal with Brookfield Service. This would include 2 maintenance trips for the generator at the school and once per year for the other 4 we have. Mr. Denardo moved to approve the contract including maintenance on all the generators and authorize the Board Chair to sign on behalf of the Board. The total if paid by December 29th is \$3164. Mr. Faignant seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0. The funds will come from the Emergency Management line.
3. Provided information on state grant opportunities.
4. The revised budget sheets, with the new calculations, have been sent out to all Select Board members and all department heads for review.
5. Updated the board on the next steps for the Route 7 North sidewalk. Mr. Hathaway and Mr. Sweet were approved as co-municipal project managers. The next step is to select a consultant. The grant outlines 2 processes. There is a pre-authorized list or we could source our own. This topic has been added to the Highway Committee agenda list.
6. Mr. Denardo asked about the remaining information we had paid for in regard to the connector road project near Aldi's. Mr. Sweet will look at the communication received and see what is available.

Kari Clark Rutland Town Clerk/Treasurer:

1. Asked everyone who comes in to process their bills for her office to pay to double check their invoices and billing codes. Some checks have been returned for double payments and some for payments that were not for purchases made by the town.
2. The audit is nearly complete. It should be wrapped up by the end of December.

3. The latest installment of the 1% local option tax was received a short while ago. It came in ahead of estimates at approximately \$330,000.
4. Reviewed a recent webinar she attended with state legislators and how to handle Town Meeting Day. There is a bill being proposed to give the towns flexibility in how ballots are handled for voting. The final decision will need to be made by the Select Board. The options have not been finalized yet but once they are it will be communicated to the towns. They asked for feedback from Town Clerks on what went well and what were the challenges faced during the recent election.
 - a. Ms. Ashcroft asked if there was a date when they expected the bill to become a law. Ms. Clark said they did not know yet.
 - b. Ms. Ashcroft said the date for pre-town meeting will need to be determined soon as well. A discussion will need to be had with the School Board to see what plans they are making for this meeting.
 - c. Mr. Faignant discussed the petition process for office. Alternative options in lieu of getting signatures were discussed. Ms. Ashcroft will reach out to the town attorney and discuss it with him. Mr. Denardo asked if it could come from the Secretary of States office. Ms. Clark brought up their discussion of the possibility of digital signatures. Ms. Ashcroft said she will talk to the town attorney about alternatives and Ms. Clark will get more information on the digital signatures.

Barbara Noyes-Pulling Rutland Town Planning Commission Chair:

1. Followed up on the request for the map of the archeological sensitive areas on the Thomas Family land. The contact at the state who has this information has not sent it in to us as of yet. Ms. Pulling offered to set up a meeting between him and the board if they would like.

Mike Rowe Rutland Town Recreation Director:

1. Ms. Ashcroft complemented Mr. Rowe and Jim Hall on their efforts made today to assemble and distribute meals to Rutland Town seniors in lieu of having a holiday meal in person.
2. Mr. Rowe said winter sports have not been approved yet to happen, but a decision is expected soon. He will follow up with the board when he knows.

Byron Hathaway Rutland Town Road Commissioner:

1. The dual arrow sign will be ordered in the morning. Measurements will be taken for the guard rail and if a manufacturer is still open that can produce them, he will order it. Painting will be done as soon as weather permits.

2. Presented a draft letter to be sent to the winter plowing contractors reminding them of their obligation to ensure their routes are maintained in the event they are not able to do it themselves.
 - a. Mr. Faignant moved to approve the letter to the contractors. Ms. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.
3. Provided the quotes received for the engineering work for the Northwood Park shared use path. Two quotes were received. The specifications called for a not to exceed bid price to include all costs and fees.
 - a. Otter Creek Engineering bid \$18,000
 - b. Dubois and King bid \$15,150
 - c. Mr. Hathaway said after review he recommends accepting the Otter Creek Engineering bid due to some items excluded from the Dubois and King bid which will be required and would need to be paid for on top of the bid cost.
 - d. Mr. Denardo moved to accept the bid from Otter Creek Engineering for \$18,000 based on the incomplete numbers from Dubois and King. Mr. Faignant seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.
 - e. Mr. Hathaway will bring the originals to be signed to the office in the morning.
4. There are some grant applications nearing completion and will need signatures for approval. One is for the replacement of a culvert and the other is for the road erosion inventory. Mr. Faignant moved to authorize the board chair to sign both grant documents. Ms. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.
5. Mr. Denardo thanked Mr. Hathaway for overseeing the Randbury Road water line. Mr. Denardo expressed his disappointment in the people driving in and out of the area driving over the newly seeded areas and have caused many ruts in the new areas.
 - a. Mr. Hathaway commented on some issues with the paving and new puddles forming. He met with Robert Clark from Otter Creek Engineering. More data is being gathered and a plan will be developed for the spring.

Chris Clark Rutland Town Fire Chief:

1. No non-emergency events or meetings are taking place.
2. Mr. Denardo asked if there is a plan for January, when officers are normally elected, if meetings are not able to be held in person. Chief Clark said he and Chief Carlson have discussed it and they were going to bring it to the Fire Committee. Mr. Faignant said an exception for an in-person meeting cannot be made. The possibility of having the meeting virtually was discussed. The challenge would be voting. Mr. Denardo suggested the possibility of having the current officers serve one more year. Chief Clark said he will discuss it with the membership.

Ed Dumas Rutland Town Police Chief:

1. The Police were not available for the meeting but provided a letter on a recent grant award. Ms. Ashcroft read the letter. It stated we were awarded a \$5000 cash grant with no match and no timeline for use and is for the purpose of crating the K9 program. The Police Department thanked the United States Deputy Sheriff Association for the award.
 - a. Mr. Denardo commented on some of the opposition feedback received for the creation of this program, he compared it to the purchase of specialized equipment by the Fire Department. These items are purchased hoping they are not needing to be used but in the event they are they can prove invaluable and a police dog has the same kind of benefit.

John Paul Faignant Town Health Officer:

1. Reported on the current rate of COVID-19 infections and mitigation steps being taken.
 - a. Space sharing at the town offices is an issue. New rules put in place require that any time there are more than 2 people sharing a space masks must be worn. This has been communicated to all staff members.
 - b. Mr. Denardo asked if a supply of masks is available. Mr. Faignant said Ms. Russell has some masks available if needed. Mr. Sweet said emergency management secured a large supply of masks and they are available at the office for anyone who needs them.

Committee meeting updates:

1. There was a brief meeting of the personnel committee this afternoon with the entire 4-person board meeting. This was done in executive session to discuss a personnel matter. There was no action taken at the end of the meeting.

The 2020 project list was reviewed. Several projects including the Randbury Road water line, Town Hall crosswalk and Northwood Park trail expansion were completed.

Mr. Denardo commented that the Harbor Freight site is under construction with excavating proceeding.

Ms. Ashcroft commented that a new Board Clerk will need to be selected. This person typically serves as Chair if the Chair is not available. Mr. Faignant moved to nominate Mr. Denardo. Ms. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Russell recognized Ms. Ashcroft as the first female Chair for the Rutland Town Select Board.

New Business Board to discuss filling the vacant Select Board seat:

1. Letters of interest were solicited from town residents. Letters were received from Paul Racine, Chris Howland, Aaron Jones and Barbara Noyes-Pulling. A special Select Board meeting was held in executive session earlier this evening to interview the interested parties. Mr. Fagnant moved to appoint Aaron Jones. Ms. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.

New Business Board to discuss creating a depreciation account for the Transfer Station:

1. Transfer Station Manager Larry Dellveneri discussed the need to establish a depreciation fund to help fund the replacement of large items like the compactor and trash containers. The committee discussed what would be appropriate and decided the best option would be to fund it at one-eighth of one cent, with a cap of \$50,000. Mr. Dellveneri commented that if the compactor needed to be replaced today it would cost approximately \$40,000.
 - a. Mr. Dellveneri asked what would happen if the fund balance is at \$50,000 and money is spent, how do the funds begin again going into the fund. There would be language that would be included in the ballot item to address this.
 - b. It is not known currently how much would be raised annually by this. Mr. Hathaway said his depreciation account is funded by a one-half cent contribution and this gives him approximately \$40,000 per year.
 - c. It is estimated the one-eighth cent contribution would gain approximately \$5000 annually.
2. Mr. Denardo moved to include on the March ballot a request of a maximum \$7500 annual depreciation fund contribution to reach and then maintain a maximum fund balance of \$50,000 for the purpose of maintenance and operation of the transfer station equipment. Mr. Fagnant seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.
3. Mr. Dellveneri said the new trash container should be delivered soon.

Old Business Board to vote on approving the 2021 – 2022 municipal budget:

1. Mr. Sweet sent around updated budget sheets with new sections and calculations including expected income being a part of the budget change.
2. Mr. Fagnant commented he felt this was more transparent and would support this new format. Mr. Denardo and Ms. Russell also support the new format.
3. Mr. Fagnant moved to approve the budget as presented. Ms. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0.
4. This budget will be presented at pre-town meeting. The board discussed various options for having a remote meeting and being able to present the budget to people who attend

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remotely. The draft sheets can be published online and made available to view during the virtual meeting.

Mr. Faignant moved to adjourn. Mr. Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Mr. Bill Sweet

12/8/2020

Mary Ashcroft, Clerk

John Paul Fignant

Joseph Denardo

Sharon Russell

Center Rutland, VT.