



Select Board

Town of Hinesburg
10632 Route 116 Hinesburg VT 05461
802.482.2281 | hinesburg.org

Meeting Minutes – January 20, 2021

- Draft -

Attending the Meeting: Phil Pouech, Merrily Lovell, Jeff French (joined at 8:00), Mike Loner, Maggie Gordon, Joy Dubin Grossman, Dawn Francis, Megan Schramm, Eric Spivak, Missy Ross, Al Barber, Chief Anthony Cambridge, Caleb Casco, Kate Kelly, Andrew Driver, Bret Golann, John Lyman, Scott L., Carl Bohlen, Barb Forauer, Kendall Blanck, Daniel Sharpe, Meg Handler, Nisha Hickok, Andrea Morgante, Alexander Goss, Chris Conant, Alyssa Lasher, Miles Hickok, Sau, Harrison Mead, Frank Twarog

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Phil noted that Megan Schramm will be helping as an assistant moderator for the meeting and will be monitoring the comments in chat room.

Additions / Deletions / Public Comment

There were no changes to the agenda or public comment.

Town Administrator Report

- Continuing work on exploring options for on line platforms on which to hold the Town Meeting.
- Joy expressed her appreciation for the many volunteers working to keep the skating rink open.
- The Town received their Local Government Expense Reimbursement Grant and was reimbursed for just about all COVID related expenses.
- Joy met with the Police Department and Health Officer regarding enforcement of mask wearing. It was agreed the PD should handle these cases for now.

Barb Forauer asked in the chat room about an accounting for the funds from VT Gas. Phil said they went to the Bissonette Field (spent), environmental stewardship education at Geprags (not spent), warbler habitat at Geprag.(spent). Andrea said Barb asked for a detailed budget and feels it would be good to see what the \$190,000 was spent on at the Bissonette Field.

Joy said she will get all the information.

Select Board Forum / Correspondence Received

Maggie brought up an email from Kim Coates regarding problems with the road in front of her house. Maggie suggested to have an engineer look at the situation and come up with some options to solve it. Phil suggested the Board invite Mike Anthony and Kim to a Board meeting to discuss this.

Phil announced he will be running for the one year Select Board term.

Discussion of FY 22 General Fund Budget

Phil said the Select Board has been working on the budget since November and has come up with a proposed budget. Due to the way Town Meeting will be held this year, the Board wanted to present the budget to the Town and allow input from residents as it would be from the floor at Town Meeting. The budget will be reviewed as it will be listed on the Town Meeting Warning.

➤ General Government.

Phil noted in the Town Administrator budget more money has been included for the salary line. Joy noted there has been more money put in the capital transfer line to cover stormwater items. Phil addressed the salary and noted it has been adjusted to be able to be competitive with other Towns our size in attracting applicants. It also includes some funds to study how the position would manage the Town, such as project management and human resources.

Meg Handler addressed the Conservation Commission budget and the request from LIA. She said there is no budget or accounting for the \$15,000 request on how it would be spent. She strongly recommends the Board reconsider the request. Phil said this has been discussed at previous meetings and the Board agreed they do not want the funds spent on the herbicide project. Maggie noted Chris Conant sent information that Joy put in spreadsheet form indicating the funds will be used for non-chemical mitigation efforts, specifically for the Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting.

Mike asked where the permit stands at this time. No one had a definite answer but It is believed it is still in the review process.

Daniel Sharp, one of the founding members of the committee that created LIA in 2007 said in 2008 he worked with DEC on the lake monitoring program. In 2010 monitoring of the tributaries going into the Lake began under the LaRosa grant program. In 2014 the book State of the Lake was put together with information on the history of the lake.

Merrily asked Daniel about the effectiveness of the DASH program and also noted that the weather seems to drive the amount of milfoil in the lake. Daniel said he is compiling a report on the level of milfoil and weather but they do not understand it at this point. He said buffers are effective and to pull milfoil in spots, such as landowners have done, is effective. He does not think suction harvesting in the middle of the lake is productive.

Phil asked Board members if they are looking to change this proposed request. Merrily said she would be in favor of reducing. Maggie asked Chris Conant about funding from other towns. Chris said for FY 22 Hinesburg was asked for \$15,000 / Richmond asked for \$1,000 / and Williston asked for \$15,000. Last year Hinesburg awarded \$7,500 / Williston awarded \$15,000 / and Richmond awarded \$1,000 and an additional \$3,400 for the plant survey. Merrily stated she is not in favor of using the funds for the DASH program and would be in favor of reducing by \$1,000. The Board agreed not to reduce the LIA request and to keep it \$7,500.

Andrea asked on behalf of the Hinesburg Land Trust / Land Preservation Fund, to raise the amount back up to \$5,000 which was the level of funding several years ago. She is not sure of the amount in the reserve fund but suggests it be kept up to at least \$20,000. The Land Trust is currently working with some landowners interested in conservation. Typically, it is between \$10,000 and \$15,000 locally that goes toward these projects. Missy said the current reserve fund has \$14,931. Kate Kelly said the Conservation Commission did not officially vote but discussed it favorably and she supports the increase. Meg Handler said she also supports the increase.

Merrily said she is not comfortable increasing unless we decrease in another budget, this is not the year to spend more.

Phil moved to increase the amount from \$1,500 to \$2,500. Second by Jeff and approved with 5 yes votes.

Carl Bohlen asked about the increased wages for the Town Administrator/Town Manager line. Phil said the increase is needed whether we hire an Administrator or Manager.

➤ Police Department.

Bret Golann asked in the chat room about the increase in this budget. He since had to leave the meeting.

Phil talked about the request for a few years for increased hours to avoid single officer coverage when on duty. The department came to the Board with the opportunity to apply for the COPS grant as we have in the past and the Town has been awarded the grant. This budget shows the addition of the new officer. He noted the addition of a new line for Community Outreach.

Jeff said he knows this is a tight year but feels the COPS grant will help with needed funding. He stands behind the acceptance of the grant and the need to have more coverage.

Merrily is in agreement about the grant and noted the importance of having the Community Outreach.

Barb Forauer asked about dog control now being in the Police Department budget. Phil explained the dog warden is not in Town during the day and the police are responding to most of the calls.

➤ Highway

Phil said Mike came up with some good opportunities to conserve some funds and the Highway budget is relatively flat.

Phil addressed a possible project at the intersection of Richmond Road/North Road / and Texas Hill Road. The proposal is to temporarily change the intersection using jersey barriers based on the Regional Planning study and get input on how it works. The cost to do this could be up to \$5,000.

Phil moved to add \$5,000 to the budget for a temporary reconfiguration of that area to meet the Regional Planning design. Second by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

➤ Fire Department.

Phil said this is part of the Town's Emergency Response which includes three parts. Fire / Emergency Medical / and Ambulance Transport. This year the Fire budget has been separated from the Ambulance budget to show the costs associated with the ambulance service. The emergency response costs have been moved from the Fire Department budget to the Ambulance budget. This Fire Department budget includes a new full time person which was voted on last year but has not yet been filled.

➤ Ambulance.

Phil noted this budget does now show cost for an ambulance as that is being donated. Going forward, next year the capital budget has an additional \$25,000 toward saving for another ambulance in the future. At some point there will be the need for two ambulances. Phil noted the Town did not use the \$94,870 which showed in the FY21 budget. The Town did pay a smaller amount to St. Mike's (approx. \$12,000) to continue coverage till we have our own service up and running.

Sau said given discussion about the Town supporting the Police Department and with the increase in first responders in the Town, and with the national climate around Police budgets and now Hinesburg increasing their budget she wanted to know if the Select Board is at least considering looking into anti-bias training for first responders and other Town employees. Merrily said this has been brought up and thought the Racial Equity group had that as one of their goals. Mike said the group is still working through how they operate and still working on the goals. He feels it would be good to require that type of training. Sau asked about funding in the budget for this training. Phil said they do not have that clarity now to fund training. Chief Cambridge said they have been taking advantage of opportunities for classes for the Police Department.

Phil said they are still checking on worker's comp costs for the ambulance budget so there may be some changes made in that area.

Andrea asked for clarification of what is included in the Fire Department insurance and the Ambulance apparatus insurance. She also asked if call reimbursable includes training time and how the split for costs was decided. Phil said a portion of the reimbursable cost has shifted from the Fire Department to Ambulance. Andrea said she finds it confusing and would like to see what exactly just Fire costs are, what EMS costs are, and what Ambulance transport costs are.

Al said the Fire Department is insured through a fire department pool type insurance which has a lower deductible than VT Cities and Towns and the efficiency is better.

Discussion of FY 22 Capital Fund Budget

Highway delayed the purchase of a truck and reallocated to purchase the grader now.

Discussion of Resolution to Display Black Lives Matter Flag

Phil said this has been proposed by the Racial Equity group.

Sau said the committee wanted to explore ways to celebrate Black History Month and, in the future, to celebrate Juneteenth. The resolution proposed was taken from a resolution that the town of Richmond used last year in raising a Black Lives Matter flag. Sau read the resolution (copy in the packet for this meeting).

Val Spadaccini raised her concerns with the statement that the Town supports the Black Lives Matter movement which is, as stated on that website, a political movement. She does not feel it appropriate for the Town to support political movements. Last June when this was discussed the Board agreed to not capitalize black lives so the statement of support would not include the movement. She did not object to the resolution in general just support of the movement.

Merrily said the Black Lives Matter movement has become political and has an agenda that has become divisive rather than uniting. So, though she is fully in support of the idea that black lives matter she does not support the organization and their political agenda.

Mike said regarding the conversation last June he was the one who recommended at that time in order to move the resolution forward that the Board de-capitalize black lives matter. The Black Lives Matter flag is a part of BLM. He does not think the Board set a precedent in June and the conversation should be on the resolution offered by the workgroup. He does support the resolution and noted the workgroup is not an official committee. The group is still working on recommendations, one of which is possibly to put together an official Racial Equity Committee.

Phil noted the policy of the Board to allow time for input from residents and act on items needing a decision at a subsequent meeting.

Jeff supports it and feels it is long over due, he likes the historical aspect included. He understands the concern with the political group vs. just saying we support black lives matter. He agrees with Phil to allow people to comment on this.

Maggie supports this and appreciates this is a symbol of not just our commitment as a Town to racial equity but as a public symbol that we are allies. She appreciates that it goes beyond Black History Month. She needs time to think about what Val said. Maggie noted in the early twentieth century when women's suffrage was protesting for the vote for women that was likely also called a political act. She feels any attempt to change the status quo is going to be called political and does not think that is a reason to not do it.

Phil supports this. He understands someone can look at that flag and feels it means defund police or sees riots and fires and associate that political piece with it. He feels there is separation and personally is moved when he looks at the American Flag because what it stands for is profound. Sometimes things happen under that flag that have nothing to do with the flag, such as Abu Ghraib / the massacre at Mai Lai / or slavery. When you put up a symbol it is for the ideals it stands for.

Alyssa Lasher, member of the racial equity group, read from an article in USA today regarding black lives matter. She agrees with Maggie that these movements will feel political as they are working toward a better world. She encouraged people to check out the 13 principals of BLM, she feels it is important to get this out to the public and hopes the Board will support this.

Miles Hickok, said he was surprised by the comment that Black Lives Matter is a political movement. As far as he sees Black Lives Matter is decentralized and does not contribute to any political candidates, it is a human rights issue and Hinesburg showing support for the BIPOC community.

This will be taken up at the February 3rd meeting.

Review of Voting Method (Australian Ballot) March 2

Missy recommends not to do a mass mailing of ballots for the election, voters will need to request a ballot if they want to vote early. The CVDS school board voted not to do a mass mailing of the school ballots so those would have to be requested separately and could cause confusion. There is a possibility that day of voting will be done with a drive thru at Town Hall parking lot. The Board agreed to go with Missy's recommendation and also to include return postage on mail in ballots.

Approve FY 22 Town Meeting Warning

The Board reviewed the wording in the draft warning and also the different versions. They agreed to approve version C with wording suggested by VLCT.

They discussed where to show the worker's comp insurance costs. Merrily said she feels it should go into the budget for the ambulance to be clear on the increased cost of ambulance service. Jeff suggests it be identified in a FAQ and the cost be included with the other Town insurances. Phil said the important thing is to get the dollar amount correct and he will allow Joy to make the decision where it will be included. The Board agreed with this.

Consider Approving Hinesburg Fire Department Resolution

Phil read the resolution (copy included with the meeting packet). Phil moved to approve the resolution, second by Merrily. Jeff asked what the implications of the statement on the first page last paragraph are. Phil said that they are agreeing to follow the best model for fire protection and response. Jeff asked about the organizational chart. Phil said the Town has that and it indicated the Fire Chief is under the Town Administrator as are other department heads.

Andrea asked if this means if there is a grievance in the Department it can come first to the Select Board or Town Administrator to be resolved. Phil said that is correct.

Motion voted and approved with 5 yes votes.

Consider Approving Certificate of Highway Mileage

Will be acted on at the next meeting.

Consider Approving EDC Grant to Support Hinesburg Businesses

Merrily moved to approve the EDC Grant to support Hinesburg businesses. Second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Review Minutes of January 6, 2021

Will be acted on at the next meeting.

Consider Approving Warrants

Merrily moved to approve the warrants, including payroll, as submitted by the Town Treasurer. Second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Mike moved to adjourn at 11:20 p.m., second by Merrily and approved with 5 yes votes.

Respectfully Submitted,
Valerie Spadaccini, Clerk of the Board