

Dalton Select Board

Meeting Minutes

Public Session

September 21, 2020

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by JoBeth Dudley, Chair. Select Board members Carol Sheltry and Tamela Swan were present. In-person attendees were Ron Sheltry (Town Fire Chief and Health Officer), Linda Greenwood (Town Treasurer), Jon Swan (Trustee of the Trust Funds) and Nancy Comeau (Conservation Commission member). The number of remote attendees ranged from four to six over the course of the meeting.

The Select Board members signed payroll and accounts payable checks.

A motion was made by Carol Sheltry - and seconded by Tamela Swan - to approve the minutes of the September 14 Select Board Public Session with one edit and the addition of the time of adjournment. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Carol Sheltry moved – and Tamela Swan seconded the motion - to approve the minutes of the September 14 Select Board Non-Public Session #1. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. Tamela then moved – and Carol seconded the motion - to approve the minutes of the September 14 Select Board Non-Public Session #2. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

OLD BUSINESS

There has still been no response from the Coos County Sherriff's office regarding equipment sales, and the Select Board agreed to follow up again this week.

The Select Board sent a letter to Ridgeline asking for more information about their organization, and all three Board members felt that the information provided to date by Ridgeline is inadequate. They agreed to follow up with a request for more detailed information this week.

Linda Greenwood, Treasurer, asked the Select Board if the plan was still to have Northway Business Services process payroll in the future, and the Board answered yes. This week - due to personnel at the bank being out of the office due to COVID – the appropriate ACH/EFT information was not transferred in time and paychecks were done in-house one last time. Starting from now, the planned sequence of getting the payroll and accounts payable information to NBS will be followed. Carol remarked that NBS will even be able to print checks to the Dalton printer if someone is in the Office. Linda reminded the Board that she would like to coordinate Select Board deliveries to NBS, including her day sheets.

Jon Swan, representing the Trustees of the Trust Funds, reported that the Trustees met remotely, with himself and Ernie Hannaford representing a quorum. Vanessa Hines was absent. They cut the check for the fire tanker for \$16,000. He stressed that he has reconciled the accounts and there is still a \$2,600 shortage in the MS-9 for the total of the three accounts - compared to what is in the Passumpsic accounts. He believes that in the past funds were deposited into an incorrect account and believes that this will be found during the audit. Unfortunately, Vanessa (the Trust Funds bookkeeper) has the only back-up files on the hard drive of her laptop.

NEW BUSINESS

The Select Board welcomed Elizabeth Buchman, who has begun serving as Interim Administrative Assistant. The posting of the Administrative Assistant job will be open until the end of the month.

An invoice came in for paving, which would require a disbursement from the paving trust fund. Carol stated that she doesn't believe that it should be paid until there is an accurate invoice. The invoice listed three roads in Dalton, one of which seems to be non-existent. Bob Wentworth has contacted the vendor, and asked them to fax an accurate invoice to the Town. The expectation is that the corrected invoice amount will be lower.

The Select Board announced that there will be a public hearing concerning a 151-foot lattice telecommunications tower that is planned for the Town of Carroll. The hearing is scheduled for October 1 at 7:00 p.m. Information will be posted on the Town web site.

The Board approved a facility use request from Linda Greenwood for meetings of the Snowmobile Club. JoBeth conditioned Board approval on social distancing and a maximum of 25 people in the room.

Ron Sheltry (Fire Chief) spoke with a fire protection company that does ANFUL installation. There is an outdated control valve in the Town Hall kitchen that needs to be replaced in order to meet code. The costs would be about \$1,800. Because this kitchen is the only commercial kitchen in Town that is legal to use, Carol stated that it is a valuable resource and we should not lose it. There is enough in the building fund to pay for it.

Ron also said that all existing fire extinguishers in the Town buildings eventually need to be inspected and tagged, which would cost the Town an additional thousand dollars or so.

JoBeth moved to replace control valve so that the kitchen's ANFUL system can be brought up to code in the Town Office building. Tamela seconded the motion. The roll call vote was unanimous.

The Town has not yet received the bill for inspection/maintenance of the oil tank at the Town Office building.

Carol spoke with Capital Alarms, and they will come to the Town Office and re-set security codes for everyone. The cost would be roughly \$80 plus mileage from Lancaster. Carol explained that it is a security concern that several people are sharing one code. Jo-Beth would also like to get another set of keys (and to potentially re-key the building) at a later date. The Board determined that someone needs to act as administrator of the codes.

Jo-Beth made a motion that the Town arrange to re-set the alarms with Capital Alarms, and designate Ron as the administrator of the codes. Ron will contact Town employees to have them come set up the security codes after receiving a complete list of all those who need access to the office (so that there is an accurate count on how many codes we need.) Tamela seconded the motion. The roll call vote was unanimous.

COVID Measures for Town Offices - Carol spoke with Rick Alber (?) who is the risk manager for the Town. His suggestion is that we provide hand sanitizers, masks, and a health screening sheet in the entry foyer, with CDC posters to guide the public. The new State directives and CDC guidelines should be posted on the office doors for public to read prior to entry - and distributed to all of the Town properties.

Carol suggested that the Town use a plexiglass wall for the Administrative Office since masks cannot be mandated - and the room is too small for social distancing. The Town has masks, but needs more hand sanitizer. The guidelines state that there should be cleaning supplies, Germex, posters, and health screening forms in every room. The health screening must be read prior attendance at any meeting. A yes to any of the questions on the health screening should send the attendee home.

Jo-Beth stated that Town Hall experienced a second possible case of COVID. Ron – speaking as the Town Health Officer - explained that if someone has had a COVID test that they do not have to disclose it. However, if their test is positive, the State will automatically conduct contact tracing etc. (Our risk manager didn't seem concerned about this particular case, indicating that the Office did not need to be closed.) State rules do give the Town the authority to enforce certain guidelines, which could help with any potential liability issues. Ron explained that the flu season is coming up and will overlap with COVID, and that Town residents should be prepared.

Carol gave the Select Board a copy of employee rights to help determine which safety guidelines can be enforced in the Town buildings. She wants every employee to get a physical copy of their rights. Carol will coordinate getting this out to the Town employees.

Carol and Jo-Beth believe that social distancing and masks (which are already being used in Select Board meetings) should be used in all Town meetings if they are not already. They want to research the Town's authority to ask people to wear masks in Town buildings during functions such as voting. The Governor signed a mandate for the Health Officer to be able to enforce a mask mandate, should there be minimal compliance with the suggestion to wear masks. Carol would like to offer COVID education to everyone and see how the public complies prior to considering a mandate. She would also like to start stating (at the beginning of meetings) that social distancing and masks are being utilized within these meetings.

The Board asked Nancy Comeau if her COVID concerns were sufficiently addressed by this conversation, and Nancy responded that they were.

Carol asked if she had permission to go out and purchase more hand sanitizer, and was told that she has permission.

JoBeth brought up the MS-1 form, which was completed by Gary FOURNIER, the Town assessor. Although it was not on the agenda, the form required the Board's signatures. It was originally due September 1, but Dalton was granted an extension until the end of the month. The Board reviewed the document and compared it to last year's. The Town's total tax evaluation was roughly 83 million dollars, of which 5 million dollars was properties owned by various utilities. This valuation was roughly equal to last year's.

JoBeth reported that the Select Board filed an application for COVID expense reimbursement totaling \$16,362.31. There was also an opportunity to request reimbursement for election-related expenses (for example increases in the number of mail-in ballots). The Town Clerk chose not to pursue that, stating that expenses were roughly the same as last year and were not impacted by the COVID crisis. JoBeth will reach out to the CARES Act administrators to let them know that the Town will not be submitting a reimbursement request for election related expenses.

Since there are some people not coming forward with zoning applications under ETZ, the Select Board is developing a system to contact and follow-up with individuals who need zoning/permitting. JoBeth drafted a template letter for soliciting zoning applications. Carol would like these letters sent in a way that determines whether or not the mail is received – possibly Certified mail.

Ron explained that a notarized letter is now required by property owners to prove that septic systems are professionally installed. He suggested that the same type of system might be beneficial in the context of zoning and permits.

JoBeth reported receipt of a letter from DNCR notifying the Town that the water system at Forest Lake State Park has been deactivated. Ellen Hays reported that the Primex certification was sent to DNCR, along with the signed copy of the DNCR agreement with the Town of Dalton.

JoBeth explained that a letter from Adam Finkel relative to the landfill development contained several questions that the Select Board did not answer last meeting. JoBeth believes that an assessor would be necessary to answer his questions. They discussed the following questions, and Jo-Beth offered to follow up with Adam.

Property taxes on 1900 acres planned for dump – Information can be accessed online.

How would the landfill development change those property taxes? JoBeth noted that this is a complex question.

Is the Town legally able to change the way that they assess and tax land?

JoBeth noted that Bethlehem had to hire a special assessor for their commercial properties

How many tons of trash/construction materials are processed through the transfer station? Tamela explained that 200 tons was processed through the Dalton transfer station in 2019.

Have the citizens of Dalton ever expressed in an organized way any specific requests for community welfare projects? All three Select Board members stated that they had no knowledge of any requests.

Nancy Comeau asked if there were any set hours that the State police have promised Dalton. Her neighborhood is concerned, as there is a lot of traffic to and from a particular house at all hours of the night - as well as shooting. Carol suggested that Nancy and neighbors put their concerns into an email to the Board, so that the Board can forward it to Sergeant Muzzey. This allows the Select Board to ensure that the State police are fully apprised as to of which parts of Dalton may need more oversight. Carol also stressed that it is absolutely appropriate to call the State police when they hear shooting at night

Nancy Comeau then reported on the recent Conservation Commission meeting, explaining that the Commission did not get to plan an approach for a public presentation on the landfill development. Both Doug Ingerson and Nancy know wetlands engineers, and a letter is planned to solicit bids from several.

Carol Sheltry brought up the letter from DES, which was dated September 4, but not received by the Select Board until September 15. Unfortunately, DES had asked for written notification to be submitted by September 14 if Dalton wishes to comment on the wetlands application. Nancy Comeau said that any member (of the Conservation Commission?) can comment - it doesn't have to be a vote - which makes it very important for people to know when the 45-day period ends. Tamela urged that the Board request an extension, as the Conservation Committee only meets once a month and is planning to provide comments. The Select Board will request the extension – probably by contacting Craig Rennie - and the Conservation Commission will look into hiring a wetlands engineer.

Carol brought up the security of email communications between Conservation Commission members that are related to Town business. Under Right To Know requests, a person using a private email address to conduct Town business is subject to having their private emails searched. In order to save costs, the Town has in the past only issued a Town email address to the Chairs of the various Commissions and Boards. Should all members of Commissions have Town email addresses at a cost of roughly \$10 per month? The Select Board will look into how Certified might handle this issue. Jon Swan suggested that – as the landfill issues heat up – it might be prudent to require all Commission members to use a Town email address to conduct Town business.

The discussion of the DES letter then continued. Nancy asked the Board if the hiring of the wetlands engineers is related to (the deadlines in?) this letter. The Conservation Commission needs to disseminate this notice ASAP and also needs to employ a professional mapper. Nancy suggested that (members of the Commission?) reach out to Corey _____.

Carol commented that all three Select Board members should probably attend the next Conservation Committee meeting, which will be publically posted.

JoBeth brought up the issue of recusal. The owner of the land that may be purchased by Casella for its landfill – Douglas Ingerson - currently sits on the Conservation Commission that will be providing comments to DES. Issues have already arisen in the form of comments made by Ingerson that he may not even allow a wetlands engineer hired by the Town on his property.

JoBeth explained that in terms of recusal, Douglas has stated that he plans to recuse himself. However, at the Commission meeting, he did not step away from the table and was involved in the entire Commission conversation. JoBeth announced that she would reach out to the New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) regarding recusal - i.e., the legal requirements for stepping away from a meeting in this scenario.

Another Conservation Commission member – Vanessa Hines – has the same address as Douglas Ingerson . She has thus far refused to recuse herself , although she lives with Douglas. Because they are not married, the issue of her refusal to recuse herself is more complicated.

Jon Swan announced to the Select Board that the Town of Bethlehem is reaching out to an attorney regarding the use of Douglas Drive for access to the planned landfill site. This planned use of a road in Bethlehem may violate previous agreements that Casella has made with Bethlehem.

Jon stated that he believes that the Town of Dalton should reach out to surrounding towns (Whitefield, Bethlehem, and Littleton) that will also be impacted by the landfill development in order to determine if there are overlapping concerns. Over a year ago, the Town notified the North Country Council that the planned landfill was a Development of Regional Impact, and he suggested following up on that designation. JoBeth explained that there is a process that which must be followed to notify the North Country Council, and believes that the Planning Board will address that at their next meeting.

Carol stated that the Select Board will meet in a Working Meeting next Monday, September 28 at 6:30 p.m.

At 8:47 p.m. JoBeth made a motion for the Board to adjourn its Public Meeting, and move to a Non-Public meeting. Carol seconded that motion, and the motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

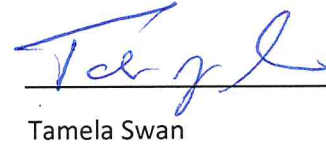
Minutes respectfully submitted by

Ellen Hays and Elizabeth Buchman

Minutes approved on September 28, 2020



Carol Sheltry



Tamela Swan



JoBeth Dudley, Chair