
Franklin Selectboard Meeting
May 7th, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m.
Town Clerks Office/Zoom hybrid

Members Present: Jay Hartman, Justin Rainville, Michael Grant, Brooks Sturtevant

Guest: Jordan Bushey- Asst Town Clerk, Jeremy Barnum, Jean Richard, Yvon Dandurand, David Lucey, Susan Lucey, Corinna Stanley, Scott Corinan, Travis Adams, Amy Adams, Mike Benjamin, Mark Stanley

Virtual: Dave Bennion, Adam Kane, Sierra Tibbetts, Lisa Larivee, Gina Quintin, Jay Dunn, Mike- Waveguide, Timothy, Dan & Annette Columb

Call to order:

At 6:02 pm Dave Bennion called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Agenda Amendments: None

Public comment period: None

Dog Hearing- On 4/18/25, Franklin resident Sierra Tibbits made a complaint with the ACO that her dog got bitten by one of Stephen Barrette and Gina Quintin's dog on Hanna Rd. The Great Dane ran to the opposite side of the road, quickly bit Sierra's dog, and was recalled by someone on the property. Both parties shared their side; Gina was not home when the bite happened. Is willing to pay for any vet bills; Sierra said that was not necessary as there was luckily no "damage". Board will discuss what to do going forward at the end of the meeting.

Highway Dept:

- **Little Pond Rd reclassification process-** Tonight's meeting is simply for conversation, no action will be taken.
- Why is this being reclassified? This road is not safe for town workers, and there was an issue with the Fire Department not having enough room to maneuver/turn around, resulting in minor property damage.
- Why is town buying equipment that doesn't fit on all roads? Because they cannot buy a piece of equipment just to fit the needs of one road. Grading and plowing can be done, but it is not easy or safe.
- A site visit will be done, and will be warned for the June 18 meeting. All abutters of the road will be notified officially through certified mail.
- Can town put in a turn around? Road has been neglected for years, believes the town could add some gravel and make the road wider. If this ends up turning into a class 4 road, will the culvert be able to get worked on in the future? Jerney thinks they should leave the road in good condition before turning to class 4.
- **Sidewalk snow plow equipment quotes/review-** Reviewed 3 proposals for leasing. Kim- Doesn't think it was fair for the board to make a decision on something like this, after it was voted down at town meeting. Board- this meeting is not to make any decisions, just looking at options. It is for the board to review options which can be presented to the town at a later date. Regardless, something still needs to be done about the current situation. The current blade has become bent this winter.

- **FY26 Grants-in-aid letter of intent-** Money the town gets every year to help with road erosion. Working to get culvert and ditch inventory to NRPC, and up to municipal permit standards. State give money to help with those. State pays 80%, town pays 20%. Jay/Justin made a motion to adopt the FY26 Grants-in-aid. All present members voted in favor, motion passed 4-0
- **Speed limit change- Morses Line-** Sheriff will be patrolling this week 5-9pm. In 2015, they did a traffic count. To reduce the speed limit, reduction would need to be done by the Vermont traffic committee. A speed limit change needs to go through the state. This was brought to town meeting one year and the voters voted it down.
- **Camp roads grading- VLCT info-** Lisa got an email back from VLCT about grading any camp roads. With the town insurance, town has no liability coverage on camp roads. Maintenance on private roads is not advised. Unfair competition and could be held liable. "Favoritism" can lead to lawsuits. Could private road owners pay the town for work that needs to get done? Lisa will give this information to Dan Larivee who brought it up to the board. Lisa will make a write-up about this, and give it to anyone who asks in the future of why we cannot do this.
- **Beaver Meadow Rd culvert-** Jeremy said the work could be done anytime now. Got a quote from Goodhue of \$5,000-\$30,000. Will have a better idea when Goodhue starts digging. This should be put out to bid, so others have a chance to bid. Work can't be done until July 1, for budget reasons. Thinks if it goes out to bid, the current quote will come back higher with "competition". Jay/Justin made a motion to put projects out to bid and have the authority to accept or deny any bids the board receives. All present members voted in favor. Motion passed 4-0
- **Highway/water worksheet review-** Board reviewed. Looks good.
- Water is being shut off at the north end of town to look for a significant leak.

Consolidated- Fidium fiber project- Jay Dunn/Mike- Board looked at plans/map They plan to bury 2-inch conduit on side of the road, which is in Town right of way (ROW). Corinna Stanley would like to be a part of a site visit whenever that happens. Believes the line will be laid on the opposite side of Stanley/Corinan barn (they own on both sides of road). Board will need to do a site visit soon; Jay Dunn is happy to meet at the site visit. Board decided on 5/13 at 7:30. This will be warned appropriately.

Exited SB meeting, and entered board of abatement meeting.

Board of abatement-

- **Luce property-** Jean/Justin nominate Lisa Larivee as chair. All members voted in favor. Motion passed. Lisa explained what types of taxes can be abated. The "Jackie Luce House" was sold to the Town/Municipality, and Town properties/buildings are not taxed. Board can decide to abate the taxes that are still owed. The principal amount is 4,334.4.
- Jean- why weren't the taxes figured out at closing? July-June is when taxes run. Jackie Luce's portion of the taxes were prorated at closing. That money was collected, but not applied to taxes.
 - Kim/Peter made a motion to deny the request for abatement as it should have been figured out at closing. All members voted in favor; motion passed.

- Jackie is not delinquent, the town is. SP&F, attorney working for town, advised that the town should abate town taxes owed. Will talk to Johanna about possibly waiving penalty fees.
- **Byam's Quick Stop- David Rugh/Attorney:** Tax sale, town buys property, clean up, and then sell. OR can put at tax sale, and anyone can bid. Tonight's meeting is to see if the Board of Abatement is (hypothetically) open to abating the remaining taxes after someone bids on the property.
- Brownfields funding is not accessible to individuals, but may qualify for other cleanup funds.
- Town could set a minimum bid of X amount, and board of abatement could waive the rest of the owed taxes. If there is a minimum amount, this may be more appealing to bidders. Not asking for a vote tonight, but can set a minimum amount.
- Vahgn Comeau is working on this right now.
- When a bid is accepted by the town, it must be paid upfront, and will be held in escrow. If the bidder decides to back out within the 1 year and 1 day time period, they will not get their money back. The only exception to getting their money back is if the owners/heirs pay the owed taxes. The heirs have shown no interest in the property though.
- Yvon is interested in the property, but after investigating the cost, it is high. There was cleanup a few years ago, but it still needs to be monitored. It has been abandoned for so long the tanks need to get pulled up.
- Pete/Mike made a motion to set a minimum bid at \$5,000. Majority of the board voted in favor; motion passed.

Brooks/Mike made a motion to close the Board of Abatement meeting at 8:11 and open the SB meeting.

Dave left the meeting.

Old business:

- **Weed Harvester operators-** Another person, Chris Casavant, also applied for the weed harvester job. Andy is still interested at the agreed amount. This job could be split between two people. If the town hires both applicants, the two will need to be in contact. Brooks will talk to Andy and give him Chris's contact info so they can figure things out.

Approve minutes from April 16th: Jay/Mike made a motion to approve the minutes from April 16th. All members voted in favor; motion passed 4-0.

Town Clerk Concerns:

- **Town Hall painting bids-** Now have two bids from Bishop Property Maintenance and Ethan Dodd. Lisa will reach out to both bidders, and see what they can do for \$10,000 that has been budgeted.
- **Town meeting date change discussion-** From an online survey, with only 26 responses, majority voted to keep Town Meeting on the first Tuesday at 10:00am.

Review bills for approval of warrants: Board reviewed bills and signed warrants.

New business:

- **Land trust application review-** This is just informational. Stated in the town plan, the SB is to review land use clauses. Board reviewed, looked good.
- **Barr engineering- Alum-** Nothing to sign now.
- **Mowing in Cemetery-** Mike Rebello noticed leaves that have piled against the Church fence that should be removed. He can do this for an additional charge from the contract from \$150-\$175. Have been budgeting for years to put money in a cemetery reserve account. Town may need to take on the whole cost at some point.
- **Rec field bid-** Rec accepted a bid of \$8,300 from Pelletier Excavation LLC. Jim Mullen has made a large donation that will be put towards the field work being done. This project will be paid for with Rec money, but Lisa wanted the SB to be aware of their progress.

Executive session-

Brooks/Jay made a motion to enter executive session at 8:43 to discuss personnel issues.

Brooks/Justin made a motion to exit executive session at 8:53.

No action was taken in executive session.

Member concerns/Other business: Dog hearing- Board and ACO discussed the situation and what action should be taken going forward. Something like this cannot happen again, as it could have been much worse. Jordan will send a certified letter to them with the decision that was made.

Adjournment:

- Mike/Justin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 9:02pm.

Next meeting will be on May 21st, 2025 @ 6:00 pm at the **Town Hall** and virtual.

Respectfully submitted,
Jordan Bushey, Assistant Town Clerk
May 11th, 2025

These minutes are not official until approved at the next regular Selectboard meeting.