

## Townshend Selectboard Meeting Minutes - November 20, 2006

Present:

Berenice Brooks  
Alene Evans  
Henry Martin, chair

Jeffrey Russ  
Irvin Stowell, Select Board

Participating Members:

Kurt Bostrom, road foreman; David Dunn, Director of  
RESCUE; Walter Meyer; Handymen applicants: Francis  
Bailey and Robert Mudgett; Auditors

The Chair ***called the Meeting to Order*** at 7:00 PM ***and recognized Participating Members:***

***Highway foreman***, Kurt Bostrom had finally acquired information on purchasing an extended warranty for the new truck #8 recommending the extended 3 year, 150,000 mile warranty costing \$6,100 which includes: covering injection & computer driven components, transmission, rear end, bumper to bumper, etc. After minimal discussion and comparison of the lesser warranty *Martin moved to authorize Kurt Bostrom to purchase the \$6,100 extended warranty, seconded by Brooks, unanimously carried by the Board.* The Equipment Fund will pay for Trk #8's extended warranty. Hr reported:

- no problems after heavy rain fall
- when he had purchased cold patch in bulk he found extensive leaching and waste, was his response to Stowell's inquiry;
- will be applying hot mix to Windham Hill Rd
- while performing equipment winter maintenance on Trk #1 they found brass filings when draining reservoir and couldn't get the body to go up
- road crewman, Royce expected back to work around Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>

Town Treasurer's response to his request for Highway budget information - she was now posting May; possible completion of the 6-month by the 27<sup>th</sup>.

The Board continues to express their dismay with the lack of cooperation with the Town Treasurer to provide town officials with financial numbers in order to perform their budget preparation. — Bostrom left at 7:13 PM

***1a. Town Clerk and/or Treasurer:*** no communication, reports etc from the Town Treasurer.

Martin & Evans both reported that the Auditors could not attend tonight's meeting but requested attending the Board's Tuesday scheduled workshop.

**RESCUE Inc. president, David Dunn** responded to the Board's letter that other town RESCUE representatives had submitted their resignation after learning that Rescue's volunteer board will be converted to a professional based organization, decreasing its large board of 20. He continued to state that representatives became confused when the Attorney stressed that their responsibility, loyalty and care was directly to RESCUE's Executive Board not to their town. RESCUE will obtain consultant advice for reconstruction, maintaining its nonprofit agency and focusing on the future. Members will consist of a lawyer, from the medical and business profession, 3 volunteers and 3 members at large. As its natural evolution a nonprofit agency needs to be reconstructed as seen by the Brattleboro Coop. Dunn also believes the duties to Windham Solid Waste

Management's town reps board would be the same as RESCUE's, which Townshend rep. Stowell voiced his disagreement to

Martin stressed to Dunn that RESCUE has flip flopped on their original presentation to the Town at Town Meeting when, at that time, the Town had other options it could have pursued. Martin still believes the Town needs to have representation. And RESCUE has a fiduciary responsibility in keeping Townshend informed; we need assurance of RESCUE's continued services. Yes, responded Dunn. Martin continued, Townshend rep., F. Hege, was a good watchdog especially some of the tracking, isolating Townshend's number of transports out of Grace Cottage Hospital and keeping the Town informed with his monthly reports.

Dunn further explained RESCUE's letter increasing their cost to \$2.00 per capita some of the reasons are as follows:

- Medicare has drastically changed the reimbursement for ambulance services; the cost to transport a critical patient from Townshend to Dartmouth is billed at \$800, now Medicare pays \$200 - \$400 and Medicare's reimbursement will be cut further in January.
- Some doctors are refusing to take Medicare patients.
- Bad debts have soared \$168,000
- Fixed events steadily increase from \$100,000 to \$150,000: fuel has tripled, Workers Comp., etc.
- RESCUE is a member of a group exploring the formation of a captive insurance agency, like VLCT
- Still has available a million dollar endowment

Dunn did provide detailed financial documents, etc. and indicated that RESCUE is seeking expanding their services to other towns. Establishing District 2 provided accountability of their service to provide EMS services. They are aware that Golden Cross is looking for an inroad into this area.

Martin stressed that Dunn was mixing up the two issues. Our main issue is Townshend having a voice, Townshend should have a finger in the pie and an impact at RESCUE's board; and be able to report back to the Selectboard. Martin listens to their calls on the scanner and believes and trusts the services they provide. No one has heard any complaints. Dunn said he'd relay Townshend's issues to RESCUE's board chair.

Dunn added that RESCUE has rolled over their lease at GCH; RESCUE is financially struggling financial to provide 24-7 / 2 person operation, trying to decrease costs by back filling; he will be introducing RESCUE and himself to GCH's new CEO after her arrival. Dunn left at 7:45 PM

**Walter Meyer** reviewed his prepared suggestions and thoughts on possible projects and observations for Selectboard consideration:

1. Sidewalks
2. Parking in front of Town Hall
3. Town Hall renovations
4. Village Sewer

5. Town Barn — Phoenix if approached could be persuaded to lease, etc adjoining lands; keeping Town Barn at present location
6. Grants — applying
7. Speed limit on Rte 35 (Grafton Rd)
8. Taft Meadows “can sit and wait”
9. Flag memorial on those lost in Iraq war on the Common

Minimal discussion followed each of his suggestions/observations. He was reminded to read Selectboard minutes to find that the Board has been discussing, taken action or contacted the appropriate state agency on his proposed projects.

Meyer offered his assistance in any way. He left at 7:53 PM.

*At 7:55 PM Martin moved into **Executive Session** under Title 1, Section 313 to interview candidates for the Town Hall Handyman position, unanimously carried by the Board.*

*At 8:15 PM Evans moved out of Executive Session, seconded by Russ, carried by the Board.*

At this time the Board discussed the job description of this new position and decided it should be one of general maintenance. They stated that a start date needed to be established, that there should be a 3-month probationary period and working hours not to be exceeded unless approved by the Board. In addition, Christine Aither, present custodian, needs to be contacted and advised of the change, which Davis was instructed to do.

After complete discussion *Evans moved to hire Francis Bailey to the position as Town Hall custodian/general maintenance, seconded by Russ, unanimously carried by the Board.* Davis was instructed to notify the applicants of the outcome in filling the position; asking Bailey to coordinate with Martin so he may be introduced to personnel, the building, and duties.

*Martin moved to approve the **Minutes - Nov. 6, 2006**, seconded by Evans*

To correct: all town money were **grants** to WRVALP and WRVHLP not Valley Cares and to correct: TES was to install moveable pedestrian crosswalk signs on the Common Rd, *unanimously carried by the Board.*

*Martin moved to **Pay Bills and Sign the following Orders**, seconded by Stowell,*

SM06-07 — #10	\$13,270.77 plus Holden TnHall \$2,000.00
SMPR06-07 - #9	\$3,392.46 Road Com Ord wk/ending 11/11

*unanimously carried and signed by the Board.*

#### **4. Old Business**

**Ancient Roads** — Stowell learned that the Vermont AOT must be notified of discontinued roads as the State has compiled information, location, etc on all town roads. He will follow up

with C. Marchant, as our road inventory must be completed by Feb. 2009; it was suggested to seek the assistance of high school students to research our roads.

**Town Hall policy** —Evans met with Anita Bean, town clerk, to review the proposed policy. Bean suggested increased rental fees, etc and expressed her willingness to work with and oversee the new custodian.

**Windham County Sheriff Department** —Lake's letter detailed response (copied to all members) to Martin's billing inquiries. No Board action taken except Martin still wants to meet and discuss their (WCSD) accounting

**Ritchie's Rd** —Robert Fisher, of Fisher & Fisher, notified Windham Superior Court of his representing Townshend in Ritchie Carusona et al's Appeal to the Town's Road Decision

**West River Valley Assisted Limited Partnership (WRVALP) and West River Valley Housing Limited Partnership (WRVHLP)** — Town received original and copies of appropriate lending documents — originals to be filed in Town Vault *(which the town clerk has placed in back of the town record book)*

**Health Insurance** —Correspondence received from Hillary Cooke, MVP and Vermont League of City and Towns scheduled informational meetings to explain the possibility of VLCT changing health insurance carrier.

Evans spoke of how Mr. Cooke worked with and negotiated health insurance at Kindle Farm (where she previously worked). She was provided a "credit card" which offset her out-of-pocket medical expenses. Brooks asked, was it a pay down card?

At this time, Martin does not want to jeopardize the Town's involvement in VLCT by inviting Mr. Cooke to present what MVP offers. Board members believe its time for town employees to pay a percentage of their health insurance, which may require legal advice on how to proceed.

## **5. New Business**

- Evans proposal of creating a web site on outreach town officers was accepted. This would allow residents to learn about town offices (appointed or elected), their job descriptions and to discuss and to consider participating in a town position; advertise a forum — <sup>st</sup> of February.
- Notification of Windham County's preliminary budget — Dec 14, 2006 — 10:00 AM
- State of Vermont, Policy & Planning: requesting comments on ACT178 - new mapping
- Windham Solid Waste Management District - Letter and financial statement
- ANR, Water Quality Division — completion of No Exposure Certificate (IS & CD)

**6. Other Business** — no action taken

- St of VT:
- Dept of Taxes notification of Townshend residents — not filing their homestead declaration
  - Land Use Permit The Stratton Corp — Tamarack Heights subdivision 2W0519-26
  - Townshend Historical Society received \$2500 from Windham Foundation Grant to conserve Johnson Gore Charter & volumes of old school districts & L&G Seminary documents
  - Otis Health Care Center notification to Waste Water Mgmt
  - Martin still believes that the Town does not need to get involved with the “revolt & repeal” group, as requested by Andrew Crossman, Town of Plymouth, until someone has created a resolution for ACT 60 / 68.

**8. Time of Next Meeting** — Dec<sup>th</sup>4

*At 9:45 PM Brooks moved to **RECESS** to tomorrow, seconded by Russ, unanimously carried by the Board.*

**November 20<sup>th</sup> RECESSED — November 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Present:

Berenice Brooks  
Alene Evans  
Henry Martin, chair

Participating Members:

Jeffrey Russ  
Irvin Stowell, Select Board  
Auditor: Jennifer Joyce and Kimberly Liebow

Auditors, Joyce and Liebow understood the Selectboard’s situation in trying to prepare and complete the Town’s 2007-08 budget. They spoke of:

- The finalization of their review of the 2006 Town Report with changes and corrections;
- their monthly duty is to open and balance all Town checking and savings accounts as overseen by the Treasurer; they could only give the Board a copy of the Treasurer’s prepared procedural form which notes only balances;
- ~~they believe what they do is a waste of time and costly to the town.~~ They are not qualified to perform accounting procedures or interpret complicated rules and laws; and they believe the Town should hire an accounting firm;
- they do not audit or see any computer financial statements - overall or detailed, they are preparing their own spread sheets;
- revealed that the Treasurer e-mailed directly to the printer her final town 2006 budgets which were late - without Auditor’s review;
- presented a copy of the Treasurer’s e-mail — “Statement by Town Treasurer ABOUT Tardy Financial Reports, requested by Carolyn Laning, Town Auditors, November 20, 2006” which is attached to original hard copy of these minutes. Liebow and Joyce left at 8:00 PM.

The Treasurer’s e-mail to Laning implied that she would be working at home on her personal lap top which concerned the Board. It is practice that no paperwork,

documentation, etc is not suppose to leave the Town Hall. The Board's continual concern is the lack of the Town Treasurer having an effective, active, working assistant Treasurer and their fiduciary responsibility to prepare 2007-08 budgets.

Members updated information obtained from State Officials; obtained copies of Statutes defining the Town elected Treasurer's duties and responsibilities; sought how other towns handle this situation — most town's contacted operate beyond the Statutes with a Legislative approved charter: Brattleboro, Milton, Windsor, etc.; will explore seeking other opinions and options from Atty. Gillies, VLCT, etc.

The Town Treasurer has promised financial statements, etc on November 27<sup>th</sup>. Accordingly, no budget work was performed. *Brooks **adjourned the meeting at 8:20 PM**, seconded by Stowell, unanimously carried by the Board.*

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Davis, clerk for the Selectboard