



TOWN OF TOWNSHEND

Selectboard
PO Box 121 Townshend, Vermont 05353

Selectboard Meeting Agenda

April 25, 2023 6:00 PM

Townshend Town Hall

Approved: 5/9/23

Present: Sherwood Lake, Rob Wright, Katie Marrow, Rob Swiger, Phoebe Connolly

In Attendance: Janis Chaillon - BCTV, Connie Holt - SB Assistant

1. **Meeting Call to Order:** Lake calls the meeting to order at 6:11pm
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Wright makes a motion to approve the April 11, 2023 Selectboard meeting minutes. Marrow seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0.
3. **Additions and Deletions:** Lake runs through the additions to the agenda.
 - a. **Old Business:** Grace Cottage Family Health's Request to use Commons 5/13/23 - correct motion.
 - b. **New Business:** Liquor License Application: Riverbend Market 2nd Class License.
 - c. **New Business:** Tobacco License Application: Riverbend Market Tobacco License
 - d. **Town Hall Use Request:** Lucier Family - Dick Lucier's Memorial Service
4. **Members of the Public:**
 - a. **Green Mountain Power:** Tiana Smith, Mike Burke, and Don Mills from Green Mountain Power present a power point debriefing the last storm and their plans to address areas of concern. Burke discussed the seriousness of the storm and the expectation of more storms such as this past one. They stated that when a storm hits their priorities in restoring power is to restore the Transmitter, then the sub-station, then the main line. After those three are up and running then can get to side taps. The clearing of lines which allows clearing of roads takes communication between GMP, the tree crews, and the town Road department. It can take a while to make sure the line is grounded before any clearing can take place.

Burke continues to report that following this and other storms GMP has plans for;

 1. Spacer cables installed on the Route 30 lines from Jamaica to Dummerston. Where they can be buried that will be preferable. Critical to address Route 30 because it is the corridor to all the towns.
 2. RT 100, up by Wardsboro, will also get spacer cables.
 3. West Hill to Dam needs to have cable buried.

4. Expand the battery power wall program: Allows up to 8 days of power generation to a person's home.
5. Improve communication between GMP and the local road crews.

Wright raises his concern about the poor performance of GMP's tree crews. He gives an example of seeing them sitting in their trucks for three hours or hanging out at the local store instead of doing their jobs. Burke responds that there are many layers of safety when dealing with active lines that have been brought down. They can not begin until the line is grounded and dead. That can take some time.

Swiger reiterates the importance of communicating with local road crews, and that power and road clearing go hand in hand. Swiger asks if there is anything the town can do to help GMP. Burke replies that there is. They will be approaching residents and the town for easements to bury the line where they can.

Connolly comments that it is helpful to know that GMP is being proactive in replacing and securing lines.

Tiana Smith talks about GMP's Critical care list for residents on medical equipment. It is there to help make sure that they do not lose power to their medical devices. Marrow asks how a resident can get on the critical care list. Smith points out the Critical Care List (CCL) is for people on medical equipment and people should call GMP's call center. She pointed out that Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) has what they call their Cares List. People can call them about how to get on that list.

Bob Desiervo, member of the public, raises the confusion he experienced with GMP's Smart Meter not reading in real time. Burke replies that in long weather events they may not read in real time, but in short event or during regular periods the smart meters read in real time.

Laura Richardson, member of the public, states that she believes GMP did a great job during the storm. She states that towns also have to be able to help residents during these weather events. She asks if GMP has any tools to help towns. Burke replies that there is a GMP app that has a map that shows which houses have or do not have power. He also states that many towns are installing generators to set up warming centers. Richardson asked if there are programs to help town install generators. Burke replied that GMP is no longer doing fossil fuel generators; they are installing the battery power walls.

Jason Fijal, member of the public, raises the issue that when things go down everything goes down. A resident who has no cell service or electricity is not going to be able to communicate in any fashion. Burke acknowledges that the communication piece is the toughest issue. Smith suggests creating a link to the town officials to get the information out.

Burke sums up the discussion by stating that GMP has heard your feedback, and clarified safety regulations when clearing up after a storm. He finished by saying that he looks

forward to strengthening the communication between the town road crews and the GMP crews on the ground.

Wright reiterates that his issue is not with GMP, but with the contracted tree crews.

Frisk, member of the public and Road Crew Supervisor, agrees with Rob about the tree crews. He continues to add that he is not upset by the length of loss of power. A good portion of Townshend does not have cell service or internet access, so apps are not good. It took 3.5 days before a generator was put at the bottom of his road to get power. The out rage is not having landline service.

Desiervo adds that the town should have emergency generators at town hall and the town garage. Lake resounds that it is a longer discussion for another time.

There is a short recess of the meeting. Meeting is reconvened at 7:30pm. Lake reports two modifications of the agenda. The Highway report and the Stone Arch Bridge will be dealt with next.

b. Public Comment prior to going into executive session: DeSiervo raises the issue of the local emergency management plan. He states that it appears to have good scaffolding, but he does not see a lot of details. DeSiervo raises that there should be more details. Lake responds that there should not be a lot of detail; if you are not one of the people listed on the plan then you would not see it. DeSiervo states that as a town resident he has the right to know the details of the plan. Connolly states that she is hearing from DeSiervo that he would like the town to revisit the emergency management plan. DeSeirvo states she is correct.

A discussion ensues on what an emergency plan should consist of for Townshend. Connolly offers to review any document and share her insights on it by the next meeting.

Marrow talks about the research she has done on gathering resources for residents in times of emergency. She states that she is doing this as a resident and Selectboard. Swiger points out the form in the clerk's office where people can go on record with what their needs are. Marrow responds to DeSiervo that she is trying to figure out how to get the form and resource information out to people. Lake raises the issue of compromising people's security when gathering and making public people's information. Richardson states it is more about making people aware of resources and what they can do in that weather event; it not about signing up for things. Connolly raises that maybe the discussion should focus on a town plan and a community driven people plan.

5. Correspondence:

Ned Phoenix's email concerning trash fern the transfer station on his property: Lake reports that he discussed the issue with Steve, the Pubic Works supervisor. Steve will get someone to clean up the trash. Lake adds that Ned Phoenix also requested a fence, like a chicken wire fence, be put up. Lake says that he is not in favor of a chick wire fence. If there is to be a fence he thinks a stockyard fence or orange barrier fence is more

appropriate. Lake suggests that if any of the Selectboard have suggestions or questions they should call Steve.

6. **Warrants:** Marrow corrects the warrants amounts and makes a motion to pay warrants 1 - 7;

1. Payroll:	\$10,251.68
2. Payroll Taxes:	\$4,366.72
3. General Fund:	\$17,304.11
4. Highway:	\$14,056.46
5. Highway:	\$25.04
6. Highway Equipment:	\$2,381.81
7. Highway Equipment:	\$1,510.06
Total:	\$49,895.88

Wright seconds the motion. Connolly asks if the error was an editing error or something else. Marrow says just an editing error. Motion carries 5-0-0.

7. **Reports:**

1. Highway: Frisk gives the report.

a. As you may be aware we have been having issues with the garbage truck for quite some time now. Nystrom has been working on it for some time and has finally given up. ATG will only work on the truck at their location. Requesting approval to have DJ's tow the truck to ATG. Wright makes a motion to hire DJ's to tow the truck to ATG's at an expensive no greater than \$800.00. Marrow seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0.

b. Grading and Culverts: Grading continues. A culvert located on State Forest Road rusted out and collapsed. That has been fixed.

c. Tonight the Selectboard will interviewing a potential candidate for the open highway crew position.

2. Treasurer: Lake gives the report. He reports that in the General Fund, the true balance is \$285,238.00; in the Municipal Investment Fund there is \$1,216,586.72; and in the checking account there is \$24,692.30.

3. Town Clerk: Lake gives the report. He reports that the Town Clerk brought in \$1,240.75 in fees and services.

4. Chair: Lake reports that in the executive session tonight we will be discussing 2 items.

8. **Old Business:**

a. Dance Studio proposal to rent Town Hall: Brigitte Fijal, town resident, presents to the Board a proposal to rent out the upstairs space for a dance studio. She directs the Board to her proposal. Her proposal would also include hosting dances for the community and putting on performance for the public. The proposal would not modify the space. Temporary structure will be brought in; portable bars and mirrors. Connolly states that she

has heard from residents about the desire to bring in ways to revitalize the town. She also feels the space is definitely under utilized, and believes a dance studio could address those issues. Connolly asks are there any legal concerns such as a conflict with businesses with similar space. Jason Fijal responds that they have been looking around and do not believe there is any conflict.

Wright asks the Planning Commission if they have any comments or thoughts on this matter. Bob Desiervo, planning board, responds that he likes the enthusiasm. DeSiervo asks if the ADA compliance comes before or after the opening of the dance studio. J.Fijal replies that the dance studio would open immediately and then build towards ADA compliance. B.Fijal adds that grants money she applies for could also go towards ADA compliance.

Lake raises a concern about retail space at the Town Hall due to security issues. He also raises the concern about the fragility of the screens upstairs. He wants a guarantee that no one would be playing with them. Lake also raises the need to avoid conflicts with other residents who want to hold events at the Town Hall. J Fijal responds that they will address these concerns. Connolly raises the noise issue for the employees working on the first floor.

Marrow raises the issue accessibility of the classes due to costs. The Fijals both state that they are interested in creating accessibility for the community. Marrow adds that she believes that there is an interest in bringing back community events. Andy Snelling, planning commission, urges the town to talk with the Fire Marshall on the matter.

Lake states he believes that we need more conversation and research on the matter.

b. Grace Cottage Family Health's Common Use request for May 13, 2023 - verify the request. Lake reports that a resident has raised the concern that at the last meeting we did not follow proper procedure on approving the request. So, rather than argue with the person we are going to take up the request in this meeting. Lake makes a motion to approve Grace Cottage's request to use the Commons on 5/13/23, inserting a statement about clean up, and to waive the fee. Connolly seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0.

9. New Business:

a. Highway Maintenance & Repair Contract for RFP: review & approve: Holt, assistant to the Selectboard, explains the origins of the Townshend's Standard Contract for Maintenance and Repairs of Highways. She explains that the proposed language is a modified template from VLCT. James Duggan, Vermont Director of Preservation, helped to modify the language to suit this project. Holt further explains that the RFP itself, is based on a preservation RFP for the Bennington Monument. Again, Duggan from the State of Vermont helped to modify that RFP to reflect this project.

Wright expresses his desire to have more than one bidder for this project. Lee Petty, member of Townshend Historical Society, believes there will be. Marrow adds that a lot of

thought has been given regarding the timeline in order to give time for contractors to ask questions and give answers.

Connolly confirms that the Board is voting on language to be inserted into the larger RFP. Wright makes a motion to accept the Townshend Contract for Highway Maintenance and Repair. Swiger seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0.

b. Request For Proposals for W. Townshend Stone Arch Bridge: Swiger makes a motion to accept the RFP for the West Townshend Stone Arch Bridge. Marrow seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0.

c. Commons Use request: Pumpkin Festival: Lake raises the request from Leland & Gray to use the Common on October 14th for the Pumpkin Festival. Wright makes a motion to allow Leland and Gray High School to use the common on October 14, 2023 for their pumpkin festival with the fee waived. Marrow seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0.

d. Town Hall Use request: Lake reads the request of the Jackson family to use Town Hall for Dick Jackson's 100th Birthday Celebration. Wright makes a motion to approve the request and waive the fee. Marrow seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0.

e. Liquor License Application: Lake reads the application of Riverbend Market for a 2nd Class License. No concerns were raised by the Board. Marrow makes a motion to approve the 2nd Class liquor license for Riverbend Market. Wright seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0.

f. Tobacco License Application: Lake reads the application of Riverbend Market for a Tobacco License. No concerns are raised by the Board. Wright makes a motion to approve the tobacco license for Riverbend Market. Marrow seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0.

g. Lucier Family Town Hall Use request: Lake reads the town hall use request from the Lucier family for Dick Lucier's Memorial Service. Wright makes a motion allow the Lucier Family to use the Town Hall for Dick's Lucier's service with the fee waived. Marrow seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0.

10. **Executive Session:** Personnel Issues VSA 313(B) for a personnel issue and 313(3) for a legal issue: Marrow makes a motion to go into executive session. Wright seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0-0. Board adjourns to executive session at 9:45pm. There will be no reporting out of the executive session.

11. **Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023

12. **Adjournment:** Meeting is adjourned at 9:45pm.