

SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - AUGUST 19, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Charlie Pike, Linda Schmidt, Karen Tendrup. Also present: Elizabeth Daut, Jim Henderson, Sheila Kearns, Mike Miller. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

UPDATE ON MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM (MERP): Linda Schmidt says the results of the energy assessment of Town Hall and the Town Garage have been received, and they indicate a wide range of potential improvements, from changing light bulbs to installing solar panels. Sheila Kearns, who has guided the assessment so far, says MERP grant money available from Vermont's Buildings and General Services Fund would likely cover all the suggested improvements, with no match required by the Town. It would be up to the Selectboard to decide which improvements to make and not make. Linda says this would be a good time to consider replacing the aging heat and hot-water systems with something more efficient. Sheila, with help from Richard Zoppel, will complete the necessary application. It is likely the potential grant would also cover the cost of a project manager if one is needed.

UPDATE ON MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MTAP): Linda says the water at Town Hall (already known to be non-potable) was tested on August 12 as part of the effort to better equip the building as a temporary emergency shelter. The water tested positive for E. coli and coliform, and the tester advised that it not be used even to wash hands. The tester also discovered the expansion tank is not working, which causes undue strain on the well pump. Full results of the water test and recommendations for a filter and repairs should be ready for the next Selectboard meeting, and with Board approval will be submitted for coverage under MTAP.

ROAD RECLASSIFICATION: Linda says she spoke with the Department of Transportation today and got confirmation that portions of roads can be changed from Class IV to Class III by a simple Board vote. The DOT will confirm one more detail on this process, and then the reclassification of portions of Tate Hill Road, Campbell Road, and West Road can move forward, as discussed in previous meetings.

DRY HYDRANTS: Joe Nolan says he has talked with Randy Novotny of the Arlington Fire Department, and dry hydrant testing has started. Linda drove with the FD the night of August 13, when the following hydrants were backflushed and tested, and all found to be functioning: Campbell Road, West Road (midway), West Road at Rupert Road, Rupert Road at Snow Road, Wuerslin Road, West Sandgate Road at Sandgate Road. The FD will return to Sandgate over the next several days to check the rest of the hydrants. Those at the intersection of Tate Hill Road and West Sandgate Road, and on Sandgate Road near Southeast Corners Road, definitely need repair. Brian Hawley, the Arlington Fire Chief, is compiling detailed test results to submit to the Board.

CITIZEN CONCERNS: Mike Miller, a Salem resident who lives at the end of Beattie Hollow Road, says he is concerned about what will happen with the **Egg Mountain** site and asks for more information. He says there is a lot of high-speed ATV traffic on the road now, and he asks about police coverage in general. He says he called police in New York some time ago when he heard shots fired on the property in the middle of the night. The police told him there was nothing they could do as the property is out of their jurisdiction. Mike asks about a timeline for the purchase by the State of Vermont. Jim Henderson says that, with the Town's endorsement via the August 13 vote, Vermont Forest, Parks, and Recreation (VTFPR) will apply for a federal Forest Legacy Grant to purchase the property. The grant deadline is September 12. Jim says that if the grant is approved, VTFPR will begin to develop a management plan for the new state forest, a public process that will take approximately two years. He says that, per state statute, motorized vehicles would be prohibited on the site, although snowmobile use would be considered as part of management planning. Jim also says an entrance point off Rupert Road will be discussed as the main access to the site. Joe asks who will enforce the rules on motorized use. Jim says law enforcement will be through the Vermont game wardens, state police, and sheriffs, but he says a mutual aid agreement with New York law enforcement as well as fire departments should be discussed. Joe asks if the Town will be responsible for emergency-response costs. Jim says the Beattie Hollow Hunting Club still leases the property and likely will through the upcoming hunting season; the trailers and other structures on the site are theirs, and the club will be asked to clear them from the site when the property is sold. Jim says a survey of the site will be done and easements addressed for those who own camps within the site. Sheila asks if all adjacent landowners, including those in New York, will be notified when the planning process begins, and Jim says they will. He says there will be further outreach to Salem and Rupert so their concerns can be addressed along with Sandgate's. Jim clarifies that VTFPR does not need Salem's approval on the purchase but says that if Salem is seriously concerned about traffic on Beattie Hollow Road, that access could be closed, and Rupert Road would become the only access. He says this would not be preferable, given the ease of access from the Salem side. Joe says the possibility of closing off Beattie Hollow access has not been mentioned before. Linda says she wants to work

to get as many people from Sandgate, Salem, and Rupert involved in the planning discussion as possible. Jim says the VTFPR and its commissioner definitely want public input.

Charlie Pike asks why so much **material is being cut back and moved on Rupert Road** near his house. He says a load of dirt was dropped on his property. Joe says he will ask the Road Crew to make sure they are within the right-of-way but says they are trying to create a wide shoulder, as they did recently below the Notch on West Sandgate Road. The shoulders will be seeded. Charlie says neighboring residents must be notified; Joe says they were contacted.

Sheila asks if two **access permits** recently submitted to Town Hall have been recorded. Sandy Reidy says she will do that.

ROAD REPORT: Jim says the Road Crew will work next on West Road, and on replacing the culvert on West Sandgate Road at Erthein Drive once work on the nearby bridge on Camden Valley Road is finished.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Board reviews the report.

SIGN ORDERS: The Board signs orders.

REVIEW OF AUGUST 5 MINUTES: Karen Tendrup motions to pass the minutes; Linda seconds; all in favor.

ADJOURN: Joe motions to adjourn; Charlie seconds; all in favor. Meeting is adjourned at 6:50.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 3 AT 6:00 IN SANDGATE TOWN HALL.

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Reidy and Linda Schmidt.

A complete recording is available by request at Sandgate Town Hall.