

SANDGATE VERMONT SELECTBOARD MINUTES - MAY 19, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE: Board members: Joe Nolan, John Phelps, Linda Schmidt, Rob Viglas. Also present: Patricia Hall, Jim Henderson, Sheila Kearns, Bill Mitchell, Lalla Pero, Julie Robertson. Minute taker: Sandy Reidy.

MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM (MERP): Tom Yandow and Nathaniel Jamison-Root, both of Project Consulting Inc. (PCI), and Callie Fishburn of the Bennington County Regional Commission join the meeting via Zoom. PCI is the firm hired to be project manager for MERP. Tom asks if the Board has questions about how the project will move forward. Joe Nolan asks if PCI would like one or more designated contacts on the Board or elsewhere in Town to communicate with on an ongoing basis. Tom says PCI would like one main contact for the work at Town Hall and one for the Town Garage. The process for handling contractor invoices is discussed. Linda Schmidt asks if PCI uses any type of shared tracking tool that allows the company and its client to see where the elements of the project are at any given time. Tom says PCI will keep the Board updated and that he has begun looking for additional sources of state funding for the project. He says PCI will need the Town Hall and Garage contacts to (1) facilitate bid and invoice handling, and (2) give access to Town Hall and the Garage (for contractors and others) as needed. PCI understands that the Board meets only twice per month to make decisions; PCI will incorporate that timing into its work with contractors and others. PCI will let Linda know when they need to be included on any given Board Meeting agenda. Nathaniel Jamison-Root says a Gantt chart will be shared with the Board to show overall progress.

LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN (LEMP): Linda says the annual revision to this plan is due to Vermont Emergency Management on June 1. She has made updates and shows them to the other Board members, who agree with the changes. Rob Viglas volunteers to replace Karen Tendrup as one of three contacts on the Board. Linda will submit the updated document to Bill Jones at the BCRC, who will send it to VEM.

MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: Bill Mitchell says he has reviewed the Town's existing emergency plans and that the lack of potable water and cooking facilities in Town Hall should be addressed. He asks if the kitchen in the church could be used in an emergency. Jim Henderson presents to the Board a Request for Proposal, which, with the Board's approval, he will send to at least three vendors who can install the filtration system and expansion tank needed to fix the water system. All agree, however, that first the water should be re-tested. Joe asks if the water at the church can be tested under the MTAP grant. Jim will look into this, and the Board of Trustees of the church will be contacted.

May 19, 2025

CLIMATE CATALYST GRANT: Jim asks about **first-aid supplies for Town Hall**. Linda says this \$1,500 grant was awarded last year; she has a list of basic supplies and is setting up a tax-exempt account for the Town with Rescue Essentials to place an order. This week Linda was informed of a program through the Bennington Rescue Squad to make certified refurbished AEDs available to communities at a low cost, and she asks the Board for approval to obtain an **AED for the Town Garage** and pay for it through this grant; approval is given, and Linda will contact Bennington Rescue.

ROAD REPORT: Joe says the Road Crew has been hauling gravel and fixing washouts from the recent rain. They spent some time in Arlington last week, helping its road crew replace a culvert (to return the favor for Arlington's help with the box culvert at Erthein Road last fall). Lalla Pero says part of **West Road** is in very bad shape. Joe and Jim say this has been discussed with Jay Wilson and is a priority for the next few days. Jim is in touch with Jay about the timing of projects covered by Grant in Aid for this year and next, including work on West Road.

CITIZEN CONCERNS: Patricia Hall reads a statement she has prepared about the handling of two cardboard boxes that she asked a friend to leave for her at Town Hall for pickup after **Green Up Day**, and that were rejected by the Road Crew. She gives details of the incident, and she believes the Road Crew overreacted in response by contacting the Cambridge Police [her statement and a list of questions for the Board are now with the Town Clerk]. She asks for an apology from the Road Crew for her and for her friend. She says Sandgate has always had a liberal policy surrounding Green Up Day, one that allows household items to be left at Town Hall for pickup. She asks if this policy has changed and has been documented anywhere. She acknowledges that someone took advantage of the Town's liberality this year by leaving a large number of tires (which the Town must pay to dispose of). There is general discussion about what is allowable and not, and general agreement that rules must be established and clearly communicated to residents for next year. Jim mentions the Bennington County Hazardous Waste Facility, available for dropping off paint and other hazardous materials. Sandy Reidy, Green Up Day Director, says she is already planning how to communicate rules for next year; Patricia offers to help with this. Julie Robertson says the State rules surrounding Green Up Day are clear—the cleanup is intended for roadside trash, and household garbage is not permitted—and she is unaware of a more permissive approach in Sandgate. Jim says this issue should be raised at the next Town Meeting. Lalla points out the small number of Green Up bags at Town Hall relative to household trash and raises the larger issue of littering in general in Town. She asks for anti-littering signage to be set up and fines set and enforced. Patricia reiterates that she wants to help with Green Up Day communication next year. Jim says Patricia has made this a positive situation, and the Board thanks her for raising the issue.

OTHER BUSINESS: Sandy says Karen Tendrup's term as **health officer** is up at the end of May. Responsibility for this office defaults to the Board Chair; alternatives are discussed. A form is signed for extension of the **Grand List deadline**. John Phelps asks the Board to consider giving Linda a raise for the large volume of work she does for the Board; Sandy points out there is a budget line item for a **Board Secretary**. Linda thanks John for the mention; she says her biggest Board workload concern this year is communication surrounding the complex MERP project, which she does not have time to handle. John offers to be the Town Hall contact for this project.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The treasurer distributes the report to the Board.

SIGN ORDERS.

REVIEW OF APRIL 21 AND MAY 5 MINUTES: Rob motions to approve both sets of minutes; John seconds; all in favor.

ADJOURN: Linda motions to adjourn; Joe seconds; all in favor.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON MONDAY JUNE 2 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.