Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 24th, 2025

In attendance: Selectboard Chair Howard Hall, Selectboard Member Zach Weaver, Town Clerk/Treasurer Kyle Rowe, Road Foreman Rick Cloutier, Road Crew Jeff Stone, Richard Jackson, Jeanne Jackson, Kathy Kennett, Charles Kennett, Bob Groff, Liz Haenel, Maggie Catillaz, Michael Catillaz, Paula Moore, Jaime Dayton, M'Lissa Dayton, Sharon Ashcraft, David Rheume

Via Zoom: Paulette Bogan, Reece Jaring

1. Howard called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. Additions/deletions to the agenda-There were none.
3. Howard motioned to approve the minutes from the 2/10/25 Selectboard Meeting, Zach seconded, **VOTE-2 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
4. The Selectboard reviews the AP and Payroll Warrants, Howard motioned to approve the AP/Payroll Warrants, Zach seconded, **VOTE-2 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
5. The Selectboard then heard the Road Foreman's Report;
    a. The crew is cleaning out culverts to open the ditches
    b. One of the trucks went down during the storm, it is fixed now, however the bed chain will have to be changed soon.
    c. Kathy Kennett asked how many culverts will need to be replaced in the Town?
        i. The RF responded 6 to 10 larger ones, and several smaller ones.
        ii. The Highway department is waiting on the structures grant to replace as many as needed.
    d. Sharon Ashcraft asked about the culvert on the bottom of Spaulding road being plugged.
        i. The RF said he will look into it.
    e. She also asked why the town has 2 trucks?

i. The RF responded that it keeps the crew able to work, both in ditching in the summertime, and plowing in the wintertime. It also means the town has some redundancy when a truck gets damaged or becomes inoperable, meaning that work can continue.

f. She also asked about salt and its possible flow into the lake.
   i. The RF responded that the town uses a salt/sand mix to reduce salt use, and uses sugar beet juice as well to reduce road salting. The trucks are pre-programmed to disperse a certain amount, and the Town's trucks are set to the same level. It was noted that though Vermont is not a bare road state, the Town has a responsibility to maintain safe roads during storms.

g. Jennne Jackson asked how many culverts the town has on hand?
   i. The RF said there were several on hand, ready to be used. He added that at least 2 major culverts need to be replaced soon, along Panton Rd.

h. M'Lissa Dayton asked about the Ash Tree Removal Grant.
   i. The C/T noted that we have a plan with Vallencourt for Ash tree removal, and we will proceed as soon as is reasonable. It was further noted that we can access 2/3rds of the funds right now in the grant to pay for that work, but nothing has been sought right now, as no work had been performed yet.

i. Jaime Dayton asked about best practices for paving;
   i. The RF reminded people about the Addison County Road Foreman meeting happening at the Town Hall on Wednesday, February 26th at 1030, open to the public for an information session. He also said the town uses the standards set down by the AoT and the Codes and Standards to make determinations about when roads need to be repaved. Paving plans are always subject to change.
   ii. The RF also noted that he would like to see roads upgraded from Class 3 to Class 2, to get more money from the state.

j. It was noted by several people they were grateful for the road crews work during storms, and they really appreciate them.

6. The C/T gave his report;
   a. Elections are well handled, no major issues
   b. Looking for 1 more volunteer for Election Day
   c. The C/T thanked all those who are volunteering to help the Town Office with the backlog of filing.
   d. It was noted there were no major fluctuations in the Town's financial position since last Selectboard meeting.

e. The pre-audit work for RHR Smith has been completed, and the Office has moved onto the audit.
f. The Treasurer's Office has established an official relationship with Becky Condon, who will be performing both bank and NEMRC module reconciliation.
g. Several questions were asked about the records backlog;
    i. The C/T responded that he wasn't sure if the new file cabinets were fireproof, but would check on it.
    ii. The record retention policy probably needs to be re-examined.
    iii. There are digital ways to store documents that the T/C will look into.
    iv. It was generally noted we need a full accounting of what we have before we make any changes.
h. M'Lissa Dayton asked several questions about where the Town was in its current budget;
    i. The C/T noted that the Budget to Actual is showing a reasonable percentage for the position in the current Fiscal Year.
    ii. It was additionally noted that there are no major or glaring errors, or money amounting to significant amounts missing or unaccounted for, including taxes.
    iii. More information will be presented at Town Meeting.

7. The Selectboard began to discuss the Local Emergency Management Plan;
    a. It was agreed to add the Town Clerk and Road Foreman as authorized spenders in case of emergency
    b. Since the EMC has been unable to get in touch with the potential REMC candidate, the overall LEMP will be tabled until that happens.
8. The Selectboard moved on the discussion of the Town Hall Use Agreement;
    a. The C/T noted that the PACIF insurance adjustor was satisfied with the Town Hall and Offices.
    b. The C/T asked the Selectboard to approve the Town Hall Usage Policy, which would change the current policy to allow for protection from lawsuits, and give the town legal protection in a number of areas. It would also ask for a suggested donation of $10 from Panton residents and $25 from non-Panton residents to use the Town Hall. There would also be $100 suggested donation for reoccurring events at the Town Hall.
        i. Discussion ensued, where it was noted that the SB has faith in the C/T's agreement, and as this issue has been discussed for several weeks, and is reflective of best practices from the lawyers and insurance agents at PACIF, they would like to see it enacted.
        ii. Zach made a motion to accept the Town Hall Usage Policy, Howard seconded the motion, **VOTE-2 In Favor, 0 Opposed**

9. The C/T asked to table the Public Records Request Policy until after Town Meeting, with an announcement to make sure we get through public comment.
10. The C/T proposed that Lister be added to the job description of Assistant Clerk.
    a. It was generally agreed that this might not be possible, and that more research on this issue needs to be done before the change is made.
11. The Selectboard began discussing the expenditure of funds from the Digitization/IT Reserve Fund to pay for the Town Hall sound equipment.
    a. The C/T asked the SB to allow those expenses to be charged to that fund. Some discussion ensued, and it was determined that the total amount should be noted at a future SB meeting.
    b. Zach motioned to approve the expenditure, Howard seconded, **VOTE-2 In Favor, 0 Opposed.**
12. In answer to a previous question, the C/T reported that he was covered under the PACIF insurance policy as to being bonded.
13. During public comment;
    a. A comment was made about the dedication in the Town Report, and a desire to see it remain among volunteers and residents.
    b. It was noted that the SB should return to their previous general policies as to public comment and the way the meetings are structured.
    c. A question was asked about the boundary issue between Vergennes and Panton;
        i. It was noted the Town needs more information, and will be working hard on this issue.
    d. A question was asked if the Truck Loan can be refinanced;
        i. The C/T said he will take a look into that.
14. Howard made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m., Zach seconded,-**VOTE 2 In Favor, 0 Opposed**