Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 26th, 2025

In attendance:, Selectboard Member Reece Jaring, Selectboard Member Zach Weaver, Clerk/Treasurer Kyle Rowe, Jeanne Jackson, Richard Jackson, Nick Jackson, David Jackson, Bob Groff, Debbie Brace, Kathy Kennett, Charles Kennett, David Rheume, M'Lissa Dayton, Sharon Ashcraft, Mary Rudd

Via Zoom: Selectboard Vice Chair Teresa Boucher, Zoning Administrator David Martini

1. Teresa called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. The C/T asked for Item 14, Executive Session to discuss HR issues to be removed from the agenda.
3. The SB began discussion on board organization;
    a. Teresa nominated Zach Weaver to be the Selectboard Chair
    b. Reece nominated Teresa to be the Selectboard Chair
    c. Discussion ensued over the rules and selection of the chairperson
        i. The C/T stated that he believed the board could act and vote in a normal fashion (the quorum issue generated by the increase to 5 members notwithstanding) when it came to its internal organization and governance.
        ii. Teresa stated she was hesitant to take the chair position as she was split in a lot of directions at the time.
        iii. Reece asked if this would until the 2nd/Special Town Meeting or for a full year?
            1. Teresa responded that it would be fine if the issue was revisited after the Special Town Meeting/Election in May. Zach agreed.
        iv. Due to that, Reece seconded the motion to elect Zach Weaver as the selectboard chairperson until after the election on May 15th.
        v. **VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
        vi. Zach nominated Teresa to stay on as Vice Chair until after the election on May 15th. Reece seconded that-**VOTE-3 In favor, 0 Opposed**

4. The SB began discussion on the Rules of Procedure
    a. The C/T noted that the SB Rules of Procedure should be renewed annually, and the last copies available were from 2019. The C/T presented a new draft, noting that the only changes were the dates/days of the week the SB would meet, add a printed name in addition to the signature line at the end of the document, and the location of noticing and posting around the town.
    b. Kathy Kennett suggested that the Chairperson shouldn't be allowed to make motions at the SB meetings.
        i. The C/T noted that Robert's Rules of Order and Vermont State Law make no provision/say nothing about limiting the chairpersons ability to make motions. Additionally, VLCT's guidance indicates that the chairperson has all the same rights and responsibilities as any other SB member.
        ii. Reece noted that with the expansion of the board, it would provide greater possible viewpoints. He also asked if there was any reason not to wait until after the meeting/election on May 15th.
            1. The C/T responded no, and stated that technically the SB was still operating and would continue to operate under the 2019 copy of the rules of procedure.
        iii. Zach asked to table this until a future date.
5. The SB began consideration of approving minutes from previous SB meetings and the Town Meeting.
    a. The C/T noted that the Town Meeting was technically a SB meeting, and could be approved. It was noted that there was some awkwardness around which SB members were present during the meetings to allow for approval
        i. Zach motioned to approve the minutes on the 24th of February, Teresa seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
        ii. Zach motioned to approve the minutes on the 6th of March, Teresa seconded-**VOTE 3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
        iii. Reece motioned to approve the minutes on the 19th of March, Teresa seconded-**VOTE 3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
        iv. Reece motioned to approve the minutes from the Town Meeting, Teresa seconded-**VOTE 3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
6. The SB began discussion on approving AP/Payroll warrants
    a. Some awkwardness was noted about quorum needed, however Teresa said she would approve the minutes remotely, and come into sign the warrants.
    b. The C/T noted that there was one bill not in the document for inclusion, the town's phones had been hacked, and the C/T was disputing the charges.
    c. Zach made a motion to approve the AP/Payroll warrants, Reece seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
7. The C/T gave his updates

a. The Clerk's Office sent a letter to everyone in Town with details and deadlines of the Special Town Meeting. It was reiterated that the deadline for filing nominating petitions and Consent of Candidate forms for inclusion on the ballots was April 7th.
b. The C/T asked the SB if they wanted to host a candidates night;
    i. It was agreed that it would be a good use of time, and it will be part of a regular SB meeting, after the 7th of April.
c. The C/T asked the SB if they'd like to add a fee for one time or special events that require a liquor license;
    i. The SB declined to add a fee at this time.
d. The C/T noted that the town had new tax maps, and they were posted online and available for use and inspection in the Clerk's Office.
e. The C/T began discussion of the MOU between Panton and Waltham for use of the Salt Shed at the Town Garage Complex, and that it was in process, and will continue to develop as the town approaches the special town meeting.
f. The C/T discussed the accident on Hopkins Rd, which will require the replacement of a guardrail. It was noted that the Clerk's Office is handling it, and will hopefully file a claim through the insurance of the party responsible.
g. The C/T discussed Localminutes.org, a free to use AI system that organizes and can answer questions, drawing its answers from Selectboard minutes. The town is really excited to use this technology, and if it proves fruitful for the town, will consider making a small donation, as the company is donation based.
h. The C/T mentioned that the road network inventory is still in progress, and will be a great resource for the town.
i. The C/T noted that the in person audit is scheduled for April 8th, 9th, and 10th, and the Clerk's Office is looking forward to the successful completion of the audit.

8. The SB began discussion on the appointed positions and committee positions.
    a. The C/T updated the SB on the status of which positions were available, and what documentation was updated on the website to keep track of it.
        i. The C/T invited Bob Groff to speak;
            1. He said that he was grateful to the town and the employees for all the help they provided and appreciated being able to serve the town. He announced he was going to step down as the Emergency Management Coordinator, and thanked everyone again. It was noted that who successor would have big shoes to fill, a sentiment acknowledged by everyone.
        ii. The C/T detailed all the positions open and available, which include Fence Viewer, Inspector of Coal, Surveyor of Lumber, EMC, Town Advisor, Addison County Solid Waste District Rep and Alternate, Addison County Regional Planning Commission Rep and Alternate, Green Up Dat

Coordinator and Co-Chai, E911 Coordinator, and DRB member. He added that the current holders of several of these positions would be willing to stay on for another term.

iii. The SB noted that the C/T should get the initial information on each candidate, and bring them to the SB, and invite them to the SB meetings.
iv. Reece added that we should consider anyone who is interested in these roles.
v. The C/T noted there is interest from Ric Plaisance in the Tree Warden position, will arrange for his to come before the SB.
vi. The C/T noted that Sharon Ashcraft has expressed interest in Inspector of Coal and Surveyor of Lumber positions.
    1. A separate issue was raised as to what would happen to the wood from the ash tree removal
        a. The C/T said that he will check again with Rick and update the town and SB.
        b. It was noted that it could be given to families in need in the town.
vii. Zach motioned to appoint Sharon Ashcraft as Inspector of Coal and Surveyor of Lumber, Reece seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
viii. Reece motioned to appoint Debbie Brace as the Fence Viewer, Teresa seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
ix. It was requested that Wally Reed from Ferrisburgh should let them know when the next meeting is. Teresa noted that she has been working with that committee, and can continue to do so.
x. The remaining committee appointments were put on hold temporarily.

9. The SB began discussion of the Panton Grant Policy Revision
    a. The C/T began by apologizing, he had misunderstood the policy, and applied for 2 grants to cover a project. Both grants were less than $1000, and required no match or in kind match from the town.
    b. The C/T read the grant policy;
        i. “The Town of Panton recognizes the importance of applying for grants to augment the town’s budget. Grants make it possible for the town to expand its capabilities while balancing its budget and potentially reducing the need to increase taxes. When the Town is awarded a grant, it assumes responsibility for meeting the grant’s stipulations. The Town needs to ensure that a grant does not conflict with its future intentions and goals, and for certain grants, the town may also incur financial or in-kind liabilities. For these reasons, pursuing a grant, where proposed by a town employee, official/and or official town body, volunteer or any other person

acting on behalf of the town, must be approved by the selectboard before an application is initiated."

ii. The C/T proposed the following revision;

1. "The Town of Panton recognizes the importance of applying for grants to augment the town's budget. Grants make it possible for the town to expand its capabilities while balancing its budget and potentially reducing the need to increase taxes.When the Town is awarded a grant, it assumes responsibility for meeting the grant's stipulations. The Town needs to ensure that a grant does not conflict with its future intentions and goals, and for certain grants, the town may also incur financial or in-kind liabilities. For these reasons, any town employee, official/official town body, volunteer, or any other person acting on behalf of the town must seek approval of the Selectboard before a grant application is initiated. The Town Clerk and Treasurer may initiate a grant application without Selectboard pre-approval if they have determined that the town would not incur any financial or in-kind responsibility, and that the fulfilling of the grant would not be detrimental to Town business, however they would be required to inform the Selectboard at the next available opportunity of grants applied for, its purpose, and reasoning behind the application."

c. The C/T noted that this would only allow for the C/T to apply for the grant.

d. A general discussion ensued;

i. It was noted that this would give the C/T some flexibility in applying for grants.

ii. It was further noted that the SB didn't have to approve grants applied for by the C/T, and that language should be included in the revision.

iii. M'Lissa Dayton noted that the C/T shouldn't have the authority to approve grant applications, and that authority should remain with the SB.

iv. The C/T was asked to email the proposal to the SB before the next meeting.

10. The SB began discussion on the Rural Roadside Ash Tree Removal Grant

a. The C/T noted that there was an additional grant from the Agency of Natural Resources, for between $6000-$12,000 to allow for the removal of additional ash trees. In between the time the Caring for Canopies grant was awarded and now, inflation and price increases had reduced the amount of ash trees that would be removed by a significant amount. This grant would allow for additional trees to be added back into the plan. There was no matching funds or in-kind match needed for this grant.

b. A discussion of this grant ensued;

i. It was asked if the tree work was put out for bids
    1. The C/T would find out the details and make the SB aware at the next meeting.
ii. It was noted that the original grant called for 100% match
    1. The C/T would investigate that and let the SB know at the next meeting.
iii. It was noted that the wood from the cutting should be shared/used.

c. Zach made a motion to apply for the Rural Roadside Grant, Reece seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0-Opposed**

11. The SB began a discussion of the MOU with Addison for the traffic signals.
    a. The C/T laid out what the MOU would cover, basically protecting the town and the town's equipment from damage, and providing benefit to the other town in case of damage. It would also provide the right of first refusal on any future sale of the traffic signal. This document was generated to codify the existing tacit arrangement between the two towns that already exists.
    b. The SB signed the MOU, and agreed to send it to Addison for their Selectboard's consideration.
12. The SB then entertained Public Comment;
    a. Kathy Kennett asked if there was security problem at Town Hall, given missing equipment as reported in the newspaper.
        i. The C/T responded that the snowblower was take by the Road Crew to clear the deck of an elderly cancer survivor, and that the item mentioning the stolen television was a mistake on the part of the newspaper.
    b. M'Lissa Dayton was concerned with the insurance liability on any potential MOU between Waltham and Panton
        i. The C/T said he would look into it, and provide the document to the SB for their review.
        ii. It was noted that Rick should be present at the meeting between the SB's.
    c. Several requests were raised regarding information people desired in the town report.
        i. Births, deaths, and marriages by name
            1. It was added that this might be a potential security issue.
        ii. Delinquent taxes, if not by name, then totals.
    d. Sharon Ashcraft expressed interest in the EMC position
13. Seeing no further comment, Zach made a motion to adjourn, Reece seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
14. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.