Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 23th, 2025

In attendance: Selectboard Member Reece Jaring, Selectboard Chairperson Zach Weaver, Clerk/Treasurer Kyle Rowe, Jeanne Jackson, Richard Jackson, Nick Jackson, Debbie Brace, Charlie Kennett, Kathy Kennett, Janice Moulton, Robert Moulton, Abby Matson, Mary Rudd, Robert T. DeGraaf, Sharon Ashcraft

Via Zoom: Vice Chair Teresa Boucher, Mikayla DeGraaf, Mo

1. Teresa called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.
2. There were several changes to the agenda;
    a. Emergency Management Coordinator was added to Item 6
    b. Updated Language on Panton/Waltham MOU was added as item 11
    c. AP/Payroll Warrants was moved to end of agenda.
    d. The appointment items were moved to before the candidate remarks.
3. The Selectboard reviewed the minutes from 4/9/25 and the 2nd Charter Amendment Hearing
    a. Teresa motioned to approve the minutes from 4/9/25, Reece seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
    b. It was decided that the 2nd Charter hearing was informational, and minutes and a recording were available for public consumption, but as there was not a SB quorum present at the hearing, the minutes would remain in draft form.
4. The Selectboard began discussion on appointments;
    a. It was noted that Mary Rudd, the previous DRB Chair would be a good resource, and would be stepping down after the May 15th elections, but wouldn't "leave the town in a lurch". It was additionally noted that Bethanie Farrell was also going to be stepping down, but would remain for a few more meetings to see through the transition.

b. The T/C explained some of the basics of the position, and the nature of the work, as well as the importance of participation on the Town Plan and land use. There were no further questions.
c. Zach made a motion to appoint Abby Matson to the DRB/PC, Reece seconded- **VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
d. The T/C stated there is still one seat on the DRB/PC available, and that more adds will be posted on Front Porch Forum and probably in the newspaper.
e. The next meeting of the DRB/PC will be held on June 12th, at 6:00pm.
f. The T/C informed the Selectboard that there was still a seat available on the Maple Broadband, they meet once per month, usually 90 minutes, updates and a business meeting. They ask board members to attend 11 meetings per year.
    i. The Selectboard asked to the T/C to keep posting for the position
g. The T/C stated that Sharon Ashcraft resigned from the EMC position, and so it was available. The T/C stated that the distinction between Emergency Management Director and Emergency Management Coordinator wasn't made clear, and apologized for that. The T/C went on to explain some of those distinctions, and why there were two separate positions. The T/C suggested the SB appoint Kyle Rowe, the Town Clerk/Treasurer to the EMC temporarily to allow for completion of the LEMP and associated documents, and that the T/C would be happy to step down when a volunteer was found.
    i. Kathy Kennett asked if the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator was an appointed position.
        1. The T/C defined the REMC rep as the EMC from the town, and the REMC would elect their own officers and such. The T/C will remove that position from the website as one made by appointment.
h. It was noted that there is a level of training recommended, but not required for the EMD. The T/C mentioned there was also an assignment of duties that will be filled out and ready to go at a future meeting.
i. It was decided to leave the EMD position open, with the SB as a whole acting as default for the time being.
j. Zach motioned to the appoint Kyle Rowe, the Town Clerk/Treasurer to the Interim Emergency Management Coordinator, Teresa seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**

5. The Selectboard invited the candidates for Selectboard to speak;
    a. The T/C read a statements from Kirsten De La Cruz, who was home ill
        i. "My name is Kirsten De La Cruz, I have been a proud resident of Panton for 30 years, raising my six children and managing a small farm. With over 15 years' experience serving on the Panton Development Review Board and Planning Commission, as well as representing Panton on the

ANWSD School Board. I have been actively involved in our community's growth and decision making. Additionally, I have served as the president of the Vergennes Booster Club for the past 10 years. I believe it is essential to stay informed about what's happening in our community and to ensure that residents feel comfortable having their voices heard. If elected to the Selectboard, I will be committed to open communication, advocating for our town's needs, and working toward meaningful, positive change.

ii. Robert DeGraaf spoke next;
    1. He was born and raised in Panton, owns a family farm and store in town, looking to fill an empty position and be part of the community.

iii. Debbie Brace spoke next;
    1. She has lived in Panton for 48 years, she isn't the current president of the Lions Club, but has been the president twice in the past. She isn't currently on Vergennes Area Rescue, but was for 20 years, and is a lifetime member.
    2. She wants to help where it is needed. She has nothing bad to say about the other two candidates, they would both make excellent candidates. She is not afraid to voice her opinions, and used to work for Panton with her husband, a former town Road Foreman. She isn't a grant writer, but brings common sense, and a sense of what we do and don't need. Wants to get back to preventing problems, and being proactive. Wants to practice what is right, not what is easy.

6. The T/C gave his updates;
    a. The Special Town Meeting is going well, and ballots will be printed soon.
    b. There will be a BCA meeting soon, and we will need election volunteers.
    c. PACIF has agreed to reach out on behalf of the town to seek money from the driver who destroyed the guardrail, we are waiting to hear back from them.
    d. All the FEMA documents have been submitted, and the Panton Rd culvert replacement is being considered for a project as well.
    e. The T/C reported on the budget to actual-the town is doing well, with approximately 81% of the budget expended with 60 days left in the fiscal year. This number will improve if the FEMA reimbursement comes in. This budget number reflects a few of the larger payments the town makes, with a few more to go. Non-tax revenues were up, thanks in part to the funds being kept in an higher interest bearing account. Interest will be allocated at the end of the FY to the individual reserves that "earned" that interest.
    f. It is Tax Time, and the second payment for the 24-25 Tax years are due May 1st. There is a new method for tracking tax payments that the T/C is happy with.

g. The T/C is working on fixing an error in the AP, a run was duplicated by mistake, and the T/C and Fee Accountant are working to correct it.
h. The education tax payment is showing correctly as a liability, and the estimated tax payments left to collect are showing exactly where they should be at.
i. There are multiple instances of budget line items coming in lower than expectations, highway expenses being most notable. There are several instances of over budgeted expenses, most notably in professional services for the additional financial and professional services the town needed to prepare of the audit and go over the books.
j. The T/C is working on end of the year procedures, and will have set policies in place to make sure this end of FY25 goes smoother than FY24
k. The T/C is working on Internal Controls, which was an area of concern for town residents. The office has established much more rigorous controls over making and reviewing payments to prevent one person from doing or being responsible for every aspect of a transaction.
l. Kathy Kennett asked when the audit report can be expected;
    i. The T/C said hopefully end of May, and copies will be available to any and all people, and available online.
m. The T/C added that the office is trying to shift as many payments as possible to ACH/Electronic pay, as the post office is losing checks, and causing issues for the office.
n. The T/C noted that Green Up Day bags are available, and signups and other information is available at the Clerk's office.
    i. Teresa asked if the SB wanted to do donuts and coffee on Green Up Day
    ii. Zach asked is the T/C could ask Paula if she was interested in that.

7. The Selectboard began discussion on the E911 Issue on Turkey Lane
    a. The T/C and E911 Coordinator met in mid April to discuss this issue. They propose the following solution;
        i. Turkey Lane, from where it meets the private road, to where it proceeds forward to the lake, should be renamed as a different road. The E911 address of the effected houses would be minimal and would allow the town to manage that section of road separately.
        ii. It was noted that John Viskup should be asked what he would like the road to be called, and that his input should be sought on this. The SB felt as though it was their due diligence to make sure this issue was handled safely and fairly, and that public safety was paramount. The T/C will reach out to John Viskup.
8. The Selectboard began discussion on the PACIF grant update
    a. The T/C made a mistake on the amount of funding needed to reach the match from the PACIF grant. We need at least $200 to get the 50% match. The T/C

asked for the SB to add an exterior camera for the town hall, and that addition would put the grant over the threshold.

b. Zach motioned to add this camera to the grant, Teresa seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**

9. The Selectboard began discussion on updating the language of the proposed Charter Amendment
    a. The T/C mentioned there was concern and the potential for confusion over the language in the charter amendment over whether the votes needed to remove would equal the total number of voters in the election, or just the votes that officer received. The T/C checked with VLCT, and they confirmed that it was slightly confusing, as there was no precedent. The T/C proposed new language stating
        i. (d) The officer shall be removed only if at least as many registered voters of the Town vote to approve the petition as voted to elect said officer in the most recent election wherein the officer was elected, or at least one-third of the registered voters of the Town vote, whichever is fewer."
        ii. This language was vetted by VLCT, and said would accomplish what the SB wanted.
    b. Teresa motioned to approve the new language for the Charter Amendment, Zach seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
10. The Selectboard began discussion of the Panton/Waltham MOU
    a. The new language based on the discussion between the two selectboards was noted, including language specifying Waltham's need to provide Panton with copies of quotes and work schedules, Panton compensating Waltham for improvements of the salt shed, based on a depreciation schedule, if the agreement is terminated, and allowing Waltham to continue to store materials at the shed until April 1st if the agreement is terminated between October 1st and April 1st.
    b. A general discussion of these points ensued, and the T/C informed the SB to be on the lookout for further developments.
11. The Selectboard opened the floor for public comment;
    a. The T/C described the upcoming zoning regulation changes that the DRB/PC will be holding a hearing about in June. These include a noise ordinance and granting the Zoning Administrator the ability to enforce zoning regulations.
        i. A general discussion ensued on these, with it generally noted that more discussion will be held by the DRB/PC at their hearing in June.
        ii. Kathy Kennett reminded the SB to examine health insurance plans and policies for the town.
        iii. Sharon Ashcraft asked if the Vorsteveldts were to get permission to run a drainage line through the VPWD property would need an easement from the town to cross the town ROW.
            1. The T/C will investigate this.

2. General discussion ensued on this issue.

12. The Selectboard began to review AP/Payroll warrants
    a. It was noted that the SB likes the review of the AP/Payroll at the end of the meeting
    b. The Selectboard discussed a number of issues during signing these documents
        i. The T/C noted that the Town may have a ROW on Adamas Ferry Rd.
        ii. Constant Input during discussions can make governance difficult.
        iii. The SB should act on rules of procedure as soon as possible.
        iv. Meetings should try to be a little faster and more efficient
        v. The T/C is concerned about inflation for prices, and will continue to monitor the situation.
        vi. Reece motioned to approve the AP/Payroll Warrants, Zach seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**
13. Zach motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m., Teresa seconded-**VOTE-3 In Favor, 0 Opposed**