Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, February 12, 2024

In attendance: Selectboard Chair Howard Hall, Selectboard Vice-Chair Teresa Boucher, Selectboard Member Zach Wever, Clerk-Treasurer Maggie McCormick, Mel Hawley, Spencer Putnam

Via Zoom: Emergency Management Coordinator Bob Groff

1. Howard called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

2. Additions/deletions to agenda: Road Foreman will attend next meeting, so removed from agenda.

3. Approval of the minutes of the January 24, 2024 Selectboard Meeting

Teresa moved to accept the minutes as written, Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

4. Emergency Management Coordinator's Report
    a. Bob asked if Panton had any events planned in conjunction with the April 8, 2024 solar eclipse.
        i. There are no events planned.
        ii. Bob is attending the virtual eclipse safety briefings
    b. Spring flooding seminar
        i. The flood risk predictions for Panton are normal
        ii. There is limited snowpack and limited ice on waterways to add to flood risk.
    c. Weather patterns are expected to switch from El Nino to La Nina in the spring
    d. The LHMP has been submitted to the state which means Panton is qualified for highest level or relief funding should a disaster be declared.

5. Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) Grant Participation
    a. Spencer Putnam, Climate Economy Action Center (CEAC) of Addison County

i. CEAC is a nonprofit with the mission to reduce carbon emissions in Addison County while protecting the economy.
ii. CEAC developed a climate action plan for Addison County.
iii. CEAC has worked with Vermont Low Income Trust for Electricity (VLITE)
iv. CEAC wants to stand up the Energy Navigator program:
    a. Navigator would provide one-on-one coaching for individuals to pursue energy efficiency through available programs.
    b. Has received a grant for $65,000 and is looking for another $65,000 in funding from Addison County towns.
    c. MERP grants of $4000 are available to each town
    d. CEAC is already advertising the Energy Navigator job and has received applications.
    e. Two other towns have committed. Outreach to all towns is underway.
v. Howard stated that the Town's infrastructure is as energy efficient as possible with the solar microgrid, solar panels at the town garage, heat pumps in town hall and the garage, etc.
vi. Maggie asked about the grant application, reporting requirements, and what happens if they do not get enough member towns to fund the additional $65,000.
    1. Spencer answered that the grant application is a single page, CEAC would manage grant reporting as the subrecipient, and they will seek private funding to augment any shortfall from the outreach to towns.
vii. Howard asked about negatives of participation
    1. Spencer stated he did not believe there were any downsides to participation.
    2. Zach noted that failure to participate could be construed to mean Panton is not concerned about efficiency.

Howard moved to pursue a MERP grant to support the CEAC Energy Navigator position. Zach seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

6. Town Borders
    a. Mel Hawley showed a land use map which is overlayed on plot maps an area outlined that represents the Vergennes borders per charter definition.
    b. The borders have been in question since at least since 1990.
    c. Until 2006, statute on town lines stated that any border acquiesced to by the respective towns shall be the town line. Mel and Tim Cowan did research that had them believe the borders were acquiesced to.

d. Mel has asked the Vergennes City Council to extend the sidewalk along Panton Road in front of his house, but the council stated a reluctance to build a sidewalk in an area that might belong to Panton.
e. Teresa noted that Panton is extremely interested in resolving the border issue, but this is in limbo and related to the bypass outcome.
f. Howard reiterated that the bypass seems to be a foregone conclusion to build a bridge. The group discussed Route 17 as a more viable option.
g. The Selectboard determined to revisit this topic at the February 26 Selectboard meeting.

7. Arnold Bay Grant
    a. Addison County Regional Planning Commission is having trouble securing the awarded CWSP funding and suggests Panton instead apply for funding through the MTAP program.

Teresa moved to authorize the Addison County Regional Planning Commission to apply to the MTAP program on its behalf to help it fund a Scope of Work for creating 100% design plans for the Arnolds Bay Boat launch. Zach seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

8. Addison County Sheriff rate increase
    a. The Sheriff rates are increasing from $39/officer hour to $41 and the mileage fee is increasing from $0.72/mile to $1.00/mile. At current patrol hours, the monthly bill for the same patrol hours (16/month) increases approximately $70/month. Z

Zach moved to keep patrols at 16 hours/month. Teresa seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

9. Town Audit
    a. Telling & Hillman have provided the FY23 Financial Statements to the Town.
    b. Maggie reviewed the statements, received clarification on major and non-major fund figures and T&H supplied the final copy.

Zach moved to accept the FY23 audit report. Teresa seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

10. Town-Wide Reappraisal
    a. Maggie has asked RCC for an estimated percentage of the grand list total following the town-wide appraisal and expects to have that information this week.

11. Town Report
    a. Report will be sent to printer this week after final proofreading by Maggie and Suzanne.

12. Town Meeting
    a. Poll worker schedule and training
        i. Training will be scheduled for 5:00 p.m. on February 26, 2024.
    b. Potluck
        i. Eileen and Teresa will set up the online sign-up system through SignUp Genius.
    c. Rehearsal
        i. The Selectboard will invite moderator, Martha DeGraaf to a run-through on February 26, at 6:00 p.m.

13. Public comment: None.

14. Communications
    a. A purchase agreement for $$54,851 for a new Highway Department Pickup Truck was received from McGee Chevrolet.
    b. Teresa moved to sign the purchase agreement. Zach seconded. All in favor; the motion passed
    c. The regularly Selectboard meeting for the second Monday in March has been rescheduled to the second Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.
    d. Town Hall will open at 1:30 on Wednesday, March 13, 2024.
    e. The Town received official approval of the required reappraisal plan.

Teresa moved to donate $100.00 to the Vergennes Fire Department on behalf of the town in honor of town staff Jeff Stone's father, Alan Stone. Zach seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

15. Review/approval of accounts payable warrant, timesheets & payroll warrant

Zach moved to approve the warrants and timesheets. Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

16. Executive session if needed.

Howard moved to enter executive session. Teresa seconded. All in favor; the board entered executive session at 6:50 p.m.

Teresa moved to exit executive session. Zach seconded. All in favor; the board returned to open session at 7:04 p.m.

17. Adjournment

Teresa moved to adjourn the meeting. Zach seconded. All in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Maggie McCormick
Town Clerk and Treasurer