Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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In attendance: Selectboard Chair Howard Hall, Selectboard Vice-Chair Teresa Boucher, Emergency Management Coordinator Bob Groff, Road Foreman Rick Cloutier, Clerk & Treasurer Maggie McCormick, Ferrisburgh Acting Selectboard Chair Clark Hinsdale, Sharon Ashcraft

Via Zoom: Selectboard Member Zach Weaver, Town Advisor Sandy Fogg, DRB/PC Chair Mary Rudd

Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 13, 2023

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

2) Additions/deletions to agenda: None

3) Approval of the minutes of the February 13, 2023 and February 27, 2023 Selectboard meetings
   a) Tabled

4) Selectboard organization
   a) Teresa nominated Howard as Selectboard Chair. Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.
   b) Howard nominated Teresa as Selectboard Co-Chair. Teresa seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

5) Vergennes borders and bypass – Clark Hinsdale, Ferrisburgh Selectboard
   a) Clark has long been a proponent of reclaiming land Vergennes has assumed over the years through border migration.
   b) Vergennes proposed a charter change that would have set the borders as currently drawn, rather than conforming to original charter. Surveyor Tim Cowan has done a lot of research.
   c) Renewed efforts for a Vergennes bypass brought issue to head since disputed acreage along the proposed "western" route would have commercial value to add to the town's grand list.
   d) Vergennes had a committee to work on border resolution, but it dissolved when the Vergennes City Council imploded in 2020.
   e) There is a statutory procedure for resolving disputes on town boundaries.

f) If some land currently seen as belonging to Vergennes reverts to Ferrisburgh and Vergennes, each town would have the opportunity to place zoning rules into place before the bypass is constructed. Still time to have Zoning put in place prior to build
g) Howard stated that while Panton is not saying no to the bypass, the board wants to make sure Panton receives benefits that offset the impact the development would have on the rural character of Panton
h) Teresa noted that with a 50' high bridge deck and the approaches needed for trucks to cross Otter Creek, the entire portion of Panton toward the east end of Panton Road would cease to exist.
i) Clark then shifted to the Vergennes Fire Department (VFD) and the Vergennes-Panton Water District (VPWD).
    i) Ferrisburgh accounts for 26% of calls and pays 48% of the VFD operating budget
    ii) Residents in Ferrisburgh pay a 50% premium on water but VPWD does not maintain the lines.
    iii) He said both arrangements are taxation without representation.
    iv) Asked if the bypass issue bring leverage for creating a regional fire department and regional water service.
    v) Teresa asked if VLCT would have guidance on how to move forward on this.
    vi) Clark said VLCT would have history on towns that have done this.
    vii) Could an alliance of the towns agree on priorities and start at the top.
    viii) Clark noted that Adam Lougee of Addison County Regional Planning Commission cannot arbitrate between the towns, but it is within the Commission's scope of work to facilitate this type of process.
    ix) Clark noted that Vergennes has a nearly $1 municipal tax rate that exacerbates the lack of affordable housing in Vergennes.
    x) Teresa said she would reach out to VLCT and ACRPC on how to move forward on an alliance and solutions.
    xi) Howard gave Clark a copy of the Panton position letter to the PELS committee.

6) Road Foreman's Report
    a) Rick and Mike are almost done fabricating a roller for the grader. A new one would cost $55,000.
    b) The roads are so soft that plows have to carry wings to avoid damaging the roads and roadsides.
    c) Plows are not knocking down mailboxes. It happens when the heavy snow off the blade hits the box.
    d) Rick discussed the specifications for the new truck
        i) Identical to prior trucks ordered, no extras.
        ii) Delivery expected in August 2023.
        iii) The Vermont Mack truck dealer has reopened.
    e) Jeff Stone will work as needed on snow removal on Wednesday night.
    f) The "watch for pedestrians" sign has been installed on Hopkins Road.

g) Richard Jackson's well house was hit by a plow wing and the drip edge was bent. The plan was to look at it in the spring, but Richard fixed it and plans to give the bill to the Town.
h) Addison road crew will help with ditching in Panton this spring.

7) Emergency Management Coordinator's Report
   a) LEMP Approval
      i) The plan has been updated and signed by Bob and Howard. Bob will send it to ACRPC.
   b) The state has stopped reporting Covid numbers.
   c) Bob reminded people to complete the survey on the LHMP update .
      i) There is an LHMP meeting on Thursday, March 17.
   d) Bob is watching the weather: Currently a weather advisory versus a warning. He is holding off on another Front Porch Forum post so as not to fatigue the readers.

8) Tree Warden Appointment – Diana Raphael
   a) Diana volunteered to be the tree warden.
   b) Diana has been going through David's books.
      (1) Urban Forestry Program has a 10-town study that includes Panton, with a plan and recommendations for actions, including plantings for run-off mitigation.
   c) Diana stated that David developed a good relationship with Gerard when they worked on South Road trail.
   d) There is a UVM graduate student who is studying runoff from Vorsteveld Farm into Dead Creek.

Teresa moved to appoint Teresa as Tree Warden. Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

9) Appointment of Town officers
   a) Howard read the slate of prospective appointees for Town offices
      i) Town Advisor - appointed (*Sandy Fogg*)
      ii) Emergency Management Coordinator (Bob Groff)
      iii) DRB/PC
         (1) Gretchen Bailey
         (2) Catharine Hays
         (3) Anna Hopper
      iv) Dog Warden - elected no candidate
      v) Constable – elected no candidate (Jill Harter)
      vi) ACRPC - appointed (Jamie Dayton)
      vii) Alternate – no candidate
      viii) ACRPC Transportation Advisory Committee – appointed (Howard Hall)
         Alternate – no candidate
      ix) AC Solid Waste - appointed (Paul Sokal said he was willing to be reappointed)
         Alternate—no candidate
      x) 911 Coordinator – appointed (Paul Sokal)
      xi) Health Officer – appointed (Geoff Nelson)

xii) Green-Up Day Chair – appointed (Louise Giovanella)
xiii) Green-Up Day Co-Chair – appointed (Paula Moore)

Teresa moved to accept the slate as written. Teresa seconded. All in favor; the motion passed. Howard moved to appoint Jill Harter as Constable with a $300.00 stipend. Teresa seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

10) Town Meeting recap
    a) Clerk thanked the election volunteers and noted that everything went smoothly and that all ballot articles passed by large margins. Howard moved to accept the Town Meeting Minutes as written. Zach seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

11) Art show at Town Hall
    a) Marsha Chase and a group of artists are considering using Town Hall for an art show and wanted to know if they could put nails in the walls if needed.
        i) The Selectboard will not allow nails.

12) Panton Past and Present books
    a) Sharon Ashcraft found the "manuscript" and Precision Printing will print copies.
    b) Teresa moved that the Town purchase 20 copies at $10/each for resale at Town Hall.

13) Panton merchandise
    a) The Clerk noted there seems to be interest in merchandise with the Panton logo on it. Items discussed were tote bags, travel mugs, and ball caps. The Clerk will pursue options and pricing as time permits.
    b) Sharon suggested looking int Red Bubble.com, where buyers can order directly, which would eliminate the need to stock and sell merchandise at Town Hall. The group agreed that was a good idea.

14) Panton Operations Manual
    a) The Clerk and Assistant Clerk have started an outline of all the tasks that are done to keep Panton running and that outline is already four pages long.

15) Draft RFP for exterior Town Hall painting
    a) Howard has contacted several painters. Two were not interested and two have not returned his call. Matt Chabot examined the building earlier in the week and will provide a written estimate.
    b) The cost is expected to be around $40,000.
    c) The Town will put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for this job on the state proposals database and Front Porch Forum.
        i) Exterior
        ii) All surfaces no cupola
        iii) Proper prep and clean-up

iv) Insured and Bonded

16) Public comment
    a) Sharon provided information about the history of South Road Trail and has provided copies of supporting documents to the Clerk.
        i) The Selectboard at the time voted to "convert" it to a trail
        ii) The Selectboard at the time voted to discontinue use of the bridge
        iii) The default width of a trail under the Antique Roads Act is 49.5 feet.
    b) Sharon has forwarded pictures of road damage on Jersey Street to the board via email.
        i) Howard noted that there is a lot of road damage at this time because the ground is so soft.

17) Communications: None.

18) Review/approval of accounts payable warrant, timesheets & payroll warrant
    a) Teresa moved to accept the warrants and timesheets. Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.
    b)
19) Executive session to discuss personnel matters
    a) Howard moved to go into executive session Teresa seconded. All in favor; the board entered executive session at 7:09 p.m.
    b) Teresa moved to exit executive session. Zach seconded. All in favor; the board returned to open session at 7:25 p.m.

20) Adjournment
    a) Teresa moved to adjourn. Howard seconded. All in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Maggie McCormick
Clerk & Treasurer