Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 25, 2023

In attendance: Selectboard Chair Howard Hall, Selectboard Vice-Chair Teresa Boucher, Town Clerk & Treasurer Maggie McCormick

Via Zoom: Selectboard Member Zach Weaver, Emergency Management Coordinator Bob Groff, Sharon Ashcraft

1) Howard called the meeting to order at 5:48 p.m.

2) Additions/deletions to agenda: None.

3) Approval of the minutes of the September 11, 2023 Selectboard meeting
Teresa moved to approve the minutes as written. Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion carried.

4) Emergency Management Coordinator's report
   a) Bob attended the Vermont Emergency Management Conference on 9/21 and 9/22 conference. He attended a Green Mountain Power (GMP) presentation where the GMP representative indicated that adding users to the Panton Solar Microgrid was up to the Town.
   b) Andrew L'Roe of Addison County Regional Planning Commission expects to send a draft of the revised Local Hazard Mitigation Plan LHMP draft to SB by end of the week. Is willing to brief the Selectboard at an October meeting.

5) Digital radar control for speeding
   a) Sharon Ashcraft reported that the Addison County Sheriff left radar unit on Jersey Street was very effective against speeding. Sharon would like the Town to purchase one or more digital radar units that attach to speed limit signs. They are about $3000 each. Vergennes police Department was able to obtain grant funding as a law enforcement agency.

b) The clerk expressed concern about having the staff resources needed to secure and administer grants, but will investigate possibilities.

6) Public Comment was moved up in the agenda.
   a) Teresa asked about building an accessory dwelling unit on her property.

7) Fire Protection Contract
   a) Howard noted that the cost for both Waltham and Panton is very high despite the reduction of the percentage paid by each town.
   b) The Selectboard agreed that Panton needs to initiate/pursue the formation of a regional fire district.

Teresa moved to accept and sign the Vergennes Fire Protection Contract in the amount of $47, 965.90 for the period of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Howard seconded. All in favor, the motion passed.

8) Vergennes Area Rescue Squad (VARS)
   a) Howard learned through a conversation with Chris Bearor (mayor Vergennes) that Charlotte rescue has had to come into the Vergennes Area Rescue Squad's coverage area over 300 times in the past year.
   b) VARS average response time is 25 minutes, which is potentially lethal for those needing emergency medical attention.
   c) It is likely time to embody paid professional squad/personnel funded by the five towns.
   d) Howard will invite VARS municipalities and VARS administration to find out what they need to be effective.
   e) Middlebury is experiencing similar issues with personnel and response times.

9) Hiring road crew
   a) The Town has had no applicants following advertisements/postings in the Addison Independent, Seven Days, Burlington Free Press, the VTrans listserv and the VLCT online classifieds
   b) The Town will have to offer higher pay or more paid benefits or both.
   c) The possibility of offering a health insurance stipend of the same amount to all full-time employees to use at their discretion toward insurance premiums, co-pays, and other out of pocket health expenses.
   d) The clerk will survey other towns about their wages and benefits for both highway department and administrative staff.
   e) Current capital investment in highway buildings and equipment makes moving to fully contracted highway maintenance untenable.

10) Communications

a) Clerk reported that the Ferrisburgh treasurer has been contracted to provide monthly bank account reconciliation. September reconciliations were completed in an hour at $50/hour versus $149/hour for NEMRC.
b) Telling and Hillman provided an email address for potential consultant for fund accounting clean up. Clerk sent email but hasn't had a reply yet.
c) Jeff Stone will plow during his off time from the water district. Rick has another possible plow helper.
d) The regular Selectboard meeting scheduled for Monday, October 11, 2023 will be moved to Tuesday, October 12, 2023 due to the observance of Indigenous Peoples Day on October 11.

11) Review/approval of accounts payable warrant, timesheets & payroll warrant

Howard moved to accept the warrants and timesheets. Teresa seconded. All inf favor; the motion passed.

12) Executive session to discuss town administration

a) Howard moved to enter executive session. Teresa seconded. All in favor; the board entered executive session at 6:32 p.m. T
b) Terese moved to exit executive session. Howard seconded. All in favor; the board returned to open session at 6:48 p.m.

13) Adjournment

Teresa moved to adjourn. Howard seconded. All in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 6:49. P.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maggie McCormick

Town Clerk & Treasurer