

**Town of Moretown
Office of the SELECTBOARD**

DRAFT – Notice of unapproved minutes of the August 31, 2009 special joint meeting of the Selectboard and the Schoolboard for public discussion of a trail being proposed behind Moretown Elementary School, for public discussion to talk about the 2010 town budget; and for any other business.

Board members present were: Rae Washburn, John Hoogenboom, Rob Roberts, Dave Van Deusen, Stephanie Venema arrived at 6:20 p.m. and John Schmeltzer was present for the Schoolboard.

Guests included: Dara Torre, Kara and Ruby Herlihy, Hoover Austin, Mr. Van Deusen, Matt Strassberg, Kathy and Charlie Turnbaugh, Doug Reed, Julie Kitchell, Jack Wood, Liza Walker of Vermont Land Trust, Steve Robbins, Bob Mays, Ron Ward, Deborah Feldman, Cherilyn Lamson, Steve Magill, Amy Deutl, Don LaRocca, Brian Ward, Cheryl Brown – assistant to the Selectboard

Rae called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and gave a brief overview of tonight's agenda for this public forum.

Notes from public discussion included:

Trail –

- Since the last meeting Matt Strassberg has met with Fish & Wildlife biologist John Austin and Elizabeth Lord of ANR. Both have agreed to support the proposed trail with conditions. John Austin wrote John Schmeltzer a letter depicting the condition's which he will forward to the Selectboard.
- An administrative amendment to the Moretown Landfill's Land Use Permit (for the deeryard conservation easement) will be applied for. It is believed the amendment is just a formality for the file.
- The trail work may or may not be done this year depending on when the committee has approval to build the trail from both the Selectboard and the Schoolboard. The Schoolboard is behind the idea, their only concern appearing to be erosion control – the Selectboard still have to decide.

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- Discussion about: erosion being an issue with building the trail this late in the year; motorized vehicles using the trail (unauthorized) in part because of its intended 6' width; the use of heavy equipment to build the trail; children being supervised; people (other than students) being able to use the trail during school hours; getting the word out to more people that a trail is being proposed; town/school monies being spent on the trail; Safe Routes to School's involvement with the trail; multi-purposes of the trail; how the trail fits into the Forest Management Plan; how often the trail would be used by school children; future trail maintenance; insurance liabilities; the plan proposes to make the current trail safer; winter uses; how hunting will be addressed; is it a community trail or a school trail; having trail uses in writing before going forward; and about waiting until after Town Meeting discussions to go forward with building the trail.

2010 Town budget – Rae said the Selectboard has heard from the town that property taxes are too high, so we have scheduled time tonight to hear suggestions from the public that might help us to keep the 2010 budget livable. Discussion included:

- Taxpayers should have a better understanding of what they are voting for at town meeting and how if articles are approved, they impact the tax rate
- The school's portion of the tax bill is not controlled by the Selectboard
- The school building is being underutilized with enrollment down, possibly some of the town buildings could be closed and moved to the school
- Possibly sell the library and town office buildings and use the newly renovated town hall
- Get a draft budget out to early to residents for comments
- Possibly have two nights of pre-town meeting (one for town – one for school), or a week or so before town meeting, so people have more time to ask questions about articles being voted on
- Improved the budgeting process
- Form a committee to work on changing to a June 30th year end
- Provide a projected tax rate at pre-town meeting based on last year's grand list showing how budget/articles if passed, would impact the tax rate
- Having a different school tax rate for recreation/vacation homes
- Being careful about taxing second homes differently since the owners most likely do not impact municipal services
- Being sure residents are taking advantage of the income sensitivity homestead pre-bate
- Some town properties that have a residence plus other properties (such as rented houses, are being taxed as one parcel – all residential. The listers could make grand list changes that would in the end most likely increase the tax revenue

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- If someone thinks a parcel should be taxed differently, they could contact the State of Vermont Treasurer's office – Property Valuation department
- With the increase to this year's tax rate, compare the percentage of this year's delinquencies compared to last year's
- Raise the cost for a landfill ticket that residents purchase to take trash to the landfill at the 50 cent per bag rate, and raise dog licensing fees
- Send mailings to residents from the updated state-wide checklist addresses
- How bond payments are factored in the budget/tax rate
- In an effort to have public participation and informed voters and the ability to change a line item in the budget, vote on the town budget from the floor at town meeting rather than by Australian ballot; a lot of people vote by absentee ballot that consider themselves informed voters
- Support for the work of the capital budget committee; once a budget is available, get the information out to the people; the town can assess impact fees for new development once the capital budget is in place
- Most important to get information out to the public and educate taxpayers that if they vote for a piece of equipment, new building, etc, it will affect their taxes

OTHER BUSINESS:

Town Report – Rob said the 2008 audit of the town financial records is nearing completion and we will have better reports for the town report this year.

Also, we need three town auditors, two planning commissioners, and one lister immediately.

Town hall bid process – Jack Wood wanted to know the bid process for the repair work that will be done soon on the town hall.

Doug Reed explained the process as: gathering a listing of local painters (5) and of local carpenters (7); invited them to a site visit on August 5th where he provided a scope of work for the repairs and renovations; and invited them to bid on the work. Bids were received and opened by the Selectboard on August 17th. Low bidders were Hoover Austin and Steve Badger. Hoover was chosen to do the carpentry work and Steve was chosen to do the exterior and roof painting.

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Brian Ward – is worried about access remaining via the Bat Hennessey trail, with the Mazzillis foundation being so close to the trail. Brian accesses his property further up the road by this road and is concerned about the foundation and footings being allowed to remain in the town right of way.

Rae said the Selectboard only stated that the trail be determined as two rods wide, and that the Mazzillis still need a zoning permit from the Development Review Board for their addition. If they do not get a permit from the DRB, Rae believes the Mazzillis might have to remove the foundation.

Brian said he believes the foundation is 16' from the center of the Bat Hennessey trail (DRB minutes show 18') and therefore is within the town right of way (even at 2 rods wide), and also a stone retaining was built that sticks out even further into the right of way (underground) that must be considered as well. Brian is also concerned that any overhang on the structure, if allowed to remain, will prevent log trucks from using the trail to transport his lumber, and other uses as well, due to the fact that beaver pond border the other side of the road. Brian said the Selectboard have control of the roads and thinks they should act now to have the foundation removed, before the application even goes before the DRB. The DRB hearing is scheduled for September 10th.

Further discussion was tabled until the September 8th Selectboard meeting.

Town highway #24 Bridge Road adjacent to Sainsbury property – Deborah Feldman received inquiries about whether or not a structure built in the public r.o.w. by Sainsbury has been resolved. After reviewed the zoning file, she found no official documentation from the Selectboard that they accept or reject a site plan/drawing submitted by the Sainsbury's in 2003, which shows the location of the old barn, replacement shed, barn addition arena, and equipment sheds, as they relate to the old public road and land swap for new public road. No survey or deed that seemed to be the original agreement was found.

History was given by Deborah, that in 1998 a permit application from the Sainsbury's for an indoor riding arena was received. The location of the arena was too close to the public road and after discussion between the Selectboard and the Sainsbury's about relocating the right of way so the arena would be in compliance with the zoning regulations, Sainsbury's were to supply the town with a survey of a new public road, pin the road and then submit the survey and deed for the new road (which would be closer to the Mad River) to the town for recording. Though the file indicates there have been several discussions and at least one site visit with the Sainsbury's over the years, nothing other than the 2003 drawing has been received by the town. Deborah wonders if the Selectboard might take action to bring the outstanding issue to closure. Discussion was tabled until the 9/8/09 Selectboard meeting.

Library furnace - Bob Mays said they had to do work to support the area in the library where the furnace was located. Friends of the Library are financing the construction work and library books. The cost for a new oil furnace will be around \$4,500 and a new Rinnai propane heater (like what is at the town office) to heat one floor, would be about \$2,000.

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The library commissioner's would like monies from the capital reserve fund to pay for a new furnace. There is currently no heat in the library building.

Discussion followed about using the Rinnai heater that will be taken out of the town hall for the library when the new furnaces are installed as part of the renovations. Bob said that was doubtful because of duct work that would be needed.

Further discussion was tabled until the 9/8/09 Selectboard meeting. Bob will get firm pricing for the furnaces.

Town hall roof paint colors – Amazing grey was the color chosen for the roof.

Moretown Mountain Road box culvert installation – Stephanie moved to go into executive session at 9:00 p.m. for contract negotiations for a road project, whereby premature public knowledge would place the town at a disadvantage. Board assistant was invited to stay for the session. Rob seconded. All were in favor.

Stephanie moved to come out of executive session at 9:30 p.m. Dave seconded. All were in favor.

Action: Stephanie will call Kingsbury Construction and ask that they furnish their reference for installing box culverts as indicated they had, and a contract defining the scope of work they will be doing, or they will not be awarded the job, and the Selectboard will move forward with other options with talking to the next low bidder. If that doesn't work out either, discussion about how to proceed will follow at their next meeting on 9/8/09.

Warrant #'s 69, 70, 71, 72, and 73 were approved by the Board.

Overload permits were approved for: Tom Lincoln Logging
Fred Viens Excavation
Darcy Nelson

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.