

SELECTMEN MINUTES OF AUGUST 9, 2018

(Approved September 13, 2018)

- Meeting opened by Vern Worthen at 7:00 pm. Present Vern Worthen, Gerry Redlevske, Chris Tibbetts, Secretary Fran Varney, Ray Charles, Donnie and Julia Howard.
- **Minutes** from July 26th Selectmen meeting were approved as written 3-0.
- **Citizen requests**
Ray Charles was present to discuss several matters:
 - (1) What is the town doing about Hampshire Hill Cemetery? Vern responded that the town has arranged for the work to be done by Justin Furbush, but that the exact date is not known at this time.
 - (2) Are the nomination papers for town election different this year from past years? Vern responded that the state changed the nomination paper dates last year, so the dates this year are consistent with last year's.
 - (3) What is the situation with application of salt and calcium on summer roads? Vern responded that the town is applying salt on selected roads to determine what application works best, what ratio is better. Dry roads were a factor early in the summer, and recently the constant threat of thunder storms has delayed grading the roads.
 - (4) What are the rules for the positions of town clerk, tax collector, treasurer as to hours, days, vacation time, sick and personal days? Ray said this is not about the person holding the positions, and he is happy with Yolanda's work, but that he feels people have a right to know what rules there are. For example, if the office holder is sick for an extended time, what does the town do?
Selectmen responded
 - (a) that the position is elective, and the person elected sets the schedule for open hours
 - (b) the office used to be open daytimes three days a week, but a few years ago, the daytime schedule changed to four days a week
 - (c) there are no rules on sick days or personal days
 - (d) there are paid holidays
 - (e) at past town meetings, there were discussions about changing the position from elective to a hired position, but the town didn't vote to make the change presently there is an assistant training with Yolanda
 - (5) What happened with the winter roads contract?
 - (a) Local contractors were informed about the bid date, and notice was in newspaper
 - (b) By 2:59 no bids were received, and Vern Worthen submitted a bid
 - (c) At July 26 meeting, the sole bid was accepted by Selectmen Chris Tibbetts and Gerry Redlevske
 - (d) Per bid terms, the contractor must have the required equipment for the contract by October 1st, and the Selectmen will inspect the equipment on October 1st. This has been the case for many years.

Follow up question – what if the contractor can't do it? What if equipment breaks down?
Gerry responded that this year the bid terms required an additional truck for the contract, which should take care of situation when a truck or plow needs fixing.
Additional comment – Ray has an issue with a Selectman getting contract.

- (6) Ray said that if he ran for Selectman position, his work schedule is beyond his control and would cause him to miss meetings. One response was that most Selectmen have had to deal with conflicts.

Under citizen requests, there were requests for grading from people on almost every road. Dry roads were a factor early in the summer, and recently the constant threat of thunder storms has delayed grading the roads. Donnie and Selectmen agreed that as soon as the weather allows, grading will start up.

- **Summer Roads**

- (a) Roadside mowing was done
- (b) Mercer-Smithfield culvert patch bill is \$1020.42 for each town. (Vern mentioned that in the recent legislative update, he saw that a bond question will be on state ballot for money to help towns with stream crossings).
- (c) There was a washout near new hot top (near former Keith Stockford place)
- (d) More surface is needed.
- (e) Yardage information needed for Rome Road Extension.
- (f) Vern will look for pole for mirror on Hampshire Hill Road
- (g) Vern talked with Terry Warren about granite work near culvert near transfer station. Estimate is \$2000 for the job.
- (h) Salt for summer road should not be mealy. The summer road salt is not good for winter use.

There was a general discussion about how many miles of gravel roads Mercer has (which may discourage some winter plow contractors from bidding). Julia asked if the town should consider planning for more paved roads and reduce the amount of money spent replenishing gravel every year. Estimate for paving ½ mile is estimated to be about \$60,000.

Gerry mentioned that some dirt roads used to be impassable in the spring, and that some roads (for examples, Corson Road and Decker Road) have improved in recent years.

Julia and others discussed that people today may have different and higher expectations for road and for town government.

Discussion about whether to recommend another ½ mile of paving, and where. Two roads mentioned were Elm Street and Rome Road, both have a lot of traffic. Speed is a bigger issue on Rome Road.

- **Warrant Preview** (details below)

- (a) Half of the bill for Smithfield-Mercer Culvert \$1020.42
- (b) Pike bill to be paid (\$854 out of contingency).
- (c) July SAD 54 to be paid.

- **Town forest project**

- (a) Vern talked with Lora Mills about boundary line agreement, they plan to meet in the next few weeks. She would like a copy of the property tax map (town will email scanned copy or a link to the online town tax maps). After the meeting, the surveyor can survey the new line, which will not be done before the bid notice but will be done prior to logging begins.
- (b) Daren Turner (by phone) wants to post notice for bids in early September.
- (c) Estimated bid - due date September 27.
- (d) Discussion about softwood pulp demand. Not in great demand right now.

- **Furnace bids** – one received from Bob's Cash Fuel. More expected.

- **Next meeting dates**

August 23, September 13 and 27

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.