

Town of Tunbridge Selectboard Meeting

April 13, 2021, via ZOOM

Present: Gary Mullen (Chair), Mike McPhetres (Vice-Chair), John O'Brien (clerk), Mick Maguire, Cal Heminway, Neil Fitzgerald, Maureen McCullough, Matt Frost, Kathi Terami, John Echeverria, Todd Tyson, Betsy Gaiser, Elizabeth Brown, Katherine Adams, Brenda Field, Mariah Lawrence, Laura Ginsburg, Liz York, Rett Emerson, Dan Ruddell, Michael Sacca, Wendy Palthey

Minutes from March 23rd meeting approved. O'Brien moved, McPhetres seconded, so moved.

Road Report: McPhetres motioned to approve \$12,000 for 3 days of crack fill on the roads including flagging work to be done by Nicom Coatings Corporation in Barre, VT, O'Brien seconded, so moved.

Roads and equipment all in good shape. Road crew filling jelly holes around town. Signs on Kelsey Mt Rd are missing, Mullen will speak with Rodney about replacing them.

Brenda Field says she has updated the LEMP (Local Emergency Management Plan) and it needs to be signed and sent to TRORC by May 1st. McPhetres moved to have Mullen sign, O'Brien seconded, so moved.

Legal Trails Policy: Laura Ginsburg from the Planning Commission (PC) gave a report on their months long public information gathering on legal trails ordinances. There were 4 (1 ½ hr ZOOM) meetings held specifically on this topic, plus two regular PC meetings. One a general review, one with landowner perspective, one with trail user perspective, one with guest speakers on the subject. All pertinent letters, maps links are on the Planning Commission's website page.

Some of the insights from this initial reconnaissance was the lack of communication with landowners and trail users. Lack of information of how much and who is accessing the trails. The maintenance and ecology of the trails. Benefits to the town of having this access to trails.

The PC proposed that the Selectboard form a trails committee to create a line of communication on concerns of trails, study impacts of trail use, and create volunteer group to help maintain trails if needed. They recommended signage on the trails to designate proper etiquette of public use. This committee would do a deeper dive into the legal trails issue and report back to the PC mid-July 2021 with findings. The PC would research the class 4 roads and then a full recommendation on policy of roads and legal trails would be made to the Selectboard in July 2021. Names would be gathered for appointments to this committee to be made at the next Selectboard meeting.

McPhetres motioned to close trails until May 30th, to everyone due to mud season. After that date open to pedestrians, horses and bikes if walked by hand, until July 15th policy can be made

by Selectboard from PC recommendations. O'Brien seconded, so moved. Signage would be put up on trails to inform public of the rules.

Public input:

Todd Tyson- Reminded the Selectboard of PC recommendation in Town Plan draft that legal trails are an asset to the town.

Brenda Field- Recommended stopping all use of trails.

John Echeverria (not a resident of Tunbridge) Hired a lawyer to defend his point that without a policy the public had no legal right to be on the trails. (This is posted on PC webpage)

Liz York- pointed out that Echeverria's lawyer had misconstrued the VT statute and his lawyer's claims were made out of context. They were in reference to pent roads, and that the public does not need permission to move in public spaces.

Michael Sacca-Recommended trails to be closed to all during mud season then open to all after that for fairness.

Deep appreciations to PC and especially Laura Ginsburg for the time spent in working to understand these issues. There was a lot of thought and professionalism demonstrated throughout the process, despite emotions running high, and derogatory comments and accusations made towards the members of the PC. These are voluntary positions, and the Town is grateful for the people of Tunbridge who use their time to help create a better place for everyone.

Conservation Commission: New members Michael Sacca and Neil Fitzgerald were both appointed by the Selectboard to fill vacant positions. Both are avid birders and outdoors persons who look forward to addressing and educating on conservation issues in the Town of Tunbridge. McPhetres motioned, O'Brien seconded that the Tunbridge Conservation Commission join the AVCC (Association of Vermont Conservation Commission) with a membership fee of \$50/ year, so moved.

Mick Maguire is very close to launching the online transfer station ticket sales.

Katherine Adams- 2nd Constable, reported on her findings into dog and livestock laws. After warnings and issuing fines, if the dog continues to be a nuisance, animal control officer can get a warrant and impound the dog for 10 days until fines are paid. If owner does not claim the dog, it can be put down after 2 days. Adams suggested that perhaps a no kill shelter might be a better idea solution. Adams said her position as 2nd Constable is very limited in her powers.

With livestock, the landowner that is being offended, can impound livestock and sell or butcher them. O'Brien mentioned in the legislature that they are moving bills through to create state

animal control officers who are properly trained to detect abuse and remove mistreated animals.

Adams reported on other issues in Town of a residence with a camper and no septic that after 6 months, would be in violation of health laws. Also, a resident who is burning trash which Fields pointed out is illegal and can be reported for pollution. Adams is hoping to find some state assistance money to help remove the trash but is concerned it may not solve the long term problem. Someone is dumping large amounts of slashed off tires over the banks. There may now be over 200 of them. It is thought that this must be a commercial operation since the large quantity. Anyone with any information on who may be doing this is encouraged to report it to Town Officials, as it will take Town resources to remove them.

Transfer Station concerns are being worked out. Kathi Terami spoke up about need for more information about prices and recycling rules. Discussion about whether Tunbridge had a representative for CVSW was brought up. Terami expressed interest. Selectboard encouraged her to pursue this.

Warrants: McPhetres motioned to accept warrants, O'Brien seconded, so moved.

Other Business:

-Matt Frost reiterated the concern about the tire dumping situation.

-Michael Sacca emphasized again the great a job Laura Ginsburg did in leading the PC on the legal trail issue.

-Mariah Lawrence has been hired as the new Public Library Director, everyone is very pleased with the energy and enthusiasm that she brings to the job. Lawrence asked the board to address the wasp issue on the outside of the building. A pest control service will be hired. Lawrence will also look into a quote for a fence around the back yard of the library to increase safety of young children.

-Wendy Palthey will be stepping down from Administrative Assistant for the Selectboard at the end of April. The job opening will be posted.

-Memorial Day Celebrations were discussed. It was decided that do to the large gathering event in Tunbridge that end of May was too early. Suggestion was made to hold a celebration on July 5th, since the Governor has mentioned this as a likely date for the State to open up safely. This will be confirmed at the next Selectboard meeting.

-O'Brien pruned the elm tree outside the Town Offices since it was obstructing the historical marker. He noted that the tree was in bad shape and may cause damage to the building, and might need to be removed. Mullen said he would pick up the brush since he has a lot of free time on his hands.

8:16 McPhetres motioned to adjourn meeting, O'Brien seconded, so moved.