



**Town of Berlin
Municipal Office Building
108 Shed Road**

**Berlin, VT. 05602
Regular Select Board Meetings
1st & 3rd Thursday of Each Month**

**Monday, May 4, 2020
7:00 PM**

Selectboard Members: Bradley Towne, Chair; Flo Smith, Co-Vice Chair; Justin Lawrence, Co-Vice Chair; John Quinn III, Secretary; Angelina Capron. Present: Dana Hadley, Town Administrator; Diane Isabelle, Town Treasurer. All items are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

APPROVED MINUTES

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Towne called the meeting to order. Capron absent.

Changes to Agenda

Town Administrator Hadley asked to add a conversation about reopening the town offices and what that plan may look like.

Public Comment

None.

Treasurer's Report

Town Treasurer Isabelle received the fourth quarter bill from the school. The last quarter will include a savings that is good news for the town. Tax money is coming in through, mostly in the form of mailed checks.

Approval of Licenses, Permits, Vouchers, and Applications

Quinn moved to approve:

“General fund accounts payable warrant number 20g20 with checks 20176-20197 in the amount of \$42,722.07; payroll warrant number 20-22 for payroll from April 12, 2020-April 25, 2020, paid on April 29, 2020, in the amount of \$41,248.95.”

Seconded by Lawrence. Passed unanimously.

James Cultrera – Private Road Name – Herring Farm Drive

Cultrera explained the location of the road. It is on Route 12 nearly across from Fresh Tracks Vineyard. There will be four houses built on the knoll and the private road will serve those four houses. Quinn moved to approve the private road name. Seconded by Lawrence. Passed unanimously.

Phil Gentile – Footbridge on Irish Hill

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Hadley briefly revisited the topic from last meeting and explained that he reached out to the Thunder Chickens as it was suggested they be involved. Gentile explained that the bridge acts as a foot bridge, horse bridge, and ATV bridge also. He reiterated the poor condition of the bridge in that the wood is now rotten through. He is concerned of any liability to the town as the bridge is now in use at your own risk condition. The discussion continued about use of the trails and increased traffic with people looking for new activities. The estimate for material and labor is around \$5,000. Lawrence discussed the route that VAST is currently missing to connect to Northfield. Lawrence agreed to reach out to Belevance with the idea that they may lay down a truck bed to build a bridge off of in order to widen the bridge. Lawrence moved to approve the repairs of the footbridge on Irish Hill up to \$5,000. Seconded by Quinn. Motion carried.

FY '21 Budget Adjustment Suggestions

As per the conversation at the last meeting, Hadley discussed budget adjustments with department heads. He provided the select board a list of suggested adjustments. The total savings add up to about 10% of the budget. It would save about .06 on the tax rate. Towne asked to review where the savings would be. Hadley read the suggestions. Most of the savings come from delays in hiring along with cuts in purchasing equipment and other budget cuts. The Richardson Road project could be delayed a year but that is not preferable. Towne explained that it seems to be a public safety issue and should not be put off much longer. Hadley has applied for grant money to help with the Richardson Road project. Quinn asked how it would work to delay hiring the road foreman until November. Hadley explained that it is not the most preferable thing to do but the highway team could work through the summer with a designated foreman. Hadley would take a more active role in administrative functions for the highway department to coordinate things like payroll. Towne explained that he would rather have the current foreman train the incoming foreman because if the town waits until November then the incoming foreman misses out on that training. He also suggested asking Tim Davis to stay through the summer.

Lawrence asked Chief Wolfe, who had logged on to the meeting, whether he had input. Wolfe said that the department will try to do their part. He also spoke briefly about Berlin Pond and some residents who were hostile but he feels the activity is important for people.

Town Road Policy

Hadley followed up on a question about finances and found that the class of the road for residential purposes does not make a large financial impact. There was some discussion of the Fire Department's role in roads because of their need to ensure an ability to access structures. Lawrence discussed his desire to have a clear policy that saves the town revenue by classifying roads to match upkeep and keeps in mind the number of dwelling units in the formula. Hadley felt that the conversation would be productive to have with the fire department to consider things like dwelling units when classifying roads. Towne brought up considering the watershed and water runoff as well. Hadley explained that his next stop would be the fire department to discuss the policy with them.

Approval of Selectboard Minutes – 4/20/2020

Quinn moved to approve the Selectboard minutes of April 20. Seconded by Lawrence. Passed unanimously.

Town Administrator Report

Hadley provided minutes from the Planning Commission and Public Work Board for the Selectboard to review.

Re-Opening the Town Office Building:

Hadley explained that he would like to formulate a plan using the appropriate guidance. The Town Clerk mentioned that she is uncomfortable re-opening without a plexiglass guard. There is one in the Treasurer's

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office; the Town Clerk and Assistant. The one in the Treasurer's Office was not purchased by the town but was donated by Wayne Lamberton. Quinn thought that there should be a rule for all staff to wear a mask and members of the public should wear a mask into the office. The office is not currently open but they are receiving requests. The discussion turned to access to land records and how restriction to that access affects any business that deals with land transfer and requires title work.

Roundtable

Lawrence confirmed with other members that they received an email he sent earlier in the day regarding suggestions and concerns about the office sent to him by Corrine. There is a bulletin board covering a window in the entrance that it was suggested be used to serve the public. Hadley is not sure how to make the window work well for the Town Treasurer. There is continued concern about the floor in the office building that was inspected for asbestos and determined not to be an immediate concern due to the material being sealed. There was also the point that the Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk should have walled-off offices which would be a larger project but may be a good idea from a safety standpoint. Signage was discussed to avoid having the public walk through the main office to reach Isabelle. Quinn thanked Hadley and the department heads for putting together the suggestions for a revised budget.

Executive Session

None.

Quinn moved to adjourn. Seconded by Lawrence. Passed unanimously.

For the Select Board:

Bethany A. Towne