Town of Colrain

Select Board Meeting

55 Main Road/Town Office Building

6:00 P.M.

# MINUTES OF OCTOBER 27, 2020

**Present** Mark Thibodeau, Joe Kurland, Mike Slowinski

**Others Present** Brian Cady, Peter Brooks, Elizabeth Erickson, Bing Waldsmith, Energy Committee; Christopher Curtis, Eileen Sauvageau, Michael Shuipis, Paula Harrison, Collector/Treasurer; Scott Sullivan, Highway Superintendent; Betsy Shuipis, Administrative Asst.; Kevin Fox, Town Administrator

The meeting was called to order remotely by Mark Thibodeau, Chair, at 6 p.m.

**Appointments Energy Committee – Green Communities Grant Update**

Elizabeth Erikson’s update: Chris Kilfoil, engineer consultant, is not available until December to assess the sites in Colrain so the committee is in a holding position**.**

**Comments/Questions:**

* Is there a deadline for this grant? Committee members thought not, although Kevin Fox said a contract amendment would likely have to be done to get an extension.
* The Town Clerk has not received committee minutes in a few months.
* Mike Slowinski recommended that the committee concentrate on the solar array, giving Chris Kilfoil a deadline of January 31th to submit solar site assessments to the Select Board. If he finds the Town hasn’t a good site, the Energy Committee can change direction.
* Can the committee work on other projects while waiting for the solar project to begin and while it’s being built? Yes, the Select Board expects the committee to be planning and working on other projects simultaneously with the solar project.
* Why not follow the Town of Buckland’s Energy Committee’s strategy of focusing on energy savings and weatherization projects like HVAC and window inserts? Joe Kurland would like to see weatherization done, noting that he himself has saved more money with weatherization and insulation than with his solar array at home.
* Can we help residents in town save money with energy efficient projects? Elizabeth hoped to use some money for a grant program for residents so apply to. Peter suggested residents go to MassSave for energy savings.

Kevin clarified what Chris Kilfoil needs to submit: a scope of work to be done, naming specific town sites so that he can put together a proposal with a fee schedule that Kevin can send to DOER for approval. It was agreed by all that the garage and school roofs are not suitable for solar.

**MOVED:** Mike Slowinski moved that the Select Board receive some direction from Chris Kilfoil by January 31, 2021 whether it is feasible or not to put a solar array on town-owned property. If not, the Energy Committee will go in a different direction. Joe Kurland seconded. Roll call: **all ayes.**

**Christopher Curtis, Deerfield River Watershed Association re: Letter of Support for National Wild and Scenic River**

The Watershed Association is launching a new initiative to investigate whether segments of the Deerfield River or its tributaries can be designated a National Wild and Scenic River. This designation has significant benefits: protect the river from new federally permitted dams and provide federal grant funds for community-based river restorations or improvement projects. Christopher has met with Deerfield, Ashfield, Shelburne, Charlemont, and Savoy select boards and all have voted to support the initiative. There would be no cost to the Town for the designation.

Are there added costs to the Town, e.g. town bridges, or to personal property? No.

And it does not affect private property access.

Kevin will prepare a letter for the Select Board saying they are supporting the study.

**MOVED:** Joe Kurland moved that the Town send a letter supporting a study for the National Wild and Scenic River. Mark seconded. Roll call: **Joe, aye**; **Mark, aye,** **Mike recused.**

**Scott Sullivan, Highway Department Update**

Scott’s updates:

* More than half of dirt roads are graded.
* Chapter 90 pavement is done.
* Working on signs continues.
* Working under the guardrails on Greenfield Rd.
* Fixed cover of catch basin on the Hagers’ property and they are satisfied.
* Water pipe at Joan McQuade’s property – Scott’s waiting for an email from Ken Cusano confirming that 4 ft. of outlet pipe between #7 and #9 Main Rd. and the green are not included in the scope of work in the intersection project. All other underground drainage utilities will be replaced.

Kevin will get a copy of the bid plans for Mike Slowinski.

Kevin would like a copy of the email from the engineer (Alan Nafis or Ken Cusano) to Scott confirming that Joan McQuade’s land is not included, as well as clarification with MASSDot.

**Questions:**

Could Scott put some millings at Foundry Village Road and Main Road? No, since this is the construction company’s job. Scott believes they will be here a few more weeks working on driveways and filling in millings, including the large potholes at Charlemont Road and Main Road. Scott will talk to the superintendent to confirm.

New Business **Request for Clarification of Policy Regarding the Use of Town Facilities for Town Board Committee Meetings**

In March 2020, the Select Board adopted a remote meeting protocol closing all town offices to the public, including meetings. This notice was sent out to all town boards and committees and remote phone meetings became the norm. Why has the Board of Health conducted meetings in the Town Garage, when other boards are not allowed access to Town buildings?

**Comments/Questions that need clarification from the Board of Health:**

* Why has the Board of Health conducted meetings in the Town Garage when other boards are not allowed?
* On Wednesdays 6 – 8 p.m., Shawn Kimberly meets with people in the town offices. Using the small table in the foyer doesn’t work well. How to manage meetings where huge papers need to be shared? Mike Slowinski is not comfortable with anyone meeting anywhere in the Town offices. Plans can be submitted electronically to Shawn just as they are through FRCOG’s inspection and permit program.
* This situation also applies to the Zoning Board where large-scale plans need to be reviewed and documents can be 20-30 pg. long. Alice suggested that town employees could meet with the public in the Select Board room downstairs with the condition that the room is cleaned before and after.
* The Town needs guidance from the Board of Health. The Town’s current policy states no public meetings should be held in any town office until further notice, yet the Board of Assessors, Planning Board, Board of Health, and the Conservation Commission have met in the Town Offices.

Kevin will send out a draft revised policy to the Select Board for their review.

**MOVED**: Joe Kurland moved that the Select Board request of Kevin Fox to contact the Board of Health for guidance regarding meeting in town buildings, and, if possible, and to attend the next Select Board meeting. Mike Slowinski seconded**.** Roll call**: all ayes**

**Establishment of Commercial Rate for Colrain Broadband – Michael Shuipis, MLP Co-manager**

There are three issues that the MLP co-managers would like set as policy to ensure consistency with all of our customers.

1. Commercial pricing that is based on recommendations from Whip City Fiber (see pricing recommendations in packet).
2. Drop costs: some homeowners want to do some work themselves. Would we allow the homeowner to do their own trenching, put in the conduit etc.? Whip City is fine with that as long as the work is done to their specifications. The policy would state that we cover the first $2,000 allowance for drop and installation costs. Work done by the homeowner and/or their contractor is **not covered by the $2,000 allowance**.
3. For connections that will go over the $2,000 allowance, we want to bill the homeowner up front and get paid before work would start.

**MOVED:** Mike Slowinski moved that we accept the recommendations as laid out for the commercial pricing, the drop construction cost and the $2,000 exceeded as noted on the October 27, 2020 email from Kevin Fox and Michael Shuipis. Joe Kurland seconded. **Roll call**: Joe – yes; Mike Slowinski – yes; Mark Thibodeau - recused.

Michael will send a list of people who have signed up to the Select Board.

Congratulations to Kevin Fox and all those who worked so hard and persevered throughout the long journey to get the 3 Main Road project completed. It’s very much appreciated.

**MOVED:** Mike Slowinski moved to close the meeting at 7:14 p.m. Joe seconded. Voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted, Accepted by the Select Board

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Betsy Shuipis Mark Thibodeau - Chair

Administrative Assistant

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Joe Kurland

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Mike Slowinski

Documents

Select Board Meeting Notes

Email from Elizabeth Erickson to the Town of Colrain Administrator and members of the Energy Committee dated October 23, 2020 re: Draft thoughts on roadmap for the Energy Committee.

Email from Elizabeth Erickson dated October 23, 2020 to the Town of Colrain Administrator and members of the Energy Committee re: additional documents: Clean Energy Site Assessment Report for Colrain Central School dated June 3, 2019, UMass Clean Energy Extension.

Email from Town of Colrain Administrator to Elizabeth Erickson dated October 14, 2020 re: invitation to the Select Board meeting of 10/27/20.

Letter dated October 6, 2020 from Alice Wozniak, Director of Assessing, Paula Harrison, Tax Collector/Treasurer, and Eileen Sauvageau, Town Clerk to the Select Board asking that they consider disbanding the Energy Advisory Committee.

Email from the Town Administrator to Christopher Curtis, Vice President, Deerfield River Watershed Association, dated October 14, 2020 re: invitation to attend the Select Board meeting of 10/27/20.

Sample letter for the Select Board to use in support of the National Wild and Scenic River Designation for the Deerfield River.

Email dated October 12, 2020 from Christopher Curtis to the Town Administrator asking for a letter of support from the Select Board.

Email dated October 20, 2020 from Alice Wozniak, Director of Assessing to the Town Administrator re: guidance from the Board of Health on how/where to hold future meetings.