

TOWN OF CRAFTSBURY REGULAR SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023
7PM | CRAFTSBURY TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: *BOARD:* Susan Houston, Jim Jones, Bruce Urie | *PUBLIC & OTHERS:* Ricky Blanchard, Bradley J. Gebbie, John Gebbie, Sue Lamothe, Linda Ramsdell, John Zaber

Agenda

Jim Jones called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

- **Action – Adjustments / Changes to Agenda**

Remove: “Footprints Trail Race Use of Common Sept. 30 - Annie Rowell” | has withdrawn request for additional use for Common; race all set. Item removed.

- **Action – Approve Select Board Meeting Minutes**

Bruce Urie motioned to approve the Sept. 5 regular meeting minutes; Susan Houston seconded. All ayed. Motion passed.

- **Discussion – Explosion Noise 9/2 | John Zaber**

John Zaber, a Sterling College faculty member in Applied and Social Sciences, presented findings, information and insights regarding the explosion heard by residents in Craftsbury, Greensboro, Albany and elsewhere on Sept. 2 around 7 and 10 pm. After much investigation, he finds “it bizarre that we cannot find out what it was or where it originated.” He thanked the Select Board for its time. He quoted from a letter, noting the upshot is that the public should “contact the law if/when a similar incident occurs again.” **Discussion:** Select Board thanked Mr. Zaber for the extensive work and information as well as community insights, which included the need for the Select Board to be more responsive and thoughtful in addressing public safety matters and perhaps add a public safety section to Town website. **Summary:** 20 responses received to inquiry on FPF; none provide any definitive answer as to what the explosion was. Talks had with Vermont National Guard Adjutant General Gen. Gregory Knight and Derby Barracks Station Commander Lieutenant Andrew Jensen: Jensen asked via email: “...do you know where this explosion occurred? ... [W]e may be able to initiate an investigation.” Problem is: no one knows where it originated. Informed it was not a sonic boom. Tannerite Explosion? Rumors abound. Consensus: it was a Tannerite explosion; possibly someone in Town caused it. Some wondered whether Town caused it. Mr. Zaber asked to give the Select Board all info he had gathered. Although reports of Tannerite explosions are nothing new, e.g., reports of it for recreational use, a tracking vehicle of reports received seems vital; so, people should contact law enforcement despite no actions being taken just to create the record. [NOTE: Tannerite is an explosive made from two separate compounds.] Possessing these chemicals separately is legal; mixing them is illegal. The two compounds – ammonium nitrate and aluminum powder – combined can be used in creating small exploding targets for target practice. Combined in large

amounts, however, the chemical combination can result in powerfully large and dangerous explosions. Town Safety: some residents feeling unsafe; feel a need for a collective place for information and resources about this and other such incidents. People want to know their concerns have been heard/addressed. Linda Ramsdell: possible use of Town Constable Eric Britton. Over the years have consulted him on various items; good to have his insights.

- **Discussion – Cemetery Maintenance | Brad Gebbie**

Brad Gebbie, who lives in Glover and has family in Craftsbury and buried in local cemeteries, expressed gratitude for the Cemetery Association; “the [Cemetery Association](#) does a wonderful job.” **Discussion**: Need for additional funding for the association; structure of the cemetery organizations in Craftsbury (four separate, private groups) versus Town ownership and management in surrounding towns. Craftsbury groups are all volunteer; Mr. Gebbie thanked the East Craftsbury Cemetery Association and its member Jim Whitby for a comprehensive map of the plots showing names, availability and locations. Mr. Whitby, Mr. Gebbie explained, “spent a lot of time on this. Thanks to him and the association for doing that. ...We’re fortunate to have such details.” Topics: mowing and other cemetery maintenance costs (stone cleanings, e.g., [use of Wet & Forget](#), which is safe on all stones and biodegradable), recent fence repair requests/processes, Town contributions toward cemetery maintenance, processes used in other towns (i.e. “Glover – submit an appropriation request and they list them off with the appropriations.”). Mr. Gebbie was “asking if the Town could give more.” Suggestion: Mr. Gebbie ask each association to make a request to the Select Board. Seek alternative means of maintenance, e.g., use of Boy Scouts. Must figure a way to maintain: a beautiful resting place allows appropriate end-of-life dignity for vets and others.

- **Discussion – Town Garage Bridge Update | Bruce Urie**

Bruce stated the RFP is written; types of repairs - renovations/repairs at both ends. Allow snowmobiles and skiers to cross over it; possibly post signage - “single car” or “cross at your own risk” - or just block it. State inspectors said to pull the bridge. Transportation Agency checking. Fill will come out of the pit.

- **Discussion – Decide Payment Options for Grader 2023**

Grader arrived and was returned; gear issues – requires repair, adjustments. Three options for covering payment of the \$267,300 remaining cost (add to this the \$85K trade-in allowance for Town grader: total cost \$352,300 total purchase price). Considerations: interest earned on investment accounts vs interest paid on market rate loans; what Town will charge itself on leveraging funds from

Interest / Payment Re: Fund Loan	
Interest Rate	Annual Payment
2.5%	\$43,544.44
3%	\$44,173.13
3.5%	\$44,805.68
4%	\$45,442.07

Augusta Dustan Preservation Fund as a loan to town. Bank Market Interest Rates: 5.5% to 5.75%. **Discussion**: pull \$250K from the fund; find suitable medium. Based on municipal interest rate. Finances will be tight; FEMA funds allow replenishment for equipment costs. Current banking and borrowing trends. Motion initiated; however, further info required before taking action. Motion postponed.

- **Committee Reports**
 - *Mental Health Resource* – Oct. 1, 1 pm: Suicide Awareness Prevention Walk on Common
 - *Energy Committee* – Resignation; two new members proposed/suggested. Obtain info on two new members for recommendation to Select Board.
 - *Planning Commission* – Meeting tomorrow night.
 - *Freedom & Unity Committee* – Susan Clark will be attending Oct. 3 mtg; final planning for Oct. 17 gathering.
 - *Craftsbury Conservation Commission* – Naturalist program with cell phones ongoing; more than 3,000 pictures representing over 1,000 species already on Craftsbury page. Images uploaded and identified then verified by two separate individuals. [Japanese Knotweed Demonstration Project](#) ongoing; workday this Thursday 9:30. Next mtg: Brian Machesney will present update on Ash Inventory project (Oct. 16).

- **Clerk Report**
 - State Gov. Municipal Day Oct. 20
 - P & L
 - VT Municipal Clerk & Treasurers Association Annual Conference Update
 - Common Use form for Junior Class; Oct. 1 Suicide Walk approval

- **Road Foreman Report**

Roadside mowing ongoing; awaiting crushing of gravel.

- **Upcoming Projects to Keep on Agenda**
 - Signage: Hidden Drive sign requests - Paul Pitt Town Line Road; Aleta Akerlind
 - Test Pits at Gravel Pit
 - Triggers for Opening the Emergency Shelter, Providing Assistance, Activating N2N
 - Group Process: Throw Up Class 4, TH 23, Bruce Awaiting Word from VTrans
 - VOREC Grant: Upgrade Sterling Trailing; Parking Signage - Gina Campoli
 - Appreciation Certificates
 - Act 172 Municipalities
 - Assessing Spaces and Needs

- **Other Business & Walk-ins With Business to Come Before the Select Board**

None

- **Decide Next Meeting Date & Adjourn**

Next meeting: 7 pm Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023, at Town Hall. The meeting adjourned at 8:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Victoria Hudson
Select Board Clerk