

Chelsea Selectboard Meeting Minutes (draft)

May 07, 2024

Present: Kevin Mashia (remote), Kelly Lyford, Jesse Kay, Leyna Hoyt, Gregg Herrin

Others Present: Gayle Durkee

1. Call to Order

Kevin Marshai called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

2. Additions to the Agenda

Kelly Lyford added an item for a Roberts-Gould Field Use Request.

Kelly Lyford added an item for Executive Session for Personnel.

Kelly Lyford added an item for Town Administrator Update.

Kevin Lyford added an item for Mike Whipple's Water and Sewer Contract.

3. Conflict of Interest

None

4. Public Comments

None

5. Approve Minutes - 2024 Apr 30

Jesse Kay moved to approve minutes from the 2024 Apr 30 meeting, with Leyna Hoyt seconding the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

6. Water and Sewer

Gayle Durkee noted that some residents are grossly overdue on payments for water and sewer, and some people are not only not paying, but also have had no communication or engagement at all with Gayle to explain circumstances. There are two people who haven't paid in several years, and four more that haven't paid in over a year. There are numerous others that are overdue but not yet more than one year past due.

She asked for confirmation that the board will support her efforts to send letters to the grossly overdue accounts indicating that continued non-payment would result in their water being shut off. She was also seeking confirmation from the board that the Town would indeed be willing to actually turn off people's service if they don't pay.

The board confirmed that it's appropriate for Gayle Durkee to send out letters, and Kevin Marshia asked that she also speak to Mike Whipple to make sure he is aware

of the situation, since he will be the one doing the work and also the one that people are likely to contact with complaints. Gayle Durkee confirmed that she would speak to Mike Whipple, and send out the letters soon.

Gayle Durkee also indicated that we need to look at rates soon, because we're going to be running out of money as expenses are outpacing the revenue. She indicated that there is money in a sinking fund (around \$30,000) but the water and sewer budget is also carrying forward a \$160,000 debt from past years. She indicated that we can seek assistance from our accountant, noting that he would bill for that work. Gregg Herrin offered to look more closely at the water and sewer budget with Gayle Durkee, and will return to the board with an update at a future meeting.

7. Town Administrator (addition to the agenda)

Kelly Lyford indicated that she and Kevin Marshia has made an offer to Tierney Farago for the open Town Administrator position, and she has accepted with an expected start date of 2024 June 03.

Jesse Kay moved to fill the open Town Administrator position with Tierney Farago, with Leyna Hoyt seconding the motion. Kevin Marshi made a suggestion that the board members capture their thoughts on prioritized transition items for her, and send those ideas to Kelly Lyford and Kevin Marshia to collect. Gregg Herrin suggested extending that gathering process to include Gayle Durkee, Karen Lathrop, Kasey Peterson, and others. **All were in favor, and the motion passed.**

8. Mike Whipple Contract (addition to the agenda)

Kevin Marshia reminded everyone of the situation with our water and sewer contract, where last year the Town started with a one-year contract with Mike Whipple to see if the situation would work for both parties. After a year, everything seems to be going well, so Mike Whipple is seeking a longer-term contract. The proposed contract would be for a 5-year duration, starting at \$134,000 for the first year and automatically increasing by 4% each year thereafter. The current contract is roughly \$130,000, so the first year of the new contract would be approximately \$4,000 more (around 3% higher). The scope of the contract would remain consistent with what was approved last year.

Jesse Kay moved to approve the water and sewer contract with Mike Whipple for a five year contract starting at \$134,000 for year 1 and increasing at 4% per year, with Gregg Herrin seconding the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

9. Town Hall Vapor Barrier

The Town has received an estimate to replace the vapor barrier in the basement of the Town Hall building for \$22,000, which would replace the plastic that was destroyed during the 2023 summer flooding. We were hoping to have FEMA mitigation funding to replace with concrete instead, sloping everything to a sump pump so it would pump out as a permanent fix since the vapor barrier failed last time.

Jesse Kay questioned whether we have to move ahead prior to understanding how the combination of FEMA and insurance will cover costs.

Kevin Marshia clarified that the vapor barrier is intended to keep moisture out during non-flood events.

Leyna Hoyt also explained that with the pellet furnace, it makes sense to have something more permanent. She also indicated that FEMA is telling us that we could apply for a mitigation grant, but it may not be granted.

Gregg Herrin confirmed that there are two objectives related to the basement: one is to keep it dry during normal operations, which is what the vapor barrier would be for; and secondly for flood-proofing, which is not the purpose of the vapor barrier.

Leyna Hoyt also noted that we should consider making Town Hall a control center for the Town during future emergencies. Gregg Herrin noted that we would also require a generator in order to ensure that power is supplied to the building and to any sump pump intended to remove water from the basement during a flood. Leyna Hoyt indicated that historic preservation won't approve a permanent generator, according to prior research that Kasey Peterson has done.

Leyna Hoyt will get back to Kasey Peterson and indicate that we are leaning towards a permanent solution.

10. FEMA RFPs

Kevin Marshia asked if anyone had concerns about the RFP for engineering services.

Leyna Hoyt questioned whether we should continue to keep the Maple Avenue bridge project as part of the RFP. Kevin clarified that the RFP covers engineering for five independent projects, regardless of source of funding for each of those.

Leyna Hoyt expressed her opinion that lumping the Maple Avenue bridge together with the other projects may complicate the paperwork with FEMA, and Kevin Marshia indicated that the accounting would have to be done separately anyway.

Kevin Marshai indicated reluctance to reworking the RFP to split it into two or more parts, but said that he would be willing to do so if we have some level of reassurance from FEMA that it will go through their approval process that way. Jesse Kay suggested that we push ahead as-is.

Leyna Hoyt expressed confidence in our new FEMA representative, but that she was unsure if we would be able to get clear guidance quickly regarding likelihood of approvals or paperwork complications.

Leyna Hoyt also indicated that there is a meeting on 2024 May 15 at 1:00pm to look at the footbridge with someone from Mitigation. Kelly Lyford suggested that Frank Keane should also be notified of that meeting since the cemetery may also be involved. Kevin Marshia indicated that the rest of the board should wait to get more involved in the footbridge topic, since this consultation is just to look at the river itself, and nothing is binding.

Gregg Herrin suggested that Leyna Hoyt could try to get clear guidance from FEMA in the next two weeks, and if no clarity still exists then we can default to submit the RFP as it currently exists.

Kevin Marshai pointed out that it is harder for us to manage multiple consultants.

Jesse Kay asked what the worst-case scenario is if we lump too many things together, and Leyna Hoyt indicated that her impression from past FEMA meetings is that we start to lose credibility when the reviewers see things submitted that aren't related to the flood.

Kevin Marshia pointed out that we could apply for bridge funding separately as part of a different program, based on the bridge being a restriction point that can cause upstream flooding. He thinks that a valid course of action would be to get the bridge designed and build-ready, and look for funding for the construction later (possibly through a VTrans grant).

Jesse Kay moved to submit the RFP for engineering services as-is, with Kelly Lyford seconding the motion. Kelly Lyford asked if there is any concern that there are other things that we should consider, like a risk that other things will also get rejected. Leyna Hoyt indicated that it's really hard to understand what does and doesn't qualify. Kevin Marshia pointed out that this is just for the RFPs, and we can break out contracts separately if needed since the RFP is not binding. **Kelly Lyford, Jesse Kay, and Gregg Herrin were in favor. Leyna Hoyt was opposed. The motion passed.**

11. 911 Coordinator

Kelly Lyford indicated that there is no update. Leyna Hoyt expressed concerns that we will have to do something soon, since there is a person currently waiting on an address. Kelly Lyford indicated that she did provide an update to that person.

Leyna Hoyt also expressed concerns about what happens if there is an emergency, and Kelly Lyford indicated that we are currently non-compliant with our numbering in several areas, which is something that we should solve at the larger scale to fix all

of the problems rather than hurrying to do something in the short-term for one address.

12. Appoint Tree Warden

No update.

13. Roberts-Gould Field Use Request (addition to the agenda)

The FBUD Middle School baseball team is looking to use the field for baseball practice and games with event dates listed. Kevin Marshia suggested that we approve with the understanding that the teams using the field have already coordinated amongst themselves to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Jesse Kay moved to approve the FBUD Middle School baseball team's use of the fields for the dates listed in their request, with Leyna Hoyt seconding the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

14. Approve Orders

Leyna Hoyt moved to approve orders, with Jesse Kay seconding the motion. It was noted that there are three separate items from Jay's Septic. Leyna Hoyt suggested that this is likely due to three separate trips for a truck to pump out the solids, but Gregg Herrin or Kevin Marshia will seek confirmation from Gayle Durkee and Mike Whipple. **All were in favor, and the motion passed.**

15. Executive Session if Necessary

Jesse Kay moved to enter executive session, with Leyna Hoyt seconding the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Kelly Lyford moved to exit executive session, with Leyna Hoyt seconding the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

Kevin Marshia indicated that the board had a long discussion about personnel topics and processes related to some upcoming changes. No actions were taken.

16. Adjourn

Leyna Hoyt moved to adjourn, with Jesse Kay seconding the motion. All were in favor, and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 pm.