

TOWN OF PITTSFORD SELECT BOARD MINUTES October 6, 2021

Members Present – Thomas “Hank” Pelkey, Alicia Malay, David Mills, Thomas Hooker and W. Joseph Gagnon. Others Present: Andrew Mills, Ariadne Will, Al Maxham, Colleen Conway, Ron Davis, Louise Davis, Emma Cotton, Mike Gecha, Dolores Lee, Sandra Conway, Rick Conway, Bev Peterson, Tom Shannon, Kevin Blow, Mary Shaw, Butch Shaw, Michael Norris, Jeff Carleton, Kevin Hier, Wayne Rowe, James Rademacher, Ann Rademacher, David Blittersdorf, Lisa Wright, Sandy Mayo, Tracy Lanko, Pam Sokel, Stephen Belcher, Donna Wilson, Sam Carlson, George Yan, John Haverstock – Town Manager, Kelly Giard – Recording Secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM by Chair Alicia Malay.

J. Haverstock stated that there was a need to enter into Executive Session for Personnel (Accounting and Zoning). Motion by T. Hooker and seconded by T. Pelkey enter into Executive Session for Personnel. Motion passed 5 – 0.

J. Haverstock stated that there was a need to amend the agenda to add a discussion of the Kendall Hill Road Solar Project (old business) and Consideration of Water System Study loan documents (new business). Motion by T. Hooker and seconded by T. Pelkey to accept the agenda as amended. Motion passed 5 – 0.

Minutes:

The minutes of the August 18, 2021; September 1, 2021 revised minutes and the September 15, 2021 regular meetings were signed. A minor change will be made to the September 1, 2021 minutes.

Orders:

The orders in the amount of \$93,640.85 and Payroll in the amount of \$14,858.99 were signed, with no discussion.

Town Manager’s Report:

J. Haverstock reported the following:

- Sullivan & Powers has completed the external audit with a report to be forthcoming in January or February.
- The sidewalk survey will close on October 15, 2021
- The Veteran’s Day Ceremony will take place on November 11, 2021 at 11:00 AM. There is a search ongoing for a keynote speaker.
- There were 11 letters sent to delinquent taxpayers regarding the upcoming tax sale. The deadline for resolution is October 15, 2021.
- There was damage done to the Depot Hill covered bridge on September 9, 2021. VTrans has been contacted for assistance with the repairs that are required. Daniels Construction may be doing the repairs following the inspection by VLCT.
- Budget season is approaching. The department heads will be asked for their input and will begin making their presentations at the November 3 meeting.
- The Dollar General construction is in full swing with the road being closed for approximately 2 weeks while work is completed on the intersection and with installation of a water line.
- The Fire Department ladder truck has undergone warranty repairs in New Hampshire.
- The Salvage Yard owners have painted their building as promised!
- The Nature Conservancy land purchase will be discussed at a future meeting.
- The Town Manager will be out of the office on October 14 and 15.

TOWN OF PITTSFORD SELECT BOARD MINUTES October 6, 2021

- The Municipal Offices and related services will be closed on October 11, 2021 in observance of Indigenous Peoples/Columbus Day.

Select Board Comments:

D. Mills stated that he has received complaints regarding mud at the Transfer Station. Chad Eugair will be made aware of this complaint.

T. Hooker stated that he has received requests for more policing in East Pittsford. Chief Warfle will be made aware of this request.

Public Comment:

None presented at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on VLCT Retention and Efforts on Recruitment/Hiring of New Town Manager:

J. Haverstock stated that information was received today by Chair Malay and it will be reviewed.

Review Drafts of Town Profile and Town Manager Job Description:

A. Malay stated that she has been in communication with Rick McGuire of VLCT. There was discussion that the search area should be regional. There was discussion of the residency requirement, minimum requirements to include a college degree in administration/human resources; salary scale; a 5-person committee (which was determined to be the members of the Select Board); the interview process would include the first interview to be remote with the second to be in-person. The members of the Select Board discussed reimbursement for candidate travel and lodging. D. Mills stated that the job description should also include Economic Development. A. Malay stated that tech familiarity, grant writing and marketing experience should also be included.

Update on Revision of BLSG Mosquito District By-Laws:

Steve Belcher, the Pittsford BLSG Mosquito District representative, was present to explain the proposed by-laws changes, which were presented to the Select Board in their packets. Some highlights of this change was to limit future cost increases to not more than 5% annually and to change the wording of the opt-out clause. The consensus of the Select Board was positive, with no objections.

Mr. Belcher exited at 8:50 PM.

Status of Kendall Hill Solar Project:

J. Haverstock stated that there was a letter written by the Planning Commission in support of this project following the August presentation. The Select Board letter of support will be drafted and presented/reviewed at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Town's COVID 19 Response and Policies:

J. Haverstock stated that VLCT was contacted and it was determined that the Town has the right to inquire about an employee's vaccination status. The Union expressed no opposition to a vaccination status inquiry. J. Haverstock stated that any information that was conveyed by employees would remain confidential. After discussion, the Select Board's consensus was that no additional steps would be taken for now.

Consider Sending Letter to VTrans Expressing Views on Bridge Replacement Project:

J. Haverstock stated that Ms. Cota has been in communication regarding the bridge replacement project that is proposed for the junction of Route 7/3. Kristin Higgins has asked for a letter from the Town Select Board. Rick Conway stated that he would like to see a copy of the communications for his file. A. Malay inquired if the Town has an Interested Party Status on Act 250 for this project. J. Haverstock stated the Town was an Interested Party. D. Mills expressed concern about the slip lane being removed. Mark Winslow read a letter that was approved by the Planning Commission in opposition to the current proposal.

J. Haverstock recommended that two members of the Select Board and VTrans representatives meet to discuss the project. T. Hooker inquired why the island could not be removed during the construction and replaced following the completion of the project.

Rick Conway showed the 2015 design and explained the layout and explained differences with the current proposal. Mr. Conway stated that there is a petition being circulated in favor of the 2015 plan. Sandy Conway explained that the State has said that the current proposal cannot be changed back to the 2015 plan.

Colleen Maxham inquired why the change from the 2015 plan. Al Maxham stated that he has offered to sell his property for the project, however, was told that the State would lose funding due to the historical nature of his property.

Rick Conway stated that there is an Act 250 hearing on October 27. Mr. Conway stated that there are no current crash statistics and the only crash statistics available are from the 2015 proposal, which showed no crashes at this intersection.

Residents interested in the bridge project exited at 8:10 PM.

Review Adams Road Solar Project Proposal:

George Yan was present to discuss the proposed solar project on the Adams Road. Mr. Yan stated that this project is proposed to be built at 574 Adams Road and consists of 13 acres of a 117.56 acre parcel, which will not be visible from the road, however, it will be visible from two Town walking trails. Mr. Yan stated that there will be a 7' fence around the project and the land will be returned to farmland following decommissioning. D. Mills inquired if there would one continual fence, which Mr. Yan stated that there would be two fences as the project is broken into two segments. D. Mills inquired about the type of soil that is on the project. Andrew Mills stated that this was prime ag soil.

A. Malay inquired about the distance from the trails to the project. Mr. Yan explained that there is 25' – 30' on all sides away from the trails and the area is fenced from the trails.

J. Haverstock inquired if the land was purchased or leased. Mr. Yan stated that there is currently a 25 year land lease, however, this land could be purchased in the future.

Ann Rademacher inquired if the Goat Farm Road residents have been contacted as they possibly could be impacted. Mr. Mills stated that there has been a preliminary map drawn and the abutters were sent a 45 day letter. Mr. Mills explained the structure of the panels as being 16' – 18' in height. Mr. Mills explained the tracking of the sun.

TOWN OF PITTSFORD SELECT BOARD MINUTES October 6, 2021

J. Gagnon inquired about the life-cycle of the project. Mr. Yan explained that there is a 25 year lease on the property and this could be extended for 5 – 10 years if necessary and that the panels could be upgraded on a 10 – 15 year cycle.

There was discussion regarding the taxation of the project and the issue of a requested letter of support was tabled to a future meeting.

Mr. Yan and Mr. Mills exited at 8:43 PM.

Review Castleton's Wind Turbine Project Proposal:

Sam Carlson with Grandpa's Knob Community Wind was present to discuss the possibility of constructing a single wind turbine at the top of Grandpa's Knob. Mr. Carlson gave a history of the area and the reasoning behind the project, which was presented in a handout to the members of the Select Board. Mr. Carlson stated that this was a project honoring the history and the legacy of Palmer Putnam and was quite different from the project that was proposed 9 years ago, which was for 20 wind turbines. The proposed wind turbine is roughly the same height as the communications tower that is now in place. Mr. Carlson stated that the project would utilize the existing truck-ready road, current power lines and would not disturb the environmental aspects of the area. Mr. Carlson stated that there has been a Standard Offer Award for the 1.5 megawatt project, and the power will be Green Mountain Power. The current project is not in the permitting phase. Mr. Carlson stated that he and Mr. Blittersdorf have met with the Select Boards of Castleton, Hubbardton, West Rutland and will be meeting with Proctor on October 25 as well as the Rutland Regional Planning Commission on October 19. Mr. Carlson stressed that this is not a money-making project and the funds that are received will be shared with the surrounding towns. He believes that the benefits will outweigh the costs. Mr. Carlson stated that there will be a visual analysis conducted and this will be an open and honest project with absolute transparency. A. Malay inquired what would prevent any future additional turbines from being constructed. Mr. Carlson stated that he cannot control the other parcels on the ridgeline. J. Gagnon inquired where the funding would be obtained. Mr. Carlson stated that this was proposed as a Vermont project using a Vermont bank to borrow money. J. Haverstock inquired if there was another way that the legacy of Mr. Putnam could be recognized without erecting a turbine. Mr. Carlson stated that there was currently a historic marker on the knob and he feels that the construction of the turbine would be generating economic benefits to be shared with neighboring towns. Mr. Blittersdorf stated that this was an important part of history and he is planning on returning ½ of profits back to the towns that are involved.

Bev Peterson inquired how the proposed tower would be erected. Mr. Blittersdorf stated that there would be a crane doing the construction and Mr. Blittersdorf explained the makeup of the supporting tower. Mr. Blittersdorf explained that there would be some drilling and core samples taken to determine if the base would be poured concrete or attached to existing rock by screws.

Lisa Wright inquired how many times the public has to say NO before the proposals stop. Ms. Wright explained that the Town Plans have been reviewed, letters have been written and the last proposal was prohibited. Ms. Wright continued by stating that the Grandpa's Knob Community Wind Project would divide communities and inquired if this project was transparent why the towns were not informed prior to the Standard Offer was obtained. Mr. Carlson stated that it would be at least 9 – 12 months before the permitting process begins. Mr. Carlson stated that things are ready regarding location, road, and electrical connection. He has reviewed the town plans and will be conducting a full analysis and reviewing the Rutland Regional Planning Commission's position.

TOWN OF PITTSFORD SELECT BOARD MINUTES October 6, 2021

Rep. Shaw stated that he reviewed the September 5 Rutland Regional Planning Commission letter and map and inquired about the exact location of the proposed project. Mr. Carlson stated that he spoke with Ed Bove from the Rutland Regional Planning Commission who stated that the map is not correct and that the majority of the project is located in Castleton.

Sandy Mayo stated that there should be a complete study of the impact of stressing the birds in the area.

Ann Rademacher expressed concern if this was a money-making project or profit project, expressed concerns over height and inquired why a model could not be constructed in honor of Mr. Putnam instead.

Tracy Lanko inquired about the neighbors' concerns, such as unsalable houses and health issues.

Mike Gecha stated that the opinions expressed are "heartfelt". However, the current tower is lattice and the blades will be prominent and expressed his opinion as being that there would be a domino effect, with more turbines to come. Mr. Gecha inquired if the state and federal tax credits would be returned to the owner.

Pam Sokol stated that the Grandpa's Knob area is behind her property and she is against wind power and does not want it in her back yard.

Lisa Wright stated that there is a lot of solar and wind power being generated in Vermont, however, the electric rates continue to increase. Mr. Carlson stated that he wants dialog, information and feedback and will be conducting a visual, sight, flicker and sound analysis.

A. Malay inquired if the developers would continue to push if the towns say no to the proposal. Mr. Carlson stated that the costs and benefits would be reviewed.

Jim Rademacher stated that the Select Board reviewed a wind proposal 10 years ago and no benefits were found.

Mr. Gecha stated that there would be migraine impacts sustained by his family members.

T. Hooker stated that his position on the wind projects in this area has not changed.

Residents interested in the wind project exited at 7:34 PM.

Remarks on Second Annual Tractor Parade:

Jeff Carleton was present to explain that the Second Annual Tractor Parade will be held on October 23 at 1:00 PM. The parade will begin and end at the Pittsford Village Farm. This year, there will be a time that residents can view the tractors and kids can sit on them; there will be food trucks at the Village Farm; there will be announcing of the tractors at the Fire Station. The registration for the event is from 11 AM – 12:30 PM.

Discussion of further Implementation of Declaration of Inclusion:

This topic was tabled to a future meeting.

TOWN OF PITTSFORD SELECT BOARD MINUTES October 6, 2021

Discussion of Water & Sewer Loan Documentation:

J. Haverstock explained that the loan was for a study of the current water system and the loan is to be 100% forgiven. The members of the Select Board signed the documents, as requested.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

T. Hooker made the motion and seconded by T. Pelkey to go into Executive Session for Personnel where premature knowledge would be damaging to the Town and may be jeopardized by public disclosure.

In accordance with 1 VSA 312 (b), where premature general public knowledge would clearly place the Municipality or person involved at a substantial disadvantage, the Board unanimously agreed to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of Personnel at 9:27PM. Town Manager Haverstock was invited to remain for Executive Session.

The Select Board exited Executive Session at 9:37 PM, with no action taken.

The Select Board adjourned at 9:37 PM.

The next regular meeting of the Select Board will be held on October 20, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Giard
Recording Secretary

Alicia Malay, Chair

David Mills, Vice Chair

Thomas Hooker, Selectman

W. Joseph Gagnon, Selectman

Thomas "Hank" Pelkey, Selectman