

Selectmen Meeting 4/25/19 Minutes

(Approved 5-9-19)

Meeting opened at 7:03. Present: Selectmen Vern Worthen, Gary Mosher, Gerry Redlevske, Secretary Fran Varney, Tax Collector-Treasurer Yolanda Violette, Town Forester Daren Turner, Budget Committee members Rick Loadwick, Steve Hakala, Barb VanBurgel, Jason Juskewitch, and at 7:43 Steve Moore, townspeople Chris Beeuwkes, Donnie Howard, Fred LaPlante, and Jesse Crandall.

Citizen Request: Chris Beeuwkes asked if the Selectmen would consider writing a letter to be sent to Congress stating that they are concerned about climate change. Chris described his beliefs that climate change is a matter of urgency, Jesse questioned those beliefs. *Selectman Gary Mosher requested that Chris draft a letter for the Selectmen to review and then could sign or not depending on their own personal beliefs.*

Town Forest Harvest: Daren Turner passed out summaries of stumpage totals and financial details of the harvest so far. As of now, the Town has received \$7,101.82. Gerry said he can finish the harvest in one year in terms of the original bid. The Selectmen will proceed to send Lora Mills a Boundary Line Agreement for her to sign as she has not returned their calls.

Budget Committee (BC): Opened meeting at 7:35 with four members. Sarah Bunker-Geyer is at a SAD 54 meeting, but sent a letter suggesting Chris Tibbetts as Chair. Chris has indicated to Yolanda he would accept. Barb nominated Chris Tibbetts as Chair, Jason seconded, the vote was 4-0. There was a consensus that some members would like to meet at least twice during the year (instead of one time), and additional discussion that any member could ask the other members to attend even more meetings if they feel it is a good idea. Vern also informed the BC members and others present that there is a scheduled informational meeting on May 16, and a special town meeting on June 6 concerning a request to ask Mercer voters to allow an existing marijuana manufacturing facility or facilities in general to operate in the Town, if licensed by the State. Budget Committee adjourned its meeting 4-0.

Roads: Many people present discussed road issues in general and pot holes needing attention on Decker Road, West Sandy River Road, Elm Street, and Rome Road. Steve Hakala mentioned that in some places, trees prevent the snow from melting. There was further discussion about how to proceed in deciding to cut trees, to involve the owners of the abutting land to be in the discussion. Most town roads have a three-rod right of way, but at times the original center line of the three-rod r-o-w may be difficult to determine.

People discussed the bridge on old Rt 2, and the ownership of the bridge. The State of Maine (Fish and Game) owns the dam and perhaps half the bridge. The State has told the Town that Mercer must maintain the bridge and road surface over the dam. One suggestion was a steel plate to reinforce the bridge, another was cement, another was closing the road. In any case, if the road is to remain open, the town at least has to find a temporary fix.

Barb VanBurgel and Steve Moore requested that the Selectmen work on a Road Plan. Responses from at least one current Selectmen and either one or two past Selectmen indicated that a plan only works until a more urgent road problem appears which needs attention first. Unexpected weather can change road conditions. No consensus reached. There are at least two major needs – one is ongoing maintenance, the other is planning to rebuild as money allows, beginning with fabric. Parts of Decker Road, Rome

Road, Corson Road and Bacon Road need rebuilding. People who have lived in town the longest time shared memories of much worse road conditions back in the days. Steve Moore stated that he believes more information is needed at town meetings so that more informed voting is possible.

Other business:

Town mowing: Justin Furbush has offered to do the town mowing at the same price as last year. Selectmen approved Justin Furbush's mowing offer 3-0.

Transfer station: Request that the entrance at transfer station be worked on. There is still some frost at that location.

Request for Town to clean up dirt on private land due to dust and rocks from the bridge.

Person on Beech Hill Road reported a neighbor's trash blowing onto his land, Selectmen consensus that the two neighbors should resolve the problem.

SAD 54 minutes received. Brent Colbry will come to May 9th meeting to talk about the 2019-20 budget.

Trash bags: Selectmen compared the trash bags from the company Mercer has been using with samples from another company. Given the pricing and the comparative quality, the Selectmen decided 3-0 to go with the new company at the lower price which involves a total order of 70 cases. *The bags will not have Town of Mercer printed on them.*

Charity article: Selectmen approved \$100 contribution to Mr. Campbell's Masonic Bikers for Books (to benefit Mill Stream School) under Charity article.

Roadside cutting: Aggressive Cut Co. sent proposal to do roadside cutting at same rate for three more years. Selectmen approved the new three-year contract 3-0. The cutting should include Rt 137 and True Road. Some roads are more difficult to cut, due to presence of rocks or poles. Road work can help remove some of the obstacles.

Ethel Springer scholarship: Yolanda will send the Ethel Springer scholarship information to the two Mercer Seniors at Skowhegan High School. Selectmen will make their decision on May 23.

Warrant preview: Approved as modified to include ½ of a month's SAD 54 payment.

Roads:

Fred described the car width size pot hole on Ladd Road needing to be fixed.

Decker Road – Discussed use of Styrofoam over rocks on Decker Road. Also discussed using 17 and ½ foot width fabric instead of 24 foot width.

Work needed on parts of Rome Road, Bacon Road, Brown Road, Hampshire Hill Road, Tibbetts Road, Beech Hill Road, and Corson Road, and on plow turnaround on Wills Road.

Culvert work needed on Ladd Road and Elm Street. Culverts needing to be patched on Pond Road and Bacon Road. Discussion that metal culverts work better than plastic culverts.

7 Lakes Alliance: (formerly Belgrade Regional Conservation Association) Gary recently drove with Charlie Baeder (7 Lakes) to check what culverts associated with North Pond in Mercer might qualify for

grants. There is also a bridge project being considered for the boat landing which would require some funds from towns of Mercer and Smithfield. Charlie and someone from MDOT will be at May 9 meeting with further information.

Possibilities for LRAP discussed: to work on an already prepped dirt road, or on a road needing to be prepped first, or on a road needing fabric first? Portions of Beech Hill Road and Rome Road were mentioned. There will be more discussion on May 9.

Maine Cemetery Association: A brochure/newsletter of Maine Cemetery Association was given by Fred to the Town.

Minutes from April 11 approved 3-0.

Next meetings

May 9 - regular meeting, agenda includes Brent Colbry discussing proposed SAD 54 Budget; Charlie Baeder and possibly MDOT person discussing 7 Lakes possible bridge project; and this year's LRAP project.

May 16 - informational meeting to learn about the request by Blue Sky Labs LLC for a special town meeting for voters to consider if they will vote to allow marijuana products manufacturing facilities, or any existing Class 1, Division 1 facility, licensed pursuant to 28-B M.R.S. sections 101 *et seq.* to operate within the Town of Mercer.

May 23 - regular meeting

June 6 – tentative date for special town meeting

Adjourned 9:55 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Varney