

Minutes of Selectmen's Meeting of September 26, 2019

(Approved 10/10/19)

Meeting opened at 7:05. Present: Selectmen Vern Worthen, Gary Mosher, Tax Collector-Treasurer Yolanda Violette, Secretary Fran Varney, Adam Keene, Fred LaPlante, Donnie Howard, Julia Howard, Melody Warren, Maryellen Charles.

MINUTES: The September 12 minutes were approved 2-0.

CITIZEN REQUEST: Melody Warren stated that the road conditions are terrible on the Rome Road, and that this problem needs to be dealt with. Her issues include washouts after rain storms, berm problems, not enough grading, road areas where there is no gravel but just boulders.

Vern Worthen discussed the fact that the summer roads budget doesn't pay for all the work that the roads need annually, also that budgeting more money for roads means higher taxes which will burden older residents.

Everyone at the meeting contributed ideas, including the value of having a road commissioner; borrowing money to do major improvements rather than just aiming for status quo; high costs of maintaining gravel roads; needing a road plan to prioritize projects.

It was noted that weather can cause a major problem, as it did in spring of this year on Decker Road, which alone used a major portion of the summer roads budget.

If people want change to the budget, or a different plan for road work, they should come to the budget meeting with articles to propose for voters to act on at the annual town meeting in March.

FIRST RESPONDERS: Adam Keene was present for update regarding workers' compensation and medical malpractice insurance coverage for the First Responders. Eleven calls for first responders have taken place during the absence of coverage.

ROAD PROJECTS

Already done or on the list to do next: Culvert on Tibbetts Road; West Sandy River Road surface; two culverts on Ladd Road; ditching and fill on Bacon Road; culvert on West Sandy River Road. Culvert near Fe Jones is plugged, and needs work. Also needing attention are Elm Street trench near Bill True's, Elm Street near the Crowleys, and Tibbetts Road near Meola's.

Pike will be doing the LRAP project work in mid-October.

State will be contacted about responsibility for hole on Main Street near bridge.

SPIRIT OF AMERICA – Awards to honored volunteers in Somerset County from different towns will be given out Wednesday October 16, 2019 at 6 pm. First Responders of Mercer will be honored. Fran will try to go to the ceremony.

MERCER COMMUNITY CENTER: Before winter, the roof above the front entrance way needs work. Vern will check with three local contractors.

2019 plowing for MCC and transfer station can be put out for bid, or not. Vern will check with Jerry and perhaps another local person about prices.

Yolanda will ask John Chamberlain to look into the noise in cellar near entrance. It sounds like it is associated with the electric power.

TREE GROWTH APPLICATIONS WERE SIGNED.

TREASURER/TAX COLLECTOR/CLERK:

Twelve properties will be sent foreclosure notices.

Skowhegan Savings Bank is providing information for Town to consider banking with Skowhegan Savings Bank.

Vern will be providing his independent contractor form to Yolanda.

BOUNDARY LINE AGREEMENT: Selectmen have signed four originals. New address is now available for the Trustee of the abutting property, and originals will be sent to her for signatures.

AGENT FEES: Increased from \$3 to \$5 for reregistrations and from \$4 to \$6 for new registrations.

GRANT: Yolanda is looking into a grant to improve exterior lighting for the parking area. Deadline is October 25 for applications to Efficiency Maine and The Nature Conservancy for this grant. Yolanda has contacted Quality Electric and is waiting for a quote.

COLE BELANGER AUTO RECYCLING APPLICATION: Vern will inspect the site this coming weekend. Voted 2-0 to sign permit if the facility passes inspection.

ANNUAL GA ORDINANCE Public review, discussion, voted 2-0 to accept state appendices.

WARRANT PREVIEW: Accepted 2-0. Final warrant signed 2-0.

ABT Plumbing Heating & Cooling preliminary inspection: ABT has not given Mercer a price yet for the work needed on the building's heating system. There are some code issues to deal with before winter. Vern as general contractor will be responsible for costs related to his work, including furnace leak. Vern will pursue insurance coverage as applicable on pellet system.

ABANDONED ROADS PROJECT: Fran discussed her correspondence with MMA regarding the abandoned road statute. Fran will need help with this project. There is a question as to the deadline for determining abandonment under 23 M.R.S.A section 3028.

NEXT MEETINGS - October 10 and 24 (with warrant to be done October 22); November 7 and 21; December 5, 19 and 30; January 9 Warrant articles due; January 23 – Budget Committee meets with Selectmen.

Meeting adjourned at 9:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Fran Varney