

SPECIAL SELECTMEN'S MEETING on November 13, 2019
(Minutes approved November 21, 2019)

Meeting was called to order November 13th at 7:04 (Vern arrived at 7:10).

Present at the meeting were:

Selectmen Gary Mosher, Jerry Redlevske and, about five minutes late, Vern Worthen; Town Clerk Yolanda Violette; and, acting as Secretaries, Tammy Lamphere and Fran Varney; residents Fred LaPlante, Dari Hurley, Robin Laverdiere, Stephen Whitney, Bill True, Emily Turk, Sam Howard, Lorri Howard, Martha Howard, Donnie Howard, Julia Howard, Maryellen Charles, Rick Loadwick, Bob Burr, Mary Burr, Walter O'Brien, Sarah Bunker-Geyer, Steven Hakala, Dustin Barber, Aaron Gordon, Myke Bartholf, Sue Bartholf, Bjarki Gunnarsson, Dan Charles, John Cahill, Joel Lamphere, Bruce Hurley, Tina Gardner, Rob Gardner, David Welch, Chris Holt, Dennis Obert, Nick Pierce, Wanda Fortin, Mike Fortin, Denis Culley, non-residents Shawn Mullens, Carroll Bubar, Scott Landry (Farmington Selectman), and Travis Pond (New Sharon Selectman).

(1)

Resident Bob Burr asked second selectman Gary and third selectman Jerry for a summary of the winter plow contract situation.

Jerry's summary - Bid for a three-year contract from Vern W. was accepted in 2018 (by Selectmen Chris Tibbetts and Jerry Redlevske). Vern now has a health issue, and he called Gary Friday Nov. 8th to resign verbally. The earliest date Donnie H. can start is Monday, Nov. 18.

On Monday evening, Nov. 11th, Gary met with Vern (Vern as Contractor, not as Selectman), then with Donnie, Sam, Julia, Yolanda, and Fran. (Jerry was not present.) Vern Worthen submitted his written resignation from the 2018-2021 Winter Roads contract. Donnie Howard submitted a one year proposal for the 2019-2020 Winter Roads contract. A special selectmen's meeting will be held on Wednesday November 13 to review the resignation and proposal. Yolanda will post notices and notify people by email.

In response to a question, Gary responded that Vern's 2018 contract was like Donnie's old contract except for (1) equipment required and (2) cost.

Dari Hurley asked if Vern's contract is null and void for non-performance. Selectman Gary responded that if equipment is not registered, inspected and insured, then the town shouldn't let the plow equipment be put on the roads. Selectman Jerry (on Monday or Tuesday) had told Vern that he should sand and/or plow if weather conditions require it.

Fran had advised Monday evening that the Town should not release Vern from contract until Town has alternative plowing/sanding coverage. MMA advised town in writing Wednesday afternoon that Vern should not plow any more for the town unless equipment is inspected and insured.

Question to Vern at Wednesday meeting - are the vehicles registered, inspected and insured?

Vern answered they are registered and insured, but not all are inspected.

Rob Gardner - this “good old boys’ club” has to stop - this “fox guarding the hen house” – in awarding town contracts, for example, plowing and wood harvesting.

Citizen comment - Inspection of equipment needs to be required earlier than Oct. 1.

Jerry and Gary voted 2-0 to accept resignation from Vern as snow contractor.

(2)

There were many expressions of gratitude to Donnie and his sons for stepping up.

Donnie is proposing a new one year contract costing \$15,000 more than last year, plus the purchase by town of up to 300 additional tons of salt. There was discussion about performance bond, pros and cons; but Selectmen Gary and Gerry did not require one for this proposed one year contract with Donnie.

Discussion - Why is Mercer paying \$1500 more per mile than other towns? Vern said one reason is because Mercer has 15 miles of dirt road. In 2018, Terry Warren, David Kincaid and Bruce Obert said to Vern there are too many dirt roads when they chose not to bid.

Steve Whitney mentioned salt issue. Vern mentioned that the town is split, some want more salt, some want less.

Dari Hurley suggested that there be more advertising for bids in 2020, and that the bid advertising be earlier in the year (before June 21). Rick Loadwick and others suggested earlier inspection date. Vern believes soliciting bids is a good method.

Chris Holt asked if the town needs to appropriate additional money for the new contract. Gary believes the additional cost to town in 2019 will be less than 15% of this year’s appropriation of \$190,000. If so, in 2020 town needs to retroactively approve the increase. If increase is 15% or more, town will need new appropriation article.

Advice was received from New Sharon and Farmington selectmen to review and revise the contract before 2020 bid goes out and to require a performance bond in the bids.

Donnie’s proposed contract is not a substitute contract, rather it is a new separate contract. Selectmen Gary and Jerry should inspect equipment early Monday.

Vern’s equipment is to be removed from town property by 4 pm Sunday Nov. 17.

Motion to accept Donnie’s proposed contract. Selectmen approved Donnie’s contract in the amount of \$150,000 plus requested additional salt. 2-0-1.

Adjourned 7:48.

[Note takers: Fran Varney, Tammy Lamphere, Yolanda Violette]