

Minutes of November 14, 2023 Meeting

Warren Select Board

Streamed on MRVTV

6:30 PM

-draft-

Members Present: Luke Youmell, Chair; Andrew Cunningham, Vice Chair; Bob Ackland, Camilla Behn, Devin Klein Corrigan

Staff Present: Rebecca Campbell, Town Administrator; Reta Goss, Town Clerk; Dayna Lisaius, Town Treasurer; Ruth Robbins, Zoning Administrator; Marie Schmukal, Library Director

Others Present: Sandra Brodeur, Alice Cheney, Jito Coleman (Conservation Commission), Bob Cummisky, Susan Cummisky, John Goss, Dionne Heyliger, Jeffrey Lick, MariFrancis Mcl, Lisa Miserendino, Charlie Snow (Cemetery Commission), Sue Stoeher (MR Seniors), Carol White, Bill Zekas (MR Seniors)

Public Comment

Nobody present requested time to address the Board.

Agenda Changes

An update on covered bridge work was added, and it was noted that the Executive Session will be at the end of the meeting.

Town Clerk Update

Reta Goss was present, providing a letter a resignation after decades of serving as the Town Clerk. She indicated that Brent Adams is doing well, and Board members expressed their appreciation for her help in the transition to a new Clerk, in addition to their thanks for her many years of supporting the Town and its residents as Clerk.

MOTION: *Ms. Behn made a motion to accept Ms. Goss' resignation and send her off to have fun, relax, and enjoy. The motion was seconded by Mr. Youmell. All voted in favor.*

MOTION: *Mr. Cunningham made a motion to appoint Brent Adams as Town Clerk until Town Meeting Day 2024. The motion was seconded by Ms. Behn. All voted in favor.*

There was a standing ovation for Ms. Goss.

Pavilion RFP Update

Ms. Klein Corrigan recused herself from this decision, as her firm had submitted a proposal for the pavilion.

Four proposals had been received, from Yestermorrow, Corrigan & Klein, Madsonian (Dave Sellers), and Alice Cheney (Square Rule Frames). It was discussed that the basic configuration of each proposal should be evaluated along with the materials specified, and that it was not suitable to choose a specific design or set of materials and then ask for major changes from the submitter in order to match a preferred design or set of material specifications.

Ms. Lisaius reminded the group that attached benches and ADA accessibility are part of the grant requirements.

The specifics of the submissions from Ms. Cheney and from Corrigan & Klein were discussed in some detail; indications were that most of the Board members favored the design presented by Ms. Cheney but that the materials to be used need to be more in line with what was included in the Corrigan & Klein project, as they will provide for better resistance to deterioration and less overall maintenance.

MOTION: *Mr. Ackland made a motion to not accept any of the four proposals submitted, and to republish an RFP based upon a preferred design and materials. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cunningham. The motion was later amended by Mr. Ackland, and agreed to by Mr. Cunningham, to be only to not accept any of the four proposals submitted. All voted in favor.*

It was agreed that a new RFP should be published, and an attempt was made to outline the specifics of that request. Some of the details to be included in the new RFP were discussed, and there was some lack of clarity regarding where to include very specific information (such as location of benches, roofing materials, and lumber species); it was agreed that, based upon the features discussed, Mr. Ackland will present a draft RFP for review at an upcoming Board meeting.

Mad River Seniors

Bill Zekas and Sue Stoehr of the Mad River Seniors were present to outline details behind the organization's increased request for municipal appropriations in the 23-24 budget, noting that all towns which contribute have been asked for the same increased amount. Mr. Zekas outlined some of the programs supported by the Seniors group, including the most important Meals On Wheels, which serves as an opportunity for wellness checks and socialization as well as delivery of meals. Other programs, including on-site meals and classes, provide social connections as well; support is also provided to the Free Wheelin' ride program. The organization employs three part-time staff members, and needs to remain competitive; there are over 70 volunteers working with the various programs sponsored by the Seniors. Mr. Zekas outlined that CVCOA provides some funding, but there is no direct federal funding available. Towns currently provide 12% of the funding needed, this number used to be 18%, and the group's goal is to get back to that level of contribution from the towns. He confirmed that Warren's participation rate in Seniors programs is proportional to their population.

Board members agreed that the requested \$10K should be included in the 24-25 budget.

MRVPD Update

Mr. Ackland provided an update, noting that the PD has been working on long-term strategic planning, and has decided that there will be prioritization of efforts on housing, transportation, and climate. The details of these focus areas are yet to be outlined. He explained that Joshua Schwartz will be continuing his work with Waitsfield to help move their Wastewater Project forward, and also indicated that a request from Mr. Schwartz for a sabbatical has been approved, and that he will be taking a leave from mid-March to the beginning of June in 2024. Mr. Ackland noted that Sam Robinson has been doing an outstanding job, and it is anticipated that he will be able to cover the office while Mr. Schwartz is on leave.

Mr. Ackland reported that nothing specific for a tri-town gathering is planned at this point, and reminded the other Board members that his position on the PD will need to be filled in March.

Road Signs—Brook Road/VT Route 100(Brodeur/Weston)

Sandra Brodeur had requested a sign be installed near her residence, indicating a blind driveway; she noted that she frequently has difficulty crossing Brook Road to get to her mailbox, and that she doesn't believe the Post Office would be amenable to moving her box to the same side of the road as her house. Ms. Brodeur also indicated that it is very difficult to pull out of the Weston driveway on Route 100 between the north and south entrances to the Village, due to the speed of travel on Route 100.

It was explained that Route 100 is in the purview of VTrans, that posting a slower speed would need to be approved by the state, and that the Ellen Lane intersection also needs to be discussed; Ms. Campbell will reach out to Michelle Redmond of VTrans regarding both these issues.

Board members will look into sign possibilities for the Brook Road, in the meantime Ms. Campbell will speak with the Post Office regarding moving the mailbox across the road, as this is a public safety matter.

Green Schools

Ms. Campbell reported on a conversation she had with Jim Barber, who is a contact person for the Green Schools program, which facilitates obtaining funding for stormwater projects for those that need to meet the new 3-Acre Rule requiring mitigation. Ms. Klein Corrigan also provided related information, and it was indicated that, although guidance from Ray Daigle had indicated that stormwater work at the DPW area of the school parcel might be covered by this program, Mr. Barber explained that only the portion of any improvements made that would directly affect the school would be eligible for funding through the program. It was agreed that this funding should not be pursued; there will be stormwater mitigation necessary when work is completed at the garage site, as the impervious area there will be increased. Board members noted that Mr. Daigle should be thanked for his efforts in this project. The Green Schools program may be considered at a future time when the work at the garage site commences, if it is determined that the school will benefit from any stormwater work completed at that point.

Ms. Campbell also reported that she has been communicating with Andres Torrizo regarding the work which needs to be completed at the corner of School Road and Brook Road; Mr. Ackland noted that coordination between Mr. Torrizo and Mark Bannon is needed for this grant application to be completed.

Cemetery Road

Mr. Youmell opened the floor to comments regarding traffic and maintenance on an unnamed road which provides access to several residences as well as a portion of the Village cemetery. Ms. Behn participated in this conversation as a member of the Cemetery Commission.

Jeffrey Lick, a resident on the road, had provided a letter to the Selectboard outlining his concerns. He reiterated some of the contents of that letter, noting that in 2015 it was stated that the road providing access to the cemetery was to be temporary, and that it would be regraded and relandscaped when the access was no longer needed. He and other homeowners expressed concern that the road is now being used by the public to access the cemetery, and that the traffic as well as the erosion impacts should be addressed. Options of gating the cemetery entrance and appropriate signage were discussed. The matter of shared costs was also raised; homeowners expressed that the Town should pay a portion of the road maintenance costs if the intent is to continue Town use of the road.

Charlie Snow indicated that the Town repairs any road damage after use, and said that the access from the road is important, as the access through the municipal lot can be problematic for large vehicles that need to access the cemetery. Ms. Behn spoke of the possibility of closing off access to the cemetery for the time being, reestablishing that access if determined to be necessary in the future.

It was clarified that a section of the road is located on Town property. This section is also a part of the Lick driveway, although the other homeowners' access branches off before the portion of the road. The Town has granted a ROW for this shared use.

Board members agreed that the Cemetery Commission and homeowners should work together to create a homeowners' association and draft an agreement regarding road use and maintenance, to bring to the Board for further discussion and approval.

Other and Ongoing Business

Covered bridge

Ms. Klein Corrigan and Ms. Campbell reported that they had met with Peter Pochop (VTrans) and Megan Holmes (Dubois & King) to discuss potential reinvigoration of the federal highway grant that has been awarded, but for which work was not completed due to the proposals received from contractors being well above the estimates provided (anticipation of bids in the \$650K neighborhood coming in between \$1.2 and \$1.5M). Now that the bridge floor has been replaced, it may be possible to put forward an RFP for the abutment work alone, and receive bids more in line with the grant money available; Ms. Holmes has indicated that the very specific timber and bridge work needed may have led to higher bids due to contractors' lack of familiarity with that type of work. The timing of the first bid solicitation was also detrimental, due to supplies being in very high demand and thus more expensive than anticipated.

It was discussed that the associated contract with Dubois & King has lapsed in time, but that there is still about \$3K available under that agreement for use in having Ms. Holmes to complete a fee and scope analysis for the abutment work. It was also noted that \$80K of the grant receipts have been expended, and that those funds would need to be paid back if the rest of the grant isn't used. The cost for Ms. Holmes to create a bid packet, including an estimate of costs, will likely be about \$10K; once that is completed, the Board will decide whether or not to move forward with an RFP for the project.

It was clarified that the retaining wall work was also done with Dubois & King, but under a different grant source. Ms. Holmes will be sending documentation of all contract activity to date.

Ms. Campbell noted that she has received comments regarding driving over the bridge since it has reopened, in that it feels as though there is a crown on the decking. Board members agreed to look into this.

Administrative Items

MOTION: *A motion to approve the accounts payable warrant in the amount of \$115,475.32 passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *A motion to approve the payroll warrant in the amount of \$34,526.66 passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *A motion to approve the renewal of a 1st class and 3rd class liquor license for The Reks passed unanimously.*

MOTION: *A motion to approve the minutes of October 24, 2023 passed unanimously.*

Executive Session

A motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing real estate, inviting Jito Coleman to join, passed unanimously.

The meeting entered Executive Session at 8:51 pm and returned to open session at 9:33 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Chamberlin

The Warren Selectboard

Luke Youmell, Chair

Andy Cunningham, Vice Chair

Bob Ackland

Camilla Behn

Devin Klein Corrigan