**Meeting Minutes**

**Poultney Selectboard**

**Monday, January 27, 2025 – 6:00 PM**

**Poultney Town Hall**

**Zoom Recording located here:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/XJmrO4yHb4VCJkwstlBl5yP6ndWylZQEVpV6W-Vwfw9u8ybHNoHTD5liLyA1gIms.WMniOmsfjLAlDUaV>

Jeff King called the meeting to order and led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Selectmen present included: Jeff King, Sheryl Porrier, Alan-Glen Burnell, Mark Teetor and Valerie Broughton. Others present included Paul A. Donaldson, Joel Roberts, Sarah Pelkey, Carol Bunce, Mary Sue Reed, Mollie Messer, Devon Fowler, Rachel Fowler, Sherry Roberts, Chris Roberts, Patty Davenport, Dan Williams, and Don Preuss, Wells Selectboard Chair.

**Adoption of the Agenda:** Sheryl Porrier made a motion to adopt the Agenda with the addition of adding approval of January 9, 2025 meeting minutes. Mark Teetor seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mark Teetor made a motion to approve the minutes of 01-09-25, 01-13-25, 01-13-25 Special Budget Meeting, and 01-21-25 Special Budget Meeting. Alan-Glen Burnellseconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

Paul Donaldson asked the board if he could give the floor to Don Preuss, Chair of the Wells Selectboard prior to continuing the meeting.

**Town of Wells appreciation:** Don Preuss came to thank the Town of Poultney, and specifically the Highway Department, for assisting the Town of Wells Highway Department, during winter weather events since their three man crew has been down to one man, as two of Wells highway department had been out for health reasons. Wells really appreciates the help that Poultney has been providing them. He also stated that if Poultney needs assistance with roadside mowing, Wells is willing to lend a hand and equipment there as he has heard our roadside mower is down. The Poultney Selectboard thanked Mr. Preuss for this offer and for coming to this meeting.

**Road Report:** Joel Roberts reported the following:

-He expects to have an offer for the damage to the tractor by 2-7-25. He has been following up with the carrier’s insurer, Progressive, on almost a daily basis.

-He confirmed that the Truck 3 replacement cost from one bid is $69,225.00, as there was some confusion on the invoice.

-We have finished assisting Wells as their crew is back in full force.

-He urged the public to stop parking along the roadways, and in the road ROW during weather events as it causes danger for the plow trucks, and the public while we are trying to plow roads.

-He also asked the public to stop plowing their snow across roads, especially after the plows have plowed, and sanded or salted the roads. This can create road hazards to the travelling public.

-The crew has been cold patching as needed, and building maintenance as well. They are currently having problems with their wood boiler, and need to have someone look at the boiler for thoughts on repairs.

**Community Development:** Sarah Pelkey reported the following:

-She has been working on end-of-year grant reporting.

-She has been developing some new projects.

-She is working on the MERP awards, and the next step is for VDHP to review projects. GMP has offered to support and review the MERP projects. She is also seeking additional matching funds she may be able to leverage.

-She has developed an RFP in connection with the grant to do an alternative site analysis for the current town garage site.

-She is working with the PDRC, with the aid of Preservation Trust of VT and CEDRR, to explore starting a Community Trust in Poultney. That meeting will be on March 6, 2025.

**Town Managers Report:**

-Dan Williams from the Poultney Transfer Station reported the following:

-we pulled 71 boxes of MSW this past year compared to 78 the previous year.

-we pulled 73 boxes of ZS this past year compared to 74 the previous year.

-we pulled 31 boxes of Furniture this past year compared to 31 the previous year.

-we pulled 25 boxes of Demolition this past year compared to 27 the previous year.

-we pulled 8 boxes of Metal this past year compared to 5 the previous year.

-we had 5 electronic pick ups this years with an average of 5-6 gaylords per pick up.

-we had 9 book boxes picked up.

-We had 5 tire pickups, which is about 1,250 tires.

-we had food scraps picked up 52 weeks, with 8 totes per pick up.

-there were 25 bottle drives benefitting 25 nonprofit organization raising a total in donated bottles, and monetary donations in the amount of $20,669.00.

-The Town Clerk has forwarded 2 Tobacco and Beer/Wine License Renewals for Stewarts and Dollar General. Alan-Glen Burnell made a motion to approve the renewals. Mark Teetor seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

-Paul Donaldson stated that Evan Fitzgerald plans to Zoom the 02-10-2025 Selectboard Meeting to update the board and the public on progress on the Bric Grant.

-Paul Donaldson stated the Route 31/South Street Bridge is progressing along. The State is in the process of preparing offers for easements and ROWs which will impact certain landowners. -He is close to completing the Town Report, and is still waiting on auditor information to finish it.

-we will be utilizing VT Alert to alert the public to road closures, emergency matters, etc., that people can enroll in to receive notices from the Town.

**Transact any Other Lawful Selectboard Business:** None.

**Health Officer:**  Sarah Pelkey reported that the Regional Committee met recently on 1-21-25. She also stated that the RRPC is conducting Selectboard Meetups in different towns for town SB’s to meet each other. She will let the board know when and where such meetings will take place.

**Rutland Regional Planning Commission:** No report.

**Public Comments on matters (limit of 10 minutes total):**

-Sherry Roberts stated that on 1-14-25 two dogs owned by Raj Bhakta killed her chickens which were in her enclosed barn. She is not sure how the dogs broke through the closed door, and latched interior doors. She had called the State Police, and Town Office. Paul Donaldson stated he went to the house around 8AM that morning. She said she was probably in the barn cleaning up the dead fowls. She said someone from Mr. Bhakta came and retrieved the dogs. She did get a VM from Paul, and did call the town office to let them know she was all set, everything was taken care of.

-Rachel and Devon Fowler stated that on 1-22-25, they believe Mr. Bhakta’s dogs killed their chickens too. They tracked tracks back to the campus and went to Mr. Bhakta’s house. They spoke with Danhee Bhakta, and also Raj Bhakta on the phone, who admitted there was a dead chicken on his porch that day when he left to go on a business trip. They spoke with the Deputy Rickets who advised them he does not want to be in charge of animal issues anymore and has told Paul Donaldson the same. Paul Donaldson stated he has not had that conversation with Deputy Ricketts. They asked if Paul was calling a police officer a liar. He stated he was not but that he has never had such a conversation with the Deputy. Paul Donaldson stated that he has had the RCSD handling these types of matters which usually result in the RCSD issuing tickets. He had advised this to Ms. Messer and Ms. Fowler when they recently stopped in the office and he told them to make a formal complaint to the RCSD.

Mollie Messer stated that her chickens were also killed on 1-22-25 around 11:30/noon. Thirteen chickens were killed with one being injured as well. She suspects the Bhakta dogs as well. Those dogs have charged her when she has been walking with her daycare children.

-All of the people complaining about the dogs are concerned the aggression will escalate towards children and/or adults, and want the Town, specifically Paul Donaldson as Animal Control Officer, to do something about it. Jeff King stated the Board will see what can be done.

-Carol Bunce inquired about the Act 250 J.O. as far as HOP Energy property, and the fact that HOP will need to amend its Act 250 permit. Paul Donaldson stated the temporary bridge was always supposed to impact that property.

-Patty Davenport inquired where is the financial information for different groups the town allocates funds to. Paul Donaldson said some of that information is contained in the Town Report. She specifically has requested the information from the Little League. Paul Donaldson had provided that to the Selectboard, and will send her a copy of the same.-Mary Sue Reed asked about Merger Committee meetings, and where those minutes are being posted. Paul Donaldson stated he has been posting them with the Selectboard Meeting Minutes.

-Chris Roberts stated that as part of their Act 250 permit conditions, Hop Energy is supposed to train fire fighters which is not being done. Paul Donaldson will mention this to Fire Chief Kerber.

**Executive Session:** None.

**Board Orders:** Mark Teetor made a motion to approve the board orders. Valerie Broughton seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

**Adjournment:** Alan-Glen Burnell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sheryl Porrier seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

s/Paul A. Donaldson