

Poultney Board of Selectmen
Meeting
Monday, January 11, 2021 – 6:30 pm
Poultney Town Hall & Virtual

Note: To join this meeting via Zoom, use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88983783452?pwd=S3FSbXZUZmpwbTNQbnRjOUZNSnFpZz09>

Meeting ID: 889 8378 3452 Passcode: 375664

Or Dial: 929 205 6099 Meeting ID: 889 8378 3452 Passcode: 375664

Agenda

- 1) Adoption of the Agenda
- 2) Approval of Minutes: December 28, 2020 and January 4, 2021
- 3) Road Report
 - truck repairs after leaving the road on ice / insurance claim
- 4) Public Comments and Concerns
- 5) Town Manager's Report
 - Raj Bhakta, Green Mountain College Farms
 - East Poultney Gorge Bridge – pedestrian access
 - Same Sun 150kW Parking Canopy – Green Mountain College campus
 - Tire fee schedule at the transfer station
 - Better Connections grant application
 - Week of February 8, 2021 – EPA meeting
 - Budget
- 6) Transact Any Other Lawful Business
- 7) Executive Session
- 8) Health Officer's Report
- 9) Rutland Regional Planning Commission
- 10) Board Orders
- 11) Adjourn

Meeting Minutes

Poultney Board of Selectmen

Monday, January 11, 2021 – 6:30 PM

Poultney Town Hall and Virtual

Jeff King called the meeting to order. Selectmen present included: Jeff King, Terry Williams (via Zoom), George Miller (via Zoom), Carol Bunce and Sheryl Porrier. Others present included Paul A. Donaldson, Town Manager, Ron Kelley, Highway Foreman, Carol Stierl, Raj Bhakta, and Attorney Leo Gibson.

Adoption of the Agenda: Sheryl Porrier made a motion to adopt the agenda. Carol Bunce seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Carol Bunce made a motion to approve the minutes of December 28, 2020 and January 4, 2021. George Miller seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

Public Comments and Concerns: None.

Road Report: Ron Kelley reported that the truck operated by Joel Roberts left the road during ice conditions, and ended up in the ditch. There was extensive damage done to the rear end, springs, tires, and brake canisters. Paul Donaldson stated they have submitted a claim through the insurance. Ron Kelley stated the crew has started to do the repairs.

The crew continues to plow and sand/salt as needed.

and crew continues to maintain equipment and plow and sand roads as needed.

Town Managers Report:

-Further discussion re: pedestrians on the East Poultney Gorge Bridge. Paul Donaldson has received further advisement from the State of Vermont Bridge Management and inspection Manager Pam Thurber, that they would recommend not allowing pedestrians to use the bridge if our own visual inspection appears to show additional wear due to frost/thaw/freeze cycles. Ron Kelley did an inspection as best he could given the snow and ice conditions, and by his estimation, the southeast abutment looks worse than it did previously. Discussion followed. George Miller made a motion to close the bridge immediately to all pedestrian traffic, foot, bike, etc. Terry Williams seconded the motion. Carol Bunce voted against the motion. Sheryl Porrier voted against the motion. Jeff King voted against the motion. Motion failed. Further discussion re: the courtesy to give notice to folks of the impending closure. Sheryl Porrier made a motion that Paul Donaldson distribute a letter notifying people of the closure as of 01-18-2021. Ron Kelley to get signs, and additional barriers to notify the public. Carol Bunce

seconded the motion. Terry Williams voted against the motion. George Miller voted against the motion. Jeff King voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried. Paul Donaldson will draft and circulate the letter tomorrow and Ron Kelly will order the signs tomorrow.

The board set another Special Budget meeting for January 19, 2021.

Paul Donaldson advised the board that Same Sun of Vermont has started an application for a 150Kw parking canopy on the GMC campus.

Paul Donaldson advised he is working with the RRPC and Sarah Pelkey to explore a Better Connections grant application to secure funding to do scoping study of bike trail connectivity to downtown, explore traffic and parking options to incorporate other forms of transportation alternatives, i.e. biking, hiking, etc.

Paul Donaldson reminded the board that the week of February 8, 2021 we will be participating in virtual EPA meetings in connection with our EPA grant.

Transact any Other Lawful Business: Raj Bhakta, and his attorney, Leo Gibson, presented to the board his evolving plans for the college campus. He stated:

-Since the September closing, he has realized the liberal arts education and or debt-free work college will be difficult in today's climate to succeed.

-He is trying to come up with a "blank slate" for the campus and is focusing on a spirits company and building upon that with other partners for a world class food and beverage destination.

-He wants to work with environmental friendly companies and bring them in to the project as an incubator and hub for startups.

-He hopes to have an unaccredited, post-graduate program, starting with 2021 education based upon a wood-fired distillery.

-The model includes him pledging 5% of all his sales to fund the educational side of the program.

-It currently takes \$1.5 Million per year, at a minimum to insurance, keep the lights on, heat, etc. He has currently set the budget at that from his own funds, and would like to see that grow to \$3 Million to help pay deferred maintenance.

-When he was at Whistle Pig, he ran a successful internship program that saw several of his pupils move onto fortune 500 companies.

-He wants to use local agricultural products in his model. Terry Williams mentioned the H57 program as agriculture being at the hub of economic solutions in VT, whereby by 2022, the goal is that 48% of produce consumed in VT comes from VT.

-He is working on getting a non-profit, 501c3 status, which he would lease the campus to. This is a 9 month process at a minimum. Raj Bhakta asked the board to consider waiving taxes for his property for 5 years. Discussion followed. Paul Donaldson stated that this is a matter that would likely have to go to the voters, and with March 2 meeting date fast approaching, time was running short. The board did request that Mr. Bhakta formerly request a tax stabilization Agreement in writing so they had a starting point. He stated he would present such a request in writing.

Health Officer: None.

Rutland Regional Planning Commission: Terry Williams mentioned that the so-called 3acre rule is coming down the pipe, and properties such as the golf course in town, some quarries, may be hit with the tax for properties over three acres. Terry also asked to be kept apprised of other matters the town is working on so that he can bring those matters to the RRPC's attention, and see if they can support us in any way.

Executive Session: None.

Board Orders: Sheryl Porrier made a motion to pay board orders. Terry Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Adjournment: George Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sheryl Porrier seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

s/Paul A. Donaldson