

Poultney Board of Selectmen
Meeting
Monday, January 24, 2022 – 6:30 pm
Poultney Town Hall

Agenda

- 1) Adoption of the Agenda
- 2) Approval of Minutes: 1-10-2022 (Special Meeting), 1-10-2022, 1-17, 2022, 1-20-2022
- 3) Public Comments and Concerns (limit of 15 minutes):
 - Nic Stark – branding initiative
 - Jamie Lee – Poultney Planning Commission: proposed update to Town Plan
- 4) Road Report:
- 5) Town Manager’s Report
 - Sarah Pelkey: Economic Development Coordinator updates
 - Ice Rink at Legion
 - Town owned property on Loop Road (old school house)
 - Marijuana vote for Town Warning
 - Merger of Town and Village for Town Warning
 - Highway Mileage Certification
 - Town Report
 - Execution of Warning
- 6) Transact Any Other Lawful Selectboard Business
- 7) Executive Session
- 8) Health Officer’s Report
- 9) Rutland Regional Planning Commission
- 10) Board Orders
- 11) Adjourn

Meeting Minutes

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Jeff King called the meeting to order. Selectmen present included: Jeff King, Terry Williams, Carol Bunce, Sheryl Porrier and Richard LaPierre. Others present included Paul A. Donaldson, Ron Kelley, Jaime Lee, Sarah Pelkey, Nic Stark, Mary Sue Reed, Aaron Kerber, Neal Vreeland, Margaret Mug, Ken White, and appearing via zoom members of the Castleton Content Lab, William DeForest and Castleton students _____
(names have been requested).

Adoption of the Agenda: Carol Bunce requested an item to be added to the agenda: Adding Personal Property Taxing issue to the Warning and made a motion to adopt the agenda with that added item. Richard LaPierre seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Approval of Minutes: Terry Williams made a motion to approve the minutes of 1-10-2022 (Special Meeting), 1-10-2022, 1-17, 2022, 1-20-2022. Sheryl Porrier seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

Public Comments and Concerns:

Nic Stark and members of the Castleton University Content Lab presented the branding initiative for Poultney they have been collaborating on as the Poultney Branding Committee. In addition, Mr. Stark circulated different font ideas created by the lab and contributed by Ken White. Nancy Liberatore has also recently joined the group. Mr. Stark is going to share the ideas with different stakeholders in town, the Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, business owners and provide feedback to the Selectboard at a later date.

Jaime Lee presented a brief synopsis of the proposed updated Town Plan that the Planning Commission has forwarded to the Selectboard. The Selectboard will need to have two public meetings on the proposed plan before they can adopt it. The Planning Commission will await comments, concerns, etc. that can be funneled through Paul Donaldson. Paul Donaldson emailed the board members a copy of the proposed plan.

Sarah Pelkey, Economic Development Coordinator updated the board on the progress of the VOREC Grant she and others have been working on. The grant is to provide Way finding signs, message board for the Fair Haven Visitor Center, website assistance, and logo ideas.

Mary Sue Reed reminded the board that it is obligated to comply with Open Meeting Laws and timely post minutes. She questioned a remark that Constable Kerber made at the last meeting

regarding possible office space at the fire department and lack of note in the minutes. Jeff King stated that we have been talking about that issue for a number of years now so its been an ongoing conversation. Mary Sue Reed questioned why Terry Williams had recently posted on facebook a Neighborhood Watch meeting idea, and wondered when the Selectboard ever discussed the same. Jeff King stated that the board had never discussed the matter. Terry Williams acknowledged the post should not have indicated is position on the Selectboard and the initiative was one members of the public had approached him on, and he was conducting the meeting on his own and not as a representative of the Selectboard. Paul Donaldson stated that he had received anonymous correspondence from a member of the public about alleged criminal activity at various locations in the town and village. He has shared the same with local, county and state law enforcement where the responsibility for such matters should lie.

Road Report: Ron Kelley reported the following:

- relocation of utility poles for the Thrall Road bridge project has started;
- the new truck is working out well, Dick Ferguson has been making a few adjustments to the truck;
- we had a recent exhaust leak on Brad's truck which has been repaired;
- he discussed budget items with Paul Donaldson recently;
- if there is surplus from FEMA reimbursement the board should consider placing some funds in the bridge repair fund since we have at least two bridges that need to be replaced in the next couple of years. As well Grants-In-Aid reimbursements may help bridge fund;
- we sold a gravel screen that we have not used in many years to the Town of Hampton as they needed one;
- Carol Bunce questioned the State regulation to place weight limit signs on Route 30 bridge. Ron Stated that he understood that the State would be doing those signs, but will check with the State;
- The State will no longer be funding the RRPC to assist towns with MRGP compliance so the board needs to consider who will be helping the town do this;
- we should inquire if the GIS mapping program we may be getting can assist with culvert inventory and MRGP requirements

Town Managers Report:

Ice Rink at Legion: Paul Donaldson reported that the American Legion no longer needs the Town's assistance with providing insurance for the project as they were able to secure their own insurance. This project is not a town project.

Town owned property on Loop Road (old school house): Paul Donaldson stated that he has had a couple of offers to purchase the old school house on the Loop Road, and an inquiry from the Historical Society that the town has owned since 2007 (through tax sale). Discussion followed. The consensus of the board was to engage a realtor to assess and market the property.

Marijuana vote for Town Warning: Discussion on whether to include on the Warning the vote called for in 7 V.S.A. § 863 regarding cannabis retailers and integrated licensees locating in town. Discussion followed. Carol Bunce made a motion to place the question on the Warning for 2022 as follows: Shall the voters of the Town of Poultney authorize cannabis retailers and integrated licensees in Town pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 863? Sheryl Porrier seconded the motion. Carol Bunce voted in favor. Sheryl Porrier voted in favor. Terry Williams voted against the motion. Richard LaPierre voted against the motion. Jeff King voted in favor of the motion. Motion passed.

Merger of Town and Village for Town Warning: Discussion on whether to place a merger study question with the Village of Poultney. Carol Bunce made a motion to place the merger question on the Warning as follows: Shall the voters of the Town of Poultney authorize the Selectboard to appoint a committee to study the feasibility of a merger between the Town of Poultney and the Village of Poultney dependent upon the Village of Poultney placing a similar feasibility study on the Village Ballot in May, 2022, and both Articles passing in both elections? Terry Williams seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

Personal Property taxes: Paul Donaldson reminded the board that Mary Jo Teetor, Lister had questioned whether the town should continue tax business personal property in town. She stated at a recent budget meeting that the taxes are based on the “honor system” depending on when or whether a business reports the values of personal property. Paul Donaldson stated that it calculated to about \$11,500 in tax revenue, which would, if we no longer collected slightly affect the grand list, and the real property tax payers would make up the difference. Carol Bunce stated her research shows that most towns in Vermont have done away with this tax. Discussion followed. Terry Williams made the following motion: Shall the Town cease assessing and collecting taxes on personal property in the Town? Richard LaPierre seconded the motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

Highway Mileage Certification: Paul Donaldson stated he will sign the Highway Mileage Certification. No mileage changed this past year.

Paul Donaldson stated the Town Report is almost done, he is waiting on a few items, and needs to complete the Warning. He asked members of the board to be available to sign the Warning tomorrow as he has to submit to the publisher by Close of Business tomorrow, Tuesday, January 25.

Paul Donaldson stated that Representative McCoy has advised that for FY23 the State has budgeted \$190,000 for a coping study on the Route 31 bridge, 10% would be the town’s share of this study.

Transact any Other Lawful Selectboard Business: Chief Aaron Kerber circulated he end-of year report to the board. He has applied for an Assistance to Firefighters grant for \$70,000 (town share would be \$3,333) for an air pack filling station. Discussion followed.

We have applied for a BRIC grant to conduct a hydrological study of the trestle bridge on the D&H to see if the Poultney River channel is opened up again (part was closed in the 1970s), would that lower the flood plain.

Health Officer: None.

Rutland Regional Planning Commission: Terry Williams stated the following:

There is a TAC meeting on this Thursday. The RRPC approved the Trolley Track Solar project located along the D&H trail north of the Elementary School. last meeting the Bridge #4 was discussed

Executive Session: None.

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

Adjournment: Richard LaPierre made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Carol Bunce seconded the Motion. Motion carried.

s/Paul A. Donaldson