

Townshend Selectboard Meeting Minutes — November 6, 2006

Present:

Berenice Brooks
Alene Evans, absent
Henry Martin, chair

Jeffrey Russ
Irvin Stowell, Select Board

Participating Members:

Howard Lott, Richard Lucier, Walter Meyer & Andrea Royce (Listers) Bernhardt & Boyle (B&B Assoc.); TES Board members Dezendorf & Hege, teachers Bedortha and Berry, principal Leggot

The chair ***called the Meeting to Order*** at 7:00 PM ***and welcomed Participating Members:***

The Listers and B&B Associates accepted the Board's invitation for updates, progress and status reports etc. on Townshend's reappraisal process commenting:

- A great deal of the additional time was lost with computer glitches and malfunctions in the State's software.
- They also presumed that all structure photographs were lost. As it turned out unlabeled photos were found & printed, at a later date someone will have to label all of them;
- All inspections should be scheduled for completion by March 31st as some properties and major businesses remain to be inspected. This is time consuming as the Listers have to review the computer's appraised value to their calculated appraised value; believing the 2007 Grand List will be lodged in May
- All expressed reluctance on relying on the State's proposed mathematical process to appraise properties.
- June 1st should be the start of the grievance process, usually 10% of the property owners will apply. At this juncture B&B will have completed its reappraisal contract with the Town. Depending on the market, who knows when the next reappraisal may be done. The Listers were advised to continue maintaining & updating the Grand List
- Their biggest appraisal problem is lack of consistency in assessing land values;
- The Listers have hired a data entry person who is working out quite well.

The Select's consensus was that the State should be made to reimburse the Town or, at least, be made aware of the extra amount of time and money spent in fixing the State's Microsolve software glitches when working on the 2006 Grand List and the reappraisal. The best feature of Microsolve software is that it hooks up with other NEMRC programs, used by others.

The Selects were also concerned of going over budget. Lott reported that he was unsuccessful in obtaining any financial breakdown information from the Treasurer. The Select's were well aware of the difficulties in obtaining any financial information from the Treasurer and the Selects asked what could they do to help? Lott, along with the other Listers, believe they won't go over budget, as it is very infrequent that all 4 Listers work on the same day. Martin asked that the Listers start working on their 2007-08 budget for Select's consideration.

Lott added that the State now wants all appraised values on non-taxed properties; cemeteries, churches, schools, hospitals, etc. Maybe it's time to send an adjusted appraisal to the US Army Corp for considered payment of taxes on the land lost and consumed in the building of the Dam. Listers & B&B left at 7:25 PM

Townshend Elementary School (TES) Board Member, David Dezendorf presented a graphic layout of the roadway in front of the School for analysis and discussion to find a safety resolution on the increased traffic using the Common Rd while school is in session. TES Board held a public meeting to address the safety of the students, which resulted in unattainable solutions like closing the road.

The Selectboard had no issues with K. Hege's, chair suggestion and request that TES purchase and place ~~these "kid signs, neon in color"~~ pedestrian cross walk signs, before and after the Common Rd's painted cross walk, thus notifying drivers to be aware of children within the area.

TES was given District #2 phone number to contact to see if the State's highway direction sign on the Grafton Rd could be moved after the Common Rd. Stowell believes these type of road signs must be placed within certain distances and measurements.

Martin asked to speak about a different issue; how are school bus stops decided? Why is Richie's private road used? The children who use this bus stop walk thru others property to get there. Hege and Royce, the bus driver, said they would speak with parents and consider the possibility of relocating this bus stop. There remains good visibility for the bus and traffic on Rte 30 before the West Townshend Village. Hege added that a great many bus stops are on private driveways and the Town doesn't plow them. The TES contingent left at 7:45 PM

1a. Town Clerk and/or Treasurer: no financial statements, reports or memo

1b. Highway foreman: not attending

1c. Board of Health: no report

*Martin moved to approve the **Minutes of October 16, 2006**, seconded by Brooks, unanimously carried by the Board.*

*Martin moved to **Pay Bills and Sign the following Orders**, seconded by Russ,*

SM06-07 — \$13,679.59 - \$756. = \$12,923.59

SMPR06-07 - \$ 3,832.81

Road Com Ords wk/ending 10/21, 10/28 & 11/4

Martin announced that the Town was not paying Windham County Sheriff's Department's invoice of \$756. as they have been unable to substantiate his questions on charges: 3 hours in assisting a DUI; 4 hours at an accident; transporting to the Springfield jail. Lake reassured Martin that this was not a continuation of the department's past practices this time the Town will get answers.

Stowell will ask Bostrom why the Town didn't purchase bulk cold patch. Martin was asked, how does the State determine what parts of the highway will be repaved?

unanimously carried and signed as corrected.

4. Old Business

No Action taken on:

Law enforcement recap from Vermont State Police — 16 hours
Charles Marchant, Fire Department secretary sent the Board a copy of his Letter to Editor re: new fire station

Richie's Rd—Martin spoke to Atty Fisher on Richard Carusona's Notice of Appeal of the Town's road decision. At some time, the Court will appoint 3 independent Road Commissioners who will review the decision. The Board's consensus was to engage the Town Attorney in handling this legal matter.

Martin also spoke with Atty Fisher on the Town's **difficulties in obtaining financial statements/reports from the Town Treasurer**. Fisher's advice was to talk to the Secretary of State and to continue documenting discrepancies and difficulties in dealing with the Town Treasurer.

Windham Regional Commissions—Notification of Oct. 25th changes to their manual

Valley Cares'—*Stowell moved to ratify the actions taken by Henry Martin, Townshend's representative to Valley Cares, in signing Valley Care's appropriate loan/grant documents, seconded by Russ, unanimously carried by the Board.*

Martin recapped his calling each Select person explaining that due to time constraints the financial/loan grant documents for Valley Cares had to be performed before the Board's next meeting. Each Select person was in agreement to allow him to sign the documents (the Selectboard had received blank documents in the meantime)

Martin announced that the Valley Cares Board appointed Charles Marchant to hold on site "open house", Thursdays 1-4 pm, to answer questions on the project and explain the work being performed.

Ancient Roads—Stowell was encouraged to attend an interactive TV telecast, Nov. 14th, on how to properly complete the appropriate Ancient Road grant applications.

Town Hall handyman—Martin had a very amicable conversation with Christine Aither, present Town Hall janitor, who understood the direction taken by the Board. She relayed to him that she had more work than she can fulfill.

The Board agreed with Martin's proposed Town Hall Handyman job description, as a work in process. After minimal discussion the clerk will communicate Martin's job description adding working 2-3 hours a day, 3-4 days a week at \$11.28 per hour to all interested applicants. If they are still interested they should contact Davis to set up an interview.

Fountain—Russ was given permission to winterize the fountain: surrounding it with a tarp and placing non-toxic antifreeze in the bowl. Many believed moving it to the Town Barn would damage it more.

Town Hall Roof—Martin met with Michael Cutts, who had just finished repairing the Town Hall's slated roof by tightening and/or replacing them. Cutts spoke of there being some missing slates on the very top of the steeple repairing them would require the hiring of a boom. He said he would watch them carefully. He found nothing that would warrant extensive roof work but suggested that maybe ice backed up on the roof causing the water to leak/stain the upstairs ceiling.

Library—Both Martin and Stowell commented on the contractor painting the library in such cold, inclement weather.

ACT 68 repeal—Russ asked again, shouldn't the Town pursue the actions taken by other neighboring towns, started by the "Revolt & Repeal" group to repeal Act 68. Martin said personally yes, but this group did not accompany their repeal with a plan on how Legislation could correct it.

Hege added we still have to fund education; he believes in awarding teachers with an incentive pay and legislation had already created union high schools as separate tax districts, which has yet to start.

5. New Business

- Read in depth VLCT notification of a 36% increase in BC/BS health insurance (a definite budget item)
- F. Hege had submitted a copy of his resignation letter to RESCUE furthering his decision he had reservations on how the operations were to run and the duties and responsibilities of RESCUE board members after listening to a Lawyer's presentation. He restated that RESCUE has extremely well trained, really dedicated individuals who put in a lot of time serving the community. Townshend should feel very proud to have RESCUE's District #2 located here.

The lawyer explained that the roll of RESCUE Director was to report only to the RESCUE's Executive Committee, who can overrule any Board's decision. He felt that this established RESCUE's board as a corporate entity, not concerned with their community; corresponding or reporting to a Town is the sole responsibility of the RESCUE's Director — David Dunn.

Martin understood Hege's position, as he has had to wrangle with similar issues on the Valley Cares' Board. Martin dictated a short note inviting Mr. Dunn to the Board's next meeting to answer why have a representative on RESCUE's board and to understand the roles and responsibilities of their members. Hege added that getting RESCUE's into a union didn't happen by accident.

Select members thanked Hege for all of his work.

- Martin spoke of his involvement and conversation with representatives of District #2, State Highway Garage regarding the State removing signs (political, private, etc) off private property, without land owner's knowledge (Gausch, Charles Marchant, Cemetery Commissioner (the small, very little Oakwood Cemetery sign had been located on the

side of the bank for many, many years), Auction Barn, Yellow House Antiques and Candy Store)

He called John Alexander at District #2 who directed him to call Bill Sargent, who informed Martin that these signs were removed because they were within the State's Rte #30 — 25-foot right-of-way. These signs could be found and picked up behind District #2's highway garage in Dummerston. Martin spoke as a public citizen and asked Sargent why the highway personnel couldn't have used common courtesy in notifying the property owners that their signs were within the 25-foot highway right-of-way and were being removed. As he had looked around at neighboring towns Martin believed Townshend was specifically chosen for removal of the signs, at that point Sargent hung up the phone.

Martin retrieved everyone's "personal" signs.

- BCA members asked to count ballots

6. Other Business — *no board action taken*

BDCC's Annual Meeting Oct 24th

Copies of Social Service money requests:

Historical Society of Windham County; VT Center of Independent Living; Visiting Nurse Assoc & Hospice of VT & NH

The offering of an Engaging Citizens course at Antioch New England Institutes

Certificate of Insurance — Carl & Rhonda Brown

7. Executive Session — none at this time

8. Time of Next Meeting — Nov 20th

At 9:00 PM *Brooks moved to **Adjourn**, seconded by Stowell, unanimously carried by the Board.*

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Davis, clerk for the Selectboard