

**Select Board Meeting, Monday May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 6:30pm**

**(Meeting Held Via Zoom Meeting)**

Meeting login info can be found on the Town Website

[www.cavendishvt.org](http://www.cavendishvt.org)

**Present:** Bob Glidden (Chairman), Mike Ripley, George Timko (joined 6:35 p.m.), Sandra Russo, Stephen Plunkard, Brendan McNamara (Town Manager), Jen Leak (Recording Secretary), Eric Chatterjee (Okemo Valley TV), Peter Labelle, and Thomas Foster (VT Journal).

1. **Call the meeting to order**

Bob Glidden, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. **Act upon minutes of March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

*Sandra Russo moved/Mike Ripley seconded a motion to approve the minutes of March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020, as written. All voted in favor.*

3. **Adjust Agenda**

Brendan said that item #8 Update on Recreation Dept and Green Up Day can be skipped as it will be covered under item #5 Update on Town Operations with regards to COVID-19.

4. **Hear Citizens**

There were no citizens wishing to be heard.

5. **Update on Town Operations with regards to COVID-19**

Brendan said that today was the first day since closing in mid-March that the Town Clerk's office was open to members of the public. He said that a Plexiglas shield was installed between the front counter and the clerk's office with a window to pass materials through. Brendan said that the office is open to one person at a time by appointment only, researchers are required to bring and wear a mask and the office will provide gloves to wear when handling materials. He said that interested parties should call the office to schedule an appointment. Brendan added that this system will be a learning curve since the office is still staffed one person at a time and it took a lot of time to bring requested materials out of the vault.

Brendan said that demo debris is again being accepted at the Transfer Station since Casella has more drivers and can reliably haul it away.

Brendan said that the Water/Wastewater and Highway departments continue to operate with no changes.

Brendan said that the Recreation department is not offering any programs right now and won't for the foreseeable future. He said maybe sports programs will resume in the fall. He said that the Recreation Director, Terry O'Brien, has been doing field maintenance and spring clean-up.

Brendan said that Governor Scott had indicated Vermont's Green-up Day was cancelled but it has merely been

postponed to May 30<sup>th</sup>. He said that the Town won't have the traditional picnic and organized clean up this year but Green-up bags are available in the Town Office foyer so residents can green up on their own. He said that the bags will be accepted at no charge at the Transfer Station. George suggested that the clean-up be coordinated so all the Town roads get done. Brendan said that he will ask Terry to do that via the Cavendish Recreation Facebook page.

6. **Discussion regarding enforcement of 'Outdoor Junk and Junk Vehicles Ordinance'**

Brendan said that he would like some guidance and discussion from the Board on the enforcement of this ordinance. He said that each year he has been Town Manager there have been complaints about junk ordinance violations on various properties but no enforcement has taken place. Brendan said that enforcing it by complaint could be a slippery slope if it is not enforced equally through town; however, enforcing it throughout the entire town would be a huge and tedious process. Brendan said that currently when he gets complaints about properties with 4-5 unregistered vehicles he does a site visit and reports it to the State environmental agency but little happens since there is only one person to cover the entire state.

George said that he didn't think enforcing the ordinance throughout the Town was possible and suggested enforcing it under health or environmental pollution issues. Bob added that enforcing clean-up could be very expensive for the Town if the owner refuses to pay for it. Sandra said that she agreed with George and didn't think anyone would be able to survey the entire town, so addressing properties by complaints was more manageable.

Brendan agreed that investigating violations by complaint, especially if there were health or environmental issues, was probably the way to go unless the Town wanted to hire a full-time person for the job. Sandra suggested that the Highway crew could alert the Town if they see potential health or safety issues since they routinely travel all the town roads.

Mike said that he was loathe to tell people what to do on their own property, and enforcing the ordinance by complaint targets those who are most visible. Stephen said he would add that since the State has designed Route 131 a scenic byway the visual quality of properties along it is important. He said that visual impact is also an economic issue since junkyards decrease home values both for the property owners and their neighbors and for Town tax purposes.

Stephen asked if the sheriff would enforce the junk ordinance if it is a civil violation. Brendan said that the sheriff could serve a letter from the Select Board. Stephen said he was familiar with enforcement in other towns which give a period of time to clean up the property followed by fines for non-compliance which would put a lien on the property if unpaid.

Brendan said that he would look into options for enforcement. Sandra said that she agreed with imposing fines and would like to do as much as possible to encourage clean-up. Stephen asked if Brendan had a list of properties in mind. He added that those along Route 131 should be a priority and screening, by fence or vegetation, is also an option in addition to clean up. Brendan said that he would investigate all options. He said that he thought it would be difficult for the Town to choose only a few properties to enforce if there are many town-wide which are in violation. Mike added that investigating properties only by complaint would avoid that issue.

7. **Select Board to discuss process of waiving penalties and interest for delinquent tax payments.**

Brendan said that he had emailed the Board in April regarding this issue. He said that he has spoken with other town managers and with VLCT, and there is currently no legislation in place allowing the Town or Board to waive interest and fees or to change tax due dates that were voted on. Mike asked if a Special Town Meeting

could be held to change any of those. Brendan said he was not sure if that could be done for this fiscal year. He said if a taxpayer requested abatement then the Board of Civil Authority could meet and vote to waive interest and/or fees.

Brendan said that the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter taxes payments are due May 15th and so far payments seem to be on track with other years. He said that he is more concerned about next fiscal year's payments. Brendan said that he hoped legislation regarding waiving tax interest and fees might be passed before the fiscal year starts on July 1<sup>st</sup>. He said that he would continue to investigate options. Stephen asked if there was a contingency plan for the town budget if tax revenues are impacted. Brendan said that right now he is putting projects out to bid as normal but has requested only essential purchases from all the departments.

8. **Update on Recreation Dept and Green Up Day.**

(covered under item #5)

9. **Discussion on Town water supply and possible action required.**

Brendan said that Chief Water Operator Randy Shimp reported a drop in water levels in the two water storage tanks in town over the last few weeks. He said that someone from the Vermont Rural Water Association came and scanned the system for leaks and found none. Brendan said that Randy has increased the amount of water filtered by the water plant. Brendan said that they believe the high water use is due to a number of factors: school-aged kids and adults workers are staying at home, more second home owners are staying here and Mack Molding has increase their water usage. He said that Mack Molding is using an additional 32,000 gal/day as they are now making some medical supplies for the Covid-19 response.

Brendan said that Randy is now keeping up with the increased water demand but has not yet re-filled the tanks to their previous levels. He said that he asked Margo to put a water conservation request on her FB page, along water saving tips. He added that as people begin to go back to work some of the demands may be taken off the system. Brendan said that the main concern was to avoid a critical water shortage situation if there was a major event such as a fire.

Bob suggested that Brendan let the Cavendish Fire Department know to take water from the river rather than the hydrants if there is a fire and said that he would do the same for the Proctorsville Fire Department.

Stephen asked if Mack knew how long they would be using this much water. Brendan said that he didn't know and he would continue talking with them about putting less stress on the water system. George suggested adding a water conservation note with the next water bills and asked if Mack could put in a water storage system to even out their water demand.

Brendan said that he and Randy have discussed several options and agreed that if the water supply was critically low they could bypass the filters. He said that action would add iron and manganese into the water but would provide additional water into the system to more quickly fill the tanks.

Brendan said that he would keep the Board updated.

10. **Select Board to consider resolution regarding 'Deficit Refunding Note No. 1'**

Brendan said that he emailed this resolution to the Board regarding the refinancing of \$240,000, to be paid back over the next seven years, to pay off a deficit and the delinquent tax note. He said that the Board had discussed this previously but not made the resolution since the delinquent tax note was not due yet.

*George Timko moved/Bob Glidden seconded a motion to adopt the resolution as written. All voted in favor.*

Brendan said that he would mail copies for the Board members to sign.

11. **Discussion regarding participation in the Vermont Downtown Program.**

Brendan said that he and Stephen had discussed the Vermont Downtown Program, which the Town is enrolled in but has not been particularly active in obtaining available funding for improvement projects. Stephen said that projects such as sidewalks, roads and commercial property improvements in the village areas might be eligible for state funding. Stephen said that he would be willing to work with the Planning Commission to investigate funding opportunities through this program. The Board agreed.

12. **Update on various town projects**

Brendan said that he is moving forward with bid proposals for paving and the EV charging station. He said that work on the Depot Street bridge is beginning slowly. He said that drainage and culvert work is under way on the Route 131 project. He added that Route 131 paving might not take place until 2022 because the Covid-19 work restrictions are slowing projects down this season. Stephan said that there are many dead trees along the river side of Route 131 and he wondered if the state highway department would replace them.

13. **Other business**

Brendan McNamara – none.

Stephen Plunkard – none.

Sandra Russo – none.

George Timko – George thanked the Highway department for cleaning up the leaves and debris along the street edges of the Proctorsville Green area.

Mike Ripley – none.

Bob Glidden – none.

14. **Adjourn**

*George Timko moved/Mike Ripley seconded a motion to adjourn at 7:26 p.m. All voted in favor.*

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_