

UNAPPROVED
Town of Panton Selectboard Meeting
Tuesday, April 8, 2008
6:00 PM-Panton Town Office

Selectboard

L. Donnelly
R. LaFleche, Jr.
J. Viskup

Administration

R. Cloutier
S. Torrey

Guests

M. Donnelly J. Kuhn
B. Many E. Preston
K. Sullivan G. Vorsteveld

Call to Order: Chair LaFleche called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The minutes of March 25th, 27th and the 31st were approved as written on a motion from L. Donnelly, seconded by J. Viskup. So voted.

Appointment of Tree Warden: J. Viskup volunteered to serve the town as Tree Warden and explained that he has been taking a Tree Warden course and gave a brief overview of the roles and responsibilities. He added that he would like to form a committee to educate the community of what it takes to protect the trees and plant new ones. The Road Foreman stated that the trees cannot be in the ditch line and that there will be other trees that will need to be removed. The Board agreed this couldn't be helped but perhaps some compromises could be made. J. Viskup said that with a committee perhaps a plan could be made for tree planting. He added that as Tree Warden he wants to be advised prior to any trees being removed. L. Donnelly moved that J. Viskup be appointed Tree Warden, seconded by R. LaFleche. So voted.

Public Comment: J. Kuhn commented that he believes the town is spending too much money. L. Donnelly said that the budget will be watched every month to see if anything can be done and invited anyone to participate in the budget process and/or monthly financial review. She said it would also benefit the town if the Board attended the school budget meetings to better understand how they are coming up with the budgets. She further added that it's time to hold the town accountable and the school accountable. J. Kuhn proposed better forecasting of monthly cost and that perhaps he could work on the financial history with S. Torrey. L. Donnelly agreed better planning would help and there was discussion that this is being done to some extent but it was agreed it could be done better. J. Kuhn added that perhaps it's time to hire a Town Manager and perhaps the position could be shared with other small towns. L. Donnelly asked for some time to come up with answers.

Panton Road: J. Viskup explained the Tree Warden responsibility to G. Vorsteveld with regard to the town right-of-way. He added that he was disappointed to see the trees come down on Panton Road and that in the future no tree in any right-of-way is to be taken down without a public hearing unless diseased or dead (per VSA 24). Dr. Viskup suggested that in the future, prior to removing any trees, the Vorsteveld's meet with the Board to discuss their plans.

Discussion of the ditching on Panton Road (across from the town garage up to Atkins's). Foreman advised the Board that the culvert outlets were stone-lined. Discussion on cutting up some of the trees that were pushed over during the ditching. The Road Foreman advised this would be done when it's drier. L. Donnelly expressed concern that the snow will drift now that trees are gone (on the edge of Vorsteveld's field) and it was explained that it will now blow across the road instead of drifting against the trees. G. Vorsteveld remarked that he didn't know why they had to pay for half the ditching but that they would.

Road Foreman Report: R. Cloutier said he spoke to Clark's regarding the red truck and they valued the truck at \$5,000.00, \$10,000.00 if it had a new dump body which would cost around \$27,000.00. Clark's said the body of the truck wouldn't hold up if it was sandblasted and will not do the work. It was discussed that for about \$1,500.00 the road crew could purchase steel to fix the body and maybe, get another year or two out of the truck. It was discussed that next year the garage and new truck will be paid for and as the red truck will be 10 years old it will be time to get a new one. L. Donnelly said that the Road Foreman should tell the Board what truck is needed and then it should go out for three bids. It was mentioned that it would be according to State specifications which they used for guidelines in purchasing the new truck. J. Viskup remarked he hoped the old truck would last for two years but R. Cloutier said he didn't think the dump body would hold up. It was discussed that equipment should be turned every seven years due. L. Donnelly asked for the Road Foreman's equipment priorities but R. Cloutier has not completed the list. It was discussed that the State will be auctioning equipment and they have graders up which will be selling for \$15,000 - \$20,000. R. Cloutier mentioned that there is an issue with the grader clutch but so far it's holding together. B. Many remarked that there are too many other expenses to even consider purchasing a grader.

Work planned for the month: put in culvert on Jersey Street, take down snow fence, ditching Adams Ferry Road.

Discussed how to pick up the snow fence as the town doesn't have a trailer. In the past the little truck (which we no longer have) was used to pick up fence. It was mentioned that Arnold Bay offered their tractor to help with this but our liability insurance recommended that for safety purposes the vehicle should be inspected for prior to using. L. Donnelly remarked that someone must have something the town could use and that the towns should do more sharing of equipment but R. LaFleche said that the towns don't like to see their equipment being used in other towns. R. Cloutier to coordinate with G. Vorsteveld to borrow something that will work to move the snow fence. The small truck (which we no longer have) was used in the past to do this.

Chair LaFleche explained that the town is not keeping up with inflation and that the highway budget has been very malnourished for some time. R. Cloutier added that it costs \$180,000.00 just to reclaim a half-mile of road. L. Donnelly advised that the City of Vergennes did all the work on West Main Street (with the exception of paving) and perhaps the town is too quick to contract our work out versus doing our own work with the two men we have. Chair LaFleche said that only three contractors do reclaiming but agreed that everything else should be done by our highway department. L. Donnelly stated that we need to justify having two highway men and they should be utilized for a full forty hours. Discussion on highway grants and Chair LaFleche explained the process to J. Kuhn; we probably won't qualify for paving grant this year but may for a structures grant. R. Cloutier suggested the town retain a grant writer and mentioned a resident who was interested. He will touch base to see if there is still an interest. He added that E. Carter was going to get a grant for the Arnold Bay boat launch but apparently it never happened. Chair LaFleche advised the Board that E. Carter submitted a petition 5/27/06 requesting repair of the boat launch. He added that the town did some work that probably shouldn't have been done. It was mentioned that a flat bed truck is being parked in the town right-of-way across from the Pantou General Store. J. Viskup will follow up.

S. Torrey advised that Martha Price had received the structures grant application.

Financial Reports: L. Donnelly questioned the increase in income on the balance sheet. S. Torrey explained it was due to the property taxes being budgeted too low. She added that it's just an estimate based on the prior year actual but she believes a better forecasting should be done. Motion by L. Donnelly to approve the financials as presented, seconded by J. Viskup. So voted. J. Kuhn commented that he would like to see equipment depreciation then perhaps there would be fewer questions when purchases are made. S. Torrey said that a depreciation schedule can be set up. Chair LaFleche responded that they were waiting for a plan from our road foreman. J. Kuhn recommended that periodically the highway equipment be sent out for professional maintenance but Chair LaFleche explained that this would be very costly and isn't in the budget. It was mentioned that in 2010 there will be another new set of emission standards for trucks.

New Business: J. Kuhn asked about using the town constable versus the Sheriff's Department and Chair LaFleche advised that the town does not have a certified constable. S. Torrey mentioned that the town has received more speeding fines since we discontinued the Sheriff patrol. Most are Vergennes P.D. and State Police. J. Kuhn asked if the small shack could be removed located on the corner of Slang Road and Panton Road.

Chair LaFleche advised that Kim Bingham called the to inquire if the town would consider installing a culvert across Panton Road (flats) so they could install drag lines for manure spreading. He added that this would lessen the travel of tankers on the road. L. Donnelly said one drag line won't help the traffic unless all the other farmers agreed install drag lines. Chair LaFleche said that perhaps when the town improves the roads this could be considered or the Bingham's could pay for all the expenses. Discussion of having the spreading done at night when there is less traffic. L. Donnelly will talk with Matt Severy (installs drag lines) for further information.

Chair LaFleche informed that Board that Rick Keene, Addison County Transportation Planner, invited the Board and Road Foreman to a dinner and meeting on grant planning May 20th. Chair LaFleche read the recommendation from the Planning Board to appoint Jim Darragh as Alternate Delegate to the Addison County Regional Planning Commission. Motion by J. Viskup to appoint as recommended, seconded by L. Donnelly. So voted.

Old Business: L. Donnelly inquired on the new tractor order. Chair LaFleche advised that the tractor has been ordered. S. Torrey asked if there was anyone interested in serving as the town Energy Coordinator. K. Sullivan will call to inquire further.

Chair LaFleche adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Torrey
Clerk