

Town of Panton
Selectboard Meeting
Thursday, November 13, 2008

Board:

Lynn Donnelly
Rejean Lafleche – Chair
John Viskup

Administration:

Rick Cloutier
Sue Torrey

Guests:

Sharon Ashcraft	Jamie Dayton
Jim Kress	Joe Kuhn
Bruce Many	Lisa Presson
Paul Sokal	Beth Tarallo
Randy Clark – Clark’s Truck	
Mike Perrigo – H.P. Fairfield	

Call to Order: Chair Lafleche called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Motion by L. Donnelly to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by R. Lafleche. So voted.

Public Comment: J. Kress expressed concern about the condition of Hopkins Road. He stated that the road is in poor condition and needs repair. Chair LaFleche explained that Hopkins Road has received more work than some of the other roads in Panton (culverts and road topping) and that the town doesn’t have the funds necessary to repair the road to the standard that perhaps it should be. He further explained that some of the problems can be attributed to driveways not meeting State specifications causing improper drainage (steep pitch) and erosion. The speed is also a factor which makes any potholes even worse. R. Cloutier added that there are large trucks traveling Hopkins Road which also is not legal and creates more wear and tear on the road. P. Sokal stated that the town has not maintained a surface schedule for the road. Chair LaFleche explained that the town looked at re-topping the road and it will cost \$50,000.00. P. Sokal agreed this was too much to raise in a year but perhaps it could be done in stages; each year some work be done. Chair LaFleche explained that the road topping budget had been raised but still doesn’t come close to what is needed. R. Cloutier added that it will take four (4) years to get Hopkins Road up to standard (with new base) and approximately \$200,000 - \$300,000. And because it’s a Class III road the town doesn’t qualify for any grant money. Discussion on various methods to accomplish the road repair ; blasting the ledge on the Vergennes side of Hopkins Road and reusing the material; L. Donnelly to contact Vergennes to ask if they will assist. L. Donnelly also mentioned that the other towns attended the November 10th, school board meeting and the school is already running at a significant deficit (tens of thousands of dollars). The School Board was asked to cut or level spend so the towns could add a cent to their budgets. She added that what they do will determine how much the towns have to spend. It was discussed that the majority of the budgets are related to school spending. P. Sokal commented that the town roads have been neglected over the years and should have been maintained when times were better. He further asked for a commitment from the Board to maintain town roads. J. Viskup said the information will be passed along to voters at Town Meeting. Discussion on the poor condition of the town grader. The Board requested voter attendance at the budget meetings in December.

New Business:

Clark’s – Lease vs. Buy - Randy Clark, Clark’s Truck Center and Mike Perrigo, H.P. Fairfield, gave the Board a presentation and quote for lease of a new truck for Panton. The quote includes two options; single axle and tandem. This would replace the existing 1998 single axle truck (see quote attached). Chair LaFleche commented that town is just beginning a truck search but he wanted to get an idea for budget purposes, which is why Randy and Mike are here.

Randy Clark outlined the advantages of a municipal lease purchase; at the end of the lease the town can buy the vehicle for \$1.00; town will only be committing to the lease a year at a time; if the Town choose not renew at the end of a year there are no penalties and there isn't a penalties for early payoff. Annual payment for a tandem would be \$40,602.00; single axle \$31,682.00. It was discussed that re-sale isn't as good on a single axle truck versus a tandem. Mr. Clark mentioned that Clark's Truck Center was awarded a contract from the State of Vermont and the prices in the proposal reflect this discount. The truck specifications are the same as the existing tandem, (State specs) except with new emission controls required by federal law. J. Viskup commented that it made sense to do this but budget time will tell if it's feasible.

Panton School Board – School Director Beth Tarallo advised that they are considering dissolving the Panton School Board. They have based this on low meeting attendance, a desire to save the town money by increasing efficiencies (having bills paid centrally, no audits, no stipends, no overhead). There would still be a representative appointed (at Town Meeting) but any duties not absorbed by this person would be fulfilled by the Selectboard. Discussion on Panton being represented (having a vote) at the Supervisory level. The Panton School Board is unsure how this will work and will contact someone at ANWSU to ask this question. J. Viskup commented that he appreciates the Board's effort to reduce cost. Jamie Dayton commented that the School Board will hold a public informational meeting regarding the dissolution sometime in February.

Other: Sharon Ashcraft is concerned that a local farmer is spreading manure on untilled fields which is unpermitted. Discussion on manure run-off polluting private ponds and causing algae blooms in the lake. Ms. Ashcraft also expressed displeasure over the way the farm appears and that she is embarrassed to have bike tours go by and see a town farm in this state. The Board advised that there are no town ordinances regulating home appearances. Chair LaFleche commented that farms are regulated by the State of Vermont. Discussion of various methods of dealing with farm run-off and drainage.

Old Business:

Bushey re: Environmental Court Dismissal – motion by J. Viskup, seconded by L. Donnelly to dismiss the court action against LauraLee Bushey. So voted.

Booska – Clerk Torrey advised that the Booska's have paid their fines and the dog warrant has been dismissed. Motion by L. Donnelly to purchase a \$200.00 MasterCard gift card for Dog Warden Billings as he does not want a stipend. J. Viskup seconded the motion. So voted. Purchase will be offset against dog registration fund.

Financials:

Tractor Loan - Clerk Torrey advised that the loan request from the State of Vermont for the tractor purchase will not be decided until the first week in December. Motion by L. Donnelly, seconded by J. Viskup to contact our bank (Citizen) for loan request. So voted.

Fire Contract - Discussion on requesting financial backup for further fire contracts instead of assuming figures have been calculated correctly. Comment was made that by not having the back up is like signing a blank check. Further discussion on contacting Addison for fire protection. Discussion on the billing error not being the fault of the fire department but the fault of the City office.

Chair LaFleche commented that the situation seems to have been handled underhandedly and it should be Vergennes City's responsibility to fix it without penalizing the fire department or the towns involved. J. Viskup agreed that the City Office does not seem very agreeable to recalculate past contracts and he can't believe Panton's current contract includes part of the underpayment as Panton did not agree on any time frame or figure. He added that if he had not requested a breakout of the contract amount Panton would not have known this figure was in it. L. Donnelly commented that they should go back to meet with the Vergennes Council and the Board agreed.

Clerk Torrey advised that the Town received notice that health insurance rates will be increasing. Motion by J. Viskup, seconded by L. Donnelly to give the Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Road Foreman and Highway Helper their annual Christmas bonus (\$550.00 total). So voted.

Clerk Torrey advised that the office john required repair as it was leaking. Also advised that VLCT insurance representative visited the office and found that the outlets on the left side of the office were not grounded correctly. The Board advised to have this repaired. L. Donnelly commented that Lake Road is seeing a lot of roadside trash; coffee cups, etc. It was discussed that the police are not interested in pursuing this based on past experience. L. Donnelly inquired about the paving of the culvert on Lake Road. R. Cloutier advised that it's scheduled for next week. Advised that Pike had rectified the problem on Jersey Street and the invoice can be paid.

Road Foreman Report: Discussion on the poor status of Stove Pipe City Road and Slang Road. R. Cloutier mentioned that when he grades he's pulling the base out of Slang Road. Will be mowing roadsides this week with the new tractor and will be putting up snow fence. Tandem needs new tires and can purchase for \$132.60 each (8 needed). Adams' Ferry Road is complete and the grant paperwork will be submitted next week so Panton can be reimbursed for the expense. Continued discussion on road repairs. R. Cloutier advised that he had called the Vermont State Police twice trying to contact the area game warden as beavers have built a dam along the Slang Road bridge.

J. Kuhn presented project/actual financial information. Clerk Torrey asked about the Town Report; discussion on who should be put the report together; Auditors not being involved in financial reporting and not auditing the books. L. Donnelly mentioned that one of the auditors is ill. J. Viskup agreed that S. Torrey should be informed and Chair LaFleche mentioned that maybe the town can do without auditors. L. Donnelly commented that the report belongs to the Selectboard and that they should be responsible for answering questions thereof at Town Meeting. S. Torrey commented that it looks like the report for year ended June 2008 will be un-audited.

Discussion on replacing the bad culvert on Jackson Road at George Jackson's. R. Cloutier commented that he believes the town should help considering the number of years George served the town. L. Donnelly agreed and asked R. Cloutier to go look at the area to see what can be done.

Motion by J. Viskup to go into Executive Session to discuss Road Foreman review at 8:30 p.m. L. Donnelly seconded the motion. So voted. Came out of Executive Session at 9:10 p.m. with action to give the Road Foreman a 4% increase (according to the voted budget).

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Motion by L. Donnelly, seconded by J. Viskup to move the next regular scheduled meeting from Tuesday, December 9th to Monday, December 8th at 6:00 p.m. This will allow the Board to attend the Vergennes City Council meeting on December 9th. So voted.

Chair Lafleche adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. Torrey, Clerk