

Town of Panton
Selectboard Meeting
Tuesday, January 13, 2009
6:00 p.m.

Board:

Lynn Donnelly
John Viskup, Vice Chair

Administration:

Rick Cloutier
Sue Torrey

Guests:

Mayor Daniels	Louise Giovanella
Melvin Hawley	Joe Kuhn
Rejean Lafleche	Bruce Many
Matt Provencher	Paul Sokal

Call to Order: Vice Chair Viskup called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Motion by Lynn Donnelly to approve the minutes as written, seconded by John Viskup. So voted.

Fire Contract: Vergennes City Manager Melvin Hawley gave an overview of how the fire contract is calculated. John Viskup commented that Panton was not advised that the new contract included partial payback of the underpayment. Mr. Hawley indicated that he sent an explanation with the contract but Clerk Torrey explained that Panton had received a contract prior to Mr. Hawley's that didn't have any explanation. Lynn Donnelly said she would sign a contract for \$18,478.20 with the understanding that the surcharge is still in dispute until a decision is made by VLCT for Errors & Omissions. She added that Panton wants a fire contract just as much as Vergennes. John Viskup concurred and added that if the difference isn't paid through Errors & Omissions then the difference should be put to the Panton voters. Discussion ensued on whose obligation it was to notify Vergennes that an error was made. John Viskup advised that the contract was legal according to Panton's attorney but that it's in everyone's best interest to negotiate a contract and once a decision has been reached by VLCT the Board will go forward. Melvin Hawley asked the Board to sign the fire contract for \$22,560.00 with a disclaimer of reservation of rights. The Board did not agree. Melvin Hawley asked to review the verbiage of the proposed Panton contract and John Viskup stated that Panton's attorney would review it first and in the meantime he will contact VLCT to explain Panton's situation. Melvin advised that the recycling contracts will be increasing by 20% due to an increase in tipping fees in Chittenden County.

Public Comment: Paul Sokal commented that the Hopkins Road project would cost approximately \$500,000.00 when completed which he believes may partially be due to changing the road from 20 feet versus 24 feet in anticipation of paving. He added that he looked at a material budget for the road as it is, and bringing it up to grade standard. The spreadsheet containing this information was provided to the Selectboard and discussion ensued on how he arrived at the figures; grading the road, laying down base & fabric, etc. This would be accomplished utilizing our road crew and not digging up the existing road base. Lynn Donnelly added that she also did a material calculation and also came out around \$200,000. Discussion on reducing cost by utilizing our highway department and reducing fuel costs on material delivery. Rejean Lafleche added that labor man hours should be included in the price. Discussion on which part of Hopkins Road to start construction. Louise Giovanella mentioned that it was worse from the Vergennes line to Fisher Lane. It was discussed that hopefully Vergennes could work with Panton on resolving the ledge issue at the beginning of Hopkins Road. Lynn Donnelly suggested sending a survey to people on Hopkins Road to ascertain their preference for dirt road or paved road. Rejean Lafleche mentioned that people living on the West side of the road should consider alternative drainage to prevent erosion of the road. The Selectboard thanked Paul for his input. Paul mentioned that he still would like to work on the five year plan. Lynn Donnelly spoke about creating a committee to look at the truck purchase/lease.

Panton resident Matt Provencher asked the Board for permission to use the Town Hall for martial arts classes. It was mentioned that the hall is not heated and there are no bathroom facilities. Discussion on rental fee and Matt mentioned approximately \$25/hour. Lynn Donnelly advised that the town needs to determine liability but she is in favor of utilizing the hall. Matt to get back to the Board on whether he will consider renting the hall as is, without the heat and toilet facilities

Road Foreman Report: Advised red truck box has been repaired, received an estimate for replacing the pins on the backhoe. Discussion on sending out versus repairing in-house. Motion by Lynn Donnelly to purchase parts for the backhoe, seconded by John Viskup. Rick Cloutier mentioned that the grader should have gone out to push back the banks. Discussion on using the grader versus the truck and Bruce Many advised that Addison was out with their grader and using the grader saves a great deal of time. John Viskup stated that as long as the grader holds up he doesn't object. Discussion on the highway employees banking hours versus comp time. Rejean Lafleche advised that it isn't legal to bank hours, according to federal labor laws, and the attorney he spoke to at VLCT. Further discussion on how overtime should be accrued. John Viskup commented that he will speak to the attorney at VLCT about the situation and added that the Town could not afford two men working overtime. He reminded Rejean that the budget committee recommended to the Board that one highway position be cut but the Board disagreed and is keeping the two positions. He added that the highway department is doing a good job. Lynn Donnelly commented that the Board is trying to keep two highway people employed. Rejean Lafleche made the recommendation that the town go to a five (5) member Selectboard. Lynn Donnelly agreed this may be a good idea. Rejean added that he believes there is too much interference with the highway department but John reminded Rejean that he admitted Rick calls him often during the day and that he stops often at the highway department. John added that he does not micromanage the road crew and that he doesn't stop by the garage as he trusts them to be doing their job. Lynn Donnelly commented that Rick should let the Board know if he's feeling micromanaged. She added that the town budget is the only budget the Board can control. She commented that that last night's school board meeting there was \$483,000.00 in bills that were not even looked at or approved by anyone and she doesn't understand how this can happen when the little Town of Panton is micromanaging every little aspect of its budget to keep taxes down. Joe Kuhn commented that he is upset with Rejean resigning and that he has done a wonderful job. He added that he would like to see Rick Cloutier plan for the whole month. John Viskup reminded everyone that the highway department isn't the only department affected; the Assistant Town Clerk's hours have been reduced by 80%. Sue Torrey commented that in these bad economic times she is thankful just to have a job. Discussion on forming a truck committee and an analysis of purchase versus lease. Discussion of utilizing Northland Job Corps to repair the Town Hall. It was agreed that any overtime worked would be taken off in the same work week.

New Business: Town Report – Sue Torrey advised that she is working on the town report. The Certificate of Highway Mileage was reviewed and signed by the Board. Motion by Lynn Donnelly to accept with regret Rejean Lafleche's resignation from the Selectboard. John Viskup seconded. So voted. Motion by Lynn Donnelly to accept Pam Preston's resignation as Auditor. John Viskup seconded. So voted. It was noted that the 2008 books have not been audited by the town auditors. Sue Torrey commented that she has not heard from Auditors Chris Cook or Dennis Mueller. Question was asked why people take a job when they don't intend on performing the work.

Old Business: Motion by Lynn Donnelly to approve a budget of approximately \$612,272.67. John Viskup seconded. So voted. Discussion on the Warning for Town Meeting; tax collection dates change to quarterly due August 15, November 15, February 15 and May 15 , if voted no than change the collection dates from November 1 and May 1 to December 1 and June 1. Discussion of the tax impact of the contributions. Lynn Donnelly commented that at the last school board meeting the school budget increased 4.9% which will make the tax rate \$1.57. She added that the high school has a \$240,000. deficit which the Board didn't have an answer for.

Financials/Correspondence:

Bills and correspondence were reviewed and signed.

Vice Chair Viskup adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Torrey
Clerk