

Town of Panton
Selectboard Meeting
Sept. 24, 2013/6:30 P.M.
Minutes

In Attendance:

Selectboard:

John Viskup, Chair
Beth Tarallo
Wendy Knight

Guests:

Gretchen Bailey
Karrie Beebe, High School Rep.
Mark Berger
Ed & Bev Biello
Joseph & Paulette Bogan
Kathy Cannon, ANWSU
Chris Cousineau, High Sch Rep
Judi Fisher
Barbara Fleming
Louise Giovanella
Howard Hall
Bob Hartenstein
Wes John

Roger & Lori Kayser
Diane Lanpher, State Rep.
Geraldine Marshall
Cheryl & Ken McEwan
Paula Moore
Danielle Plouffe-Wineman
Roberta & Philip Puschel
Eric Rice
Paul Sokal
Bill Talbott, VT ST Educ.
Carlotta & Paul Tippet
Warren VanWyck, St. Rep.
Alton Woody
Peter Zimmerman

Administration:

Rick Cloutier, Road Forman
Diane Merrill, Treasurer
Jean Miller, Clerk

6:30 pm John called the meeting to order.

6:31 pm Beth made a motion to approve the minutes of September 10, 2013. Wendy 2nd. All approved.

6:35 pm Cheryl McEwan: Issue of Rising Taxes – Cheryl started stating that the Town of Panton’s property tax bills had gone up at least 10%. The State Joint Fiscal Office released a report that next year property tax is expected to rise 13.2%. Tax increases are driven by educational funding. In 2011 educational spending in Vermont was 1.5 times the national average. Student population is decreasing but costs are still going up. Something needs to change. People from the School, State Representatives, and residents, everyone who spoke defended their positions. The School: The costs are the costs and it is mandated that they’re funded. The Representatives: We are voting to reduce costs as you want us to but there are 188 voters and the Senate to go through to get it past. The Residents: Something needs to change; reductions need to be made, the voice of the people needs to be heard. People will need to attend School Board meetings, testify before the legislature and become informed. People interested in staying involved in this topic or becoming more involved may contact Bev Biello beverlybiello@hotmail.com or Cheryl McEwan chermac@gmavt.net.

Seth Kittredge – Town Hall Land Survey Overview – Seth brought in two (2) Mylar’s. The surveys had been done on Panton Town Hall and the land the Town owns across the road from the Town Hall. Some of Claudia Allen’s land had to be surveyed to arrive at a starting point. Records back to the 1800’s were accessed. Claudia Allen’s tenement house and Fallon’s access their property by the Town’s gravel driveway. Seth felt that there should be an Easement Deed stating that they had access to their property. This would give them a clear deed which could alleviate problems regarding access in the future. The Town now has clear boundary lines for the Town Hall and the land across the road.

State Health Insurance: Opting in? How much? – Employees need to go on the link for health insurance to see if it would make sense to buy insurance on their own using the calculator. The Town will also have to use the calculator to see what would be feasible for the Town to offer the employees for health benefits if any. The plans offered through the Health Care cost more and offer less. Andy Mayor is a Navigator for the health care exchange. He will help the Town and employees understand the different plans. Then informed decisions can be made.

Proposed Town Municipal Charter amendment for Treasurer and Clerk to appointed positions (Review calendar, draft questions, update on the research and issue/question of moving to 1 year positions) – Regarding changing positions of the Town Clerk, Treasurer and Delinquent Tax Collector back to one year for accountability could be done in the Charter Amendment article or distinct Town Meeting article. In order to change The Treasurer and Clerk position from elected position to appointed, it must, by statute, be done via Municipal Charter Ament, Voted at an annual or special meeting. VLCT Senior Attorney Jim Barlow advised doing either a charter change for elected to appointed position OR a change in terms of office because of potential conflicts with bringing both before the voters simultaneously (e.g. conflicting timelines for execution if both pass). Further noted was if terms were changed in the Charter then if they were ever to be changed back the Charter would have to be amended again. Beth has come up with a schedule to meet the time requirements and provide for sufficient preparation time for a Town Meeting Vote on Charter amendment regarding appointment, as opposed to election of Clerk and Treasurer positions. Diane made a suggestion that if a charter amendment were to pass making the Treasurer position appointed, that the Treasurer’s reappointment coincide with the fiscal year.

Junk Ordinance –Beth to revoke current version of junk ordinance being reviewed by VLCT. Board to revise current version and review at one of October SB meeting before resending to VLCT for legal review..

Substance Abuse/Alcohol Policy – Separate files are kept for employees regarding VTrans and can never be taken out of the office. The Select Board is reviewing a sample Substance Abuse/Alcohol Policy.

Security/Theft Follow-up (signage in town, cameras) Report – Tabled

Constable Follow-up Report – Tabled

Community Board – Ben Chamberlain has donated his time to make a new Community Board to replace the one that was on Jackson Road. The board is almost complete.

Wayside Grant – has been approved, the edits and translation have been done. It should be arriving before long.

The Select Board wants to thank the Town Hall Committee for all the hard work and progress that has done.

Review Bills/Financials – Bills were reviewed and approved. Financials were reviewed.

Correspondence – Vergennes sent the Fire Agreement and the Recycle Contract for the Select Board to review and sign. An error was found on the Fire Agreement. It will be sent back for revision. The Recycle Contract was signed.

At 9:35 PM John made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Beth 2nd. All approved.

Respectfully,

Jean Miller, Clerk