



Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

In Attendance: Selectboard Chair Howard Hall, Selectboard Vice Chair Teresa Smith, Clerk-Treasurer Maggie McCormick

Via Zoom: Selectboard Member Zach Weaver, Town Advisor Sandy Fogg, Emergency Management Coordinator Bob Groff, Audit Manager Samantha Hillman, Telling & Hillman, P.C.

1. Howard called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.
2. Additions/deletions to agenda
 - a. Howard moved to add Sam Hillman, auditor, to the agenda. Teresa seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.
3. Approval of the minutes of the February 8, 2022 Selectboard meeting
 - a. Teresa moved to accept the minutes as written. Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.
4. Sam Hillman, Telling & Hillman
 - a. Audit Report
 - i. Explanation of process
 1. Data is provided by the Town, primarily by the clerk
 2. Telling & Hillman uses this to assist the Town in preparing the annual financial statements.
 - ii. Auditor's responsibilities:
 1. To provide a professional opinion on financial position of the Town
 2. Look for anomalies or irregularities
 3. Check for cutoff of appropriate fiscal year
 4. Check for approved tax rates
 - iii. Balance sheet
 1. General Fund balance is ~ \$285,000
 - a. Liabilities have changed from prior years due to financing salt shed and pole barn through line of credit.
 - b. Line of credit is a liability until it is converted to loan and will be recognized as a revenue.

2. Rainy Day fund should be kept as its own entity in NEMRC but put in the General Fund for reporting.
 - a. Howard noted that this fund will be called the Emergency Fund going forward to accurately reflect that it is for significant “losses” such as a need to replace critical equipment or structures.
 - iv. Letter SAS 114 explains that financial statements use estimates and would note if the auditors had disagreements with management.
 1. There were no disagreements.
 - v. Letter SAS 115 explains any material weaknesses the auditors found in the accounting functions.
 1. Bank statements were not reconciled in a timely manner.
 2. Clerk and NEMRC are rectifying this.
 - a. Clerk anticipates having all accounts up to date by mid-March.
 - vi. Conclusion: Town finances are healthy.

5. Emergency Management Coordinator’s Report

- a. Covid
 - i. Cases are dropping
 - ii. Concern for new variant
 - iii. Unvaccinated people are still highest rate of hospitalization
 - iv. Hospitals still overwhelmed despite fewer new hospitalizations
- b. Dept of Public Safety phone meeting on Thursday
- c. Flood warnings
 - i. Don’t go into flood waters
- d. Beware of freezing conditions, icy roads, parking lots, and sidewalks.

6. Mask Mandate

- a. Discussion around whether Town officers and personnel should wear masks at Town Informational Meeting.
- b. Desire to lead by example while trying not to have masks make it difficult to hear and understand speakers.
- c. Determined that the seven people present at Town Hall will wear masks for meeting but will remove them while speaking
- d. All people at Town Hall will take a Covid rapid test on Monday prior to the meeting.

7. ARPA funding

- a. There is media coverage about using ARPA funds to offset taxes.
 - i. It’s not clear that this is an authorized use.
 - ii. Reducing taxes now will simply create greater “sticker shock” following the temporary relief.
- b. Clerk will make a slide for Town Meeting that shows authorized uses/
- c. ARPA Final Rule allows for a one-time “Lost Revenue” exemption for amounts up to \$10M.

- d. ARPA funding to be put on a Selectboard meeting agenda and Town taxpayers invited to participate.
8. Town Meeting planning
- a. Tabulator
 - i. Tested and ready to go.
 - b. Election workers
 - i. Shifts are covered.
 - c. Informational Meeting
 - i. Representatives Birong and Lanpher will participate.
 - ii. Andrew L'Roe of Addison County Regional Planning Commission will give an overview of the expansion of the Panton solar grid.
 - iii. The Development Review Board/Planning Commission Chair will not present.
 - iv. The elected Town Auditor will not present.
 - d. Poll set up
 - i. Poll will be set up Monday afternoon and be backdrop of Town Informational Meeting
 - ii. Clerk will order additional Luna speakers for more microphone coverage.
9. Billing for electricity for Town Hall use
- a. Use of upstairs space twice/week has caused a significant spike in electricity usage in morning.
 - b. Selectboard wants to continue to have Town Hall be a gathering place and get used, so okay with additional cost at this time.
 - c. Clerk and Selectboard will watch costs and revisit if needed.
10. Carrol, Boe, Pell & Kite fee schedule
- a. Does the Town need two attorneys?
 - b. Jim Carrol recommended Benjamin Putnam
 - c. Town will primarily rely on Benj Putnam.
11. Clerk-Treasurer general
- a. Suzanne has been in the role of Assistant Clerk for nice weeks and is exceeding expectations. She put together this year's Town Report with minimal oversight.
 - b. Closet construction
 - i. In progress and going quickly
 - c. Door locks and vault combo
 - i. George of George's Locks examined the three upstairs doors and will provide estimate on replacement and changing the combination on the vault.
 - ii. Doors will need to be disassembled, so the project will be done once the weather is warmer.
12. Public comment: none.

13. Communications

- a. Ballot counting: JPs Gretchen Bailey and Paula Moore will be here to witness tabulation.
- b. ANWSD provided a count of Panton students attending ANWSD schools by grade.
- c. The crack sealer purchased by the seven towns is housed at the Town Garage. Panton's share is ~\$7000.
- d. Howard investigated a Jackson Road complaint that the road needed maintenance. He found it easily passable. Additional repairs will be made when road is regraded.
- e. Turkey Lane Survey
 - i. LaRose site visit scheduled for Wednesday, 2/23 at 1:00 p.m.
 - ii. Seth Kittredge asked for a copy of the court decision to help determine his estimate. Sandy forwarded to him.
- f. Teresa had a conversation with Hopkins Road neighbors about the need for broadband internet
 - i. Panton is lowest priority for Maple Broadband because 75% of Panton residents have broadband.
 - ii. Fiber is going in on Hopkins Road now.
- g. Transportation Advisory Committee
 - i. Howard attended the most recent meeting. Route 125 repair will not be complete before June.
- h. Road Crew 2-hour minimum callback
 - i. Howard discussed with Rick and most calls are at least 2 hours.
 - ii. Not an issue in Panton.
- i. Howard thanked everyone for their work this year.

14. Review/approval of accounts payable warrant, timesheets & payroll warrant

- a. Teresa moved to approve the warrants and timesheets. Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.

15. Executive session for the purpose of discussing potential litigation

- a. Not needed

16. Adjournment

- a. Teresa moved to adjourn. Howard seconded. All in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Maggie McCormick
Clerk-Treasurer