



Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Meeting Minutes Monday, September 26, 2022

In attendance: Selectboard Chair Howard Hall, Selectboard Member Zach Weaver, Town Clerk-Treasurer Maggie McCormick, Vergennes Area Rescue Squad (VARS) Treasurer Brian Goodyear, VARS President John Weber

Via Zoom: Emergency Management Coordinator Bob Groff, Sharon Ashcraft

- 1) Howard called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.
- 2) Additions/deletions to agenda: None.
- 3) Approval of the minutes of the September 12, 2022 Selectboard meeting
 - a) Zach moved to accept the minutes as written. Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.
- 4) Vergennes Area Rescue Squad: Brian Goodyear
 - a) Brian Goodyear has been active with VARS since 2001 and became Treasurer in 2010.
 - b) John Weber has been with VARS five years and brought 25 years in fire department service to the squad.
 - c) Prior to 2011, VARS petitioned through appropriations, then went to per diem rate.
 - d) The rate is the same rate for all contracted towns except New Haven and Monkton.
 - e) \$69,000 total for all towns =~ 8% funded by Panton
 - f) 780 calls, 36 calls to Panton = 5% calls
 - g) Percentage of calls does not change per capita billing.
 - h) Howard and Zac want "itemized" bill to explain to residents where the money is going.
 - i) 501(c)3 ---books are open to inspection.
 - i) VARS has never told anyone that they do not show their books.
 - j) VARS has had conversations about expenditures with other Towns.
 - k) Addison Independent article was incorrect.
 - i) VARS is solvent.
 - ii) Budget is based on income equal to expenses -no deficit, no surplus, \$273,000 in payroll, \$46,000 insurance (WC)

- iii) VARS has bought two ambulances with cash.
- iv) VARS annual budget is \$484,000.
- l) Income sources
 - i) Billing insurance and individuals - \$350
 - ii) Towns \$70,000
 - iii) Subscription service \$55,000
 - iv) Donations \$10,000
- m) Staffing
 - i) Two FT employees
 - ii) Covid forced using per diems
 - (1) A-EMT with 10 years' experience is \$18/hr.
 - (a) 8 per diem paid
 - iii) Volunteers
 - (a) There are 15 to 17 volunteers on the roster, five of whom are active.
 - (b) Mutual aid provides service continuity.
- 5) Public comment
 - a) Sharon Ashcraft: Spaulding Road drainage
 - i) Howard will follow up with Rick on Tuesday.
 - ii) Sharon stated that the Town has liability for damage to property due to drainage issues.
- 6) Emergency Manager's Report
 - a) Bob attended the VT Emergency Management conference last week
 - i) Presentations including funding sources and dealing with long-term power outages.
 - b) Covid rates are low.
 - i) Covid boosters are available.
 - ii) Moderna booster in short supply. Pfizer readily available.
 - iii) Mixing brands for booster okay
 - c) Bob will present the 2023 Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) to the Selectboard
 - d) Hot weather emergency response document is complete and has been added to the LEMP and will be presented following Town Meeting. Bob is working with Addison County Regional Planning Commission (ACRPC) on cold weather emergency response document.
 - e) Bob posted about power outage preparation on Front Porch Forum.
- 7) Request for bids (RFB) for schoolhouse removal
 - a) The Selectboard approved the RFB created by the Clerk for posting once Rick confirms the amount of the performance bond.

- 8) Managed IT Services Proposals
 - a) Tech Group visited Town Hall to conduct a needs assessment and has submitted a proposal.
 - b) Open Approach is expected to submit a proposal by October 7.

- 9) South Road Survey requirements
 - a) Larose wanted details on Town requirements.
 - b) Clerk will ask Town Advisor Sandy Fogg to speak with Larose and determine appropriate scope.

- 10) Road Crew hiring
 - a) One candidate wants family health insurance
 - i) Cost of health insurance alone to town would be \$16,000/year.
 - ii) Burlington and Essex are advertising for road crew at \$22 – \$27/hour.
 - iii) Paying for a new hire’s family insurance create an imbalance in compensation among current employees.
 - iv) A candidate will need to bring more than basic experience to make a higher wage.
 - v) None of the current candidates are willing to take the position at the offered compensation level.
 - vi) The position will be advertised again.

- 11) General Election Preparations
 - a) Schedule BCA meeting
 - i) Tentative meeting date 10/10/2022.
 - ii) A to Z Training provided information on possible changes the BCA might make to elections procedures.

- 12) Communications
 - a) Vermont Public came to Panton to film a segment on the solar microgrid. It is expected to be included in a *Nova* episode.
 - b) Howard will investigate getting drone footage of Panton for the new website
 - c) Infraguard
 - i) FBI program to safeguard infrastructure
 - d) Hopkins Road grading
 - i) Rick not filling Vergennes potholes with Panton gravel.
 - e) Late homestead penalty filing fee will be assessed this year.
 - f) Clerk is investigating possibility of a new bank that can better serve the Town, particularly with a sweep account and more modern processes for remote deposits and ACH processing.

- g) The Selectboard agreed to purchase two new 8' folding tables with skirts for the meeting space upstairs at Town Hall. The extra folding chairs and old ballot boxes will be given away.
 - h) Several contractors have been asked to provide estimates for painting and refinishing the floor of the upstairs meeting space.
- 13) Review/approval of accounts payable warrant, timesheets & payroll warrant
- a) Zach moved to accept the warrants and timesheets. Howard seconded. All in favor; the motion passed.
- 14) Executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel and procedures
- a) Howard moved to enter executive session. Zach seconded. All in favor; the board entered executive session at 6:55 p.m.
 - b) Howard moved to exit executive session. Zach seconded. All in favor; the board returned to open session at 7:18 p.m.
- 15) Adjournment
- a) Howard moved to adjourn. Zach seconded. All in favor; the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Maggie McCormick
Town Clerk-Treasurer