

Town of Williamstown Select Board Meeting

July 13<sup>th</sup> , 2020

Attendance:

Rodney Graham

Francis Covey

Matt Rouleau

Jasmine Coulliard

Jessica Worn

Rodney Called the meeting to order @ 7:03 p.m.

Set the agenda: added under new business

-Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

-Baptist Street Solar System Proposal

Matt proposed to accept the agenda as amended. Francis Seconded 5 in favor 0 opposed

Rodney reviewed open public comments

There were no select board announcements.

Public Announcements: Rodney read Kate Flies email to the board. Rodney clarified that town employees are back to working in the office, adult senior centers are open and felt in person select board meetings were safe to resume.

Rich from the Planning commission discussed Emerald Ash Borers. He stated we are in the flight period & a team has been traveling taking inventory as well as looking for infestations with none currently being discovered in our area. He stated a major way to keep infestation away is to not travel with fire wood. He is looking into accessing open funding that would help home owners with cost of removing ash trees. Matt asked if they would assess health of trees during the process. Rich stated that would be up to the town on how to move forward. The town can decide high priority after the inventory. Rodney asked what type of tree doesn't get brittle when it dies? Rich answered the Elm and Maple are solid trees and it depends on the make-up of the tree. Ash trees tend to die and break up at a faster rate. Rodney then stated that he isn't sold on the infestation issue.

Matt made a motion to approve the Select Board minutes of June 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 and Francis seconded. Ron Cadorette stated that he would like it corrected that Grandview is not a full class 4 road. Jasmin stated we would change the sentence "It is a class 4 road and would still be open to

ATV's" to read "There is a class 4 road section that would still be open to ATV's" Matt made a motion to accept the minutes as amended seconded by Francis. 5 in favor 0 opposed.

Matt made a motion to approve Payroll 6/21 and 7/5 as well as check warrant SB1166, SB1169 and SB20003. Francis Seconded 5 in favor 0 opposed. Rodney wants to discuss check warrant SB1161 for Tucker Machine with Jackie. He stated we just approved a sewer rate hike and now there was a purchase of a \$4,199.00 lawn mower. Matt stated he would like to know whether or not this was a budgeted item and what kind of machine we are purchasing before approving. Matt made motion to table the approval until we had some clarification. Francis seconded. 5 in favor 0 opposed.

Rodney read the town managers' report to the board and attendees.

Dog ordinance amendment-Matt made a motion to approve the dog & pet ordinance dated 7/13/2020. Jasmin seconded. 5 in favor 0 opposed.

Personnel Policy Discussion- It was decided that Matt & Rodney would meet to propose changes to the policy in August. Board members had until 7/13 meeting to give their input for changes. Matt wanted to make sure we understood the "sec 8" removal of treasurer from elected positions since that position has been changed to a hired position. Matt also pointed out that we need to clarify where the town manager position falls or add a new "salaried" position to correlate with the benefits she gets. Rodney asked when him and Matt should meet with the decision being Monday 7/27/2020 at the public safety building @ 6 pm.

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan-Russ handed out a review tool and he walked us through it. A gentleman named Zach will do updated maps and change dates as necessary. Russ reviewed the plan with the planning commission stating the plan is essentially completed with proposed changes. CVRPC inserted notes on our plan for their recommended changes. Francis clarified we are being asked to approve the changes with Russ stating yes. Matt also wanted to clarify that all the check marks for "met" means we have met those items before any changes with Russ stating yes. Francis made a motion to approve the local hazard mitigation plan review tool to be submitted to the state and FEMA mitigation planners. Matt seconded 5 in favor 0 opposed.

Solar System Proposal- Martha Staskus is asking for the town to approve the preferred sighting for their solar project. She met with the planning commission previously. There are a few neighbors that are in the area that might be affected. The planning commission prior to the select board meeting had ok'd the preferred sighting proposal. Martha gave the select board a sample of the letter that would be used. Rodney asked who owns that land with Martha stating that it was currently up for sale by Dave Pullman. They would buy the Pullman land. Martha stated she has made attempts to contact all abutting land owners but had a few she was unsuccessful in contacting. Rodney asked if all of the land was prime agriculture land. Martha stated all of the land inside the orange dots on the map are but soils would be preserved in the area and not touched. Martha discussed that the land would be private land with taxes being paid to the town. Matt stated that there are many in favor of solar panels because it is a temporary long range land

preservation. Rodney stated he was concerned about the effect to the neighboring properties. Martha stated they moved it further south to assist with the northern property owner's views (see 1450 on map) Rodney stated he was also concerned with properties on Baptist Street near marker 1510 and that they may see the solar panels. This might be unappealing for the property owners and he hopes that Martha will do more to reach out to them. Rodney also has concerns that losing agriculture land could affect our lack of self-sustaining food supply. Jasmin asked if it is currently being used with Martha stating she didn't believe it was currently being used but that it had been a corn field. Martha also stated that it is a 22-acre parcel with only 2.5-3 acres being used to house the solar panel arrays. Francis asked what they will do with the balance of the land. Martha stated the solar company is purchasing the entire 22 acres and wouldn't be opposed to allowing a farmer to use the rest of the land for haying or even opening it up to a place for sheep to graze as has been done at other solar fields. Martha stated they currently had no users in mind currently because of the long process to finalize the entire process. Matt stated he understands Rodney's concerns and Francis agreed. Both agreed it was on their minds as well. Matt asked the individuals from the planning commissions opinions. Russ stated they asked similar questions and thought it was great. Horace said he thought it fit Williamstown's plan. Matt made a motion to approve the designation of the location as a preferred site proposal and allow usage. Jasmin seconded. Francis opened discussion stating he was migrating towards being against the solar fields and utilizing agriculture fields for long time frames. He stated they had long been told electricity would become cheaper with solar fields and that has yet to be shown. Rodney asked for a vote resulting in 2 in favor (Matt and Jessica) and 3 opposed (Francis, Rodney and Jasmin). This vote means the project cannot move forward.

Old Business-None

Open Public Comments-None

Round Table- Rodney stated the education tax rates were going to see a hike. School consolidation was supposed to decrease the education taxes but instead the rate is going up \$0.10. Jasmin thanked Horace for his report.

Motion was made @ 8:10 to adjourn for a short recess before moving into executive session for personnel discussion by Matt and seconded by Francis.

Executive session was called to order at 8:17 pm

Rodney stated he wanted to send out a letter to a community member and the recipient found out about it and its contents before it was sent out. He wants to know how the board wants him to proceed with keeping the board and town manager informed yet keep information just between those individuals. Rodney suggested marking emails “confidential” with the select board in favor of that idea.

Rodney also stated Covid relief funds could be received to assist sewer costs. Not a done deal but a possibility to help replace the sewer pump. Matt asked if we were keeping track of costs and Rodney stated Jackie is keeping track of the invoices that could be considered Covid related.

Francis made a motion to exit executive session with no action seconded by matt.

Francis made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Jasmin @8:24 pm.

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Rodney Graham

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Matt Rouleau

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Jessica Worn