

## **Strafford Selectboard Meeting**

December 18, 2019

Selectboard members present: Toni Pippy, Brian Johnson, Pat Kelly

Others present: Gil Robertson, Dave Paganelli, Michael Sacca, Steve Willbanks, JT Horne

Meeting was called to order at 6:08

**Citizens concerns:** None

**Town Highways and Equipment:** Brian reported that everything was up and running and the road crew has been up early doing snow removal.

**Correspondence:** The board received the following correspondence:

Vermont Emergency Management has sent a grant application to update our Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The Orange County Sheriff is requesting the board to approve using funds to run a 10 week program to educate Newton School 6,7,8th graders about the dangers of drug and alcohol use. The board will investigate and consider this program.

The board received a survey request from Vermont Emergency Management.

**Minutes of December 11 meeting:** The board voted to approve the minutes of the December 11th meeting with one minor change.

**Ashley Community Forest Project:** Michael Sacca, Dave Paganelli, Steve Willbanks, and JT Horne spoke to the board about their ongoing efforts to create a 256 acre multi use recreational/educational/conservation forest and to gift it to the towns of Strafford and Sharon. The land is currently owned by the Alliance for Vermont Communities and is situated about equally in the towns of Sharon and Strafford. There was discussion about a legal contract between the towns of Strafford and Sharon, the value and timing of future timber sales, access on both the Sharon and Strafford sides, and the formation and makeup of a Community Forest Board to oversee management of the land. There was also discussion about warning this for town meeting 2020 and the positive and potential negative consequences of accepting the land, and the board encouraged further work on the both draft contract and the proper wording of the warning for two meeting.

**2019 Budget Review:** The board discussed the budget for 2019 as we finish up the year and is continuing to review last year's budget as we prepare to work on the 2020 budget.

**Pay Increases for Town Employees:** The board discussed cost of living increases and pay increases for employees that complete certifications that increase skills related to their jobs. A motion was made and passed unanimously to approve a 2% cost of living increase that will be

divided equally among all town employees and to continue to encourage the training that increases skills in the workplace by approving a 50 cent/hour raise to the Town Clerk/Treasurer and Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer for VMCTA Advanced Level 1 Certified Vermont Clerk and Certified Vermont Treasurer in September 2019.

**2020 Budget Schedule:** The board discussed the need schedule an additional meeting in January for the extra work that it takes to work through the annual budget. There will be meetings on January 8th, 15th, and 22nd.

**Other:** The board signed the Errors and Omissions Certificate from the Board of Lusters.

**Meeting was adjourned at 7:49**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Pat Kelly**