

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES

Date: August 23, 2022
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting & Town Hall
Egremont

Present at the meeting in person were Selectboard members Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie, Water Study Group members Tom Berkel, Bob Noonan, Poly Lanoue, Mount Washington Selectboard member Eric Mendelson, John Cheek, Fire Chief Joe Schneider, Water Commissioner Ray Palmucci and for a short time at the end of the meeting Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Tom Reynolds.

Present at the meeting via zoom were Mary McGurn, Juliette Haas, George McGurn, Nate Stalker, Heidi Zorn, Joyce Frater, Peg McDonough, Chuck Ogden, Chad Robertson, James DePisa, Dan Blitzer.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the August 9, 2022 meeting were accepted with minor typo corrections.

SCHEDULED ISSUES:

The members of the Water Study Group updated the Board on their progress in looking at the Water Department infrastructure, governance, and ownership options. The group engaged with Aquarion, who has expressed an interest in purchasing the Water Plant. Aquarion is offering an amount lower than the asset value due to the high cost of imminent capital repairs needed at approximately \$5million. The Study Group has determined that Aquarion is making a legitimate offer and the sale would be beneficial to the water users. If the Town opts to retain the Water Plant then the \$5million in capital repairs, which includes a new dam, have to be done within the next year. The Study Group will continue its work and plans to have a recommendations to the Board in the near future so that decisions can be made before Town Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Board agreed to amend the order on the agenda and discuss the Mount Washington Fire Services Fee with the Fire Chief. The Town billed Mount Washington \$40,619 for FY 23. A member of the Mount Washington Finance Committee has copied the Town on an email stating that the Town of Mount Washington will pay \$16,702. After some discussion in which Mount Washington Selectboard member Eric Mendelson was given history and data, it was agreed that Fire Chief Joe Schneider will meet with Mount Washington Town Officials and then the two towns will get together to discuss this issue.

NEW BUSINESS:

Heidi Zorn presented preliminary plans to form a Business Association of South Egremont (BASE) whose membership would be the retail business owners along Route 23 and whose goals would be to support commerce and tourism and hold joint events to promote the members businesses. Board members questioned why only business owners in the village were included, the name of the Association, its goals and conformance with town regulations when holding events. It was also recommended that the Association discuss snow removal on the new sidewalks in the South Village.

The Selectboard approved a 1/3 page tax bill stuffer giving instructions on how tax payers can sign up on the Town's web page to be notified of meetings, events, news items, etc. This bill stuffer will be in addition to the already approved stuffer on home safety presented by the Municipal Vulnerability Committee.

The Board voted unanimously to declare as surplus a 2016 Ford Explorer Police Cruiser that will be sold to the highest bidder.

The Board voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Bonnie Bassis as the alternate Animal Control Officer due to her unavailability to take the required two day training. Legal Counsel has been asked to draft a simple agreement to allow the town to continue to utilize Bonnie as pound keeper.

The Board will issue a reminder that town board meetings should not take place on personal zoom accounts for security reasons and to ensure the meeting is properly recorded.

No proposals were received in response to the Town's Affordable Housing Request For Proposals. The Housing Committee will be discussing how best to move forward.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Selectboard voted unanimously to appoint John Cheek to the Comprehensive Plan Update Advisory Committee.

The Selectboard voted unanimously to appoint Jeff Nathan to fill the vacancy on the Conservation Commission.

GRANTS:

The Board approved having a free updated energy audit done at Town Hall as the previous audit was conducted 10 years ago. There is a grant opportunity to upgrade the heating system at Town Hall. The current system is fully electric.

The Forest Stewardship grant for control of invasive plants at French Park should be ready to file in about 2 weeks.

FOLLOW UPS:

The Town's 247th Birthday Celebration planning is trudging along. It may be a smaller celebration than anticipated due to lack of personnel.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS:

The next Board meeting will be Tuesday, September 6, at 10:00 am.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58am

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.23/aug23

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.