

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECTBOARD
MINUTES

Date: September 5, 2023
Time: 10:00 AM
Place: Via Zoom Meeting & Town Hall
Egremont

Present at the meeting in person were Selectboard Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie, Moderator Stephen Cohen, and for parts of the meeting Susan Bachelder, Alexis Fakelman, Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Tom Reynolds, and Elijah Doubleday.

Present via zoom were Mary McGurn, Rebecca Turner, Eileen Vining, David Seligman, Doug Mishkin, Marj Wexler, Grant Administrator Peg McDonough and Dan Blitzer.

The meeting was audio and video recorded.

SCHEDULED ISSUES:

The Board interviewed Elijah Doubleday for the position of weekend Water Department Operator. The Board voted unanimously to appoint him to that position.

MINUTES:

The Board deferred action on the minutes of the July 25 meeting so that edits can be reviewed. The Board accepted with minor edits the minutes of the August 8, August 10 and August 22 meetings.

SCHEDULES ISSUES:

The Board discussed with Susan Bachelder, Rebecca Turner, Alexis Fakelman and Tom Reynolds the Library reading garden to be paid for by a \$10,000 grant from an anonymous foundation being held by the Egremont Land Trust. Due to possible drainage issues Alexis and Rebecca drew up a plan for a rain garden. Susan is opposing this as the design is not why the grant was obtained. She is the one who obtained the grant. After a somewhat tense discussion, the Board directed the parties, including Tom Reynolds, to collaborate and come back with an acceptable plan that includes who will maintain the gardens.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Board has been made aware of a preliminary subdivision plan filed by Catamount Ski Area for several homes on the mountain side accessed by a new roadway constructed using Nicholson Road. The Planning Board has jurisdiction and will be establishing a time line for action on the application.

Chairman McGurn will try to attend the annual meeting of the Berkshire County Selectmen's Association on October 5 in Pittsfield.

Chairman McGurn will serve as Egremont's voting member for the Metropolitan Planning Organization and is willing to serve as the southwest subregions alternate representative.

The Board voted unanimously to appoint Julie Sylvia as the Water Department Operator/Clerk trainee. The starting pay rate will be \$20 per hour.

The Board authorized Mary Brazie to follow up on contacting a labor lawyer suggested by Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard as well as possible recommendation by Moderator Steve Cohen.

The Town received three bids for the Town Hall Roof project ranging from \$29,000 to \$76,700. Buildings & Grounds Superintendent recommended awarding to the low bidder JJS Universal Construction. References from other Town's they did roofing projects for were excellent. The Board voted unanimously to award to JJS Universal Construction Company whose base bid of \$29,000 was low bid.

Historical Commission member and Town Historian Beth Wood has filed a financial disclosure regarding her paid contract with the Town to complete the update of the town's MACRIS historic data. The Board voted unanimously to accept and approve the disclosure.

The Board voted unanimously to approve contracting with Innes Associates to conduct the zoning review being funded by a grant in the amount of \$54,000 and \$6,000 from the Town's American Rescue Plan Act.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Town's 250th Birthday Celebration will take place in August of 2025. The first meeting of the 250th Birthday Celebration Committee will be September 13. The Board voted unanimously to appoint additional members Barbara Kalish, Oskar Hallig, and Karen Schaefer to replace Neil Fox and James Warwick who won't be participating.

Doug Mishkin reported that the Housing Committee will begin discussion regarding noise controls for short-term rentals at their next meeting.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan with thanks to all for the massive effort and broad citizen input. Special commendation was given to the Conservation Commission and Planning Board.

The Board noted its review of the Open Space & Recreation Plan developed in tandem with the Comprehensive Plan. The Board letter of review will not the plan is comprehensive and clear, In particular the Board felt the action plan with time line and responsible parties would be very helpful. Conservation Commission Chairman Dave Seligman said the commission will be asking the Board to appoint an oversight review group as the commission doesn't feel it will be able to do that job effectively.

The Board voted unanimously to adopt the revised Social Media Policy as drafted by Mary McGurn and reviewed by the Personnel Director.

Items for a Special Town Meeting that has to be held in October to vote on the proposed merger of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District and the Berkshire Hills Regional School District will also include funding for the Police Collective Bargaining budget to cover the outlay of mandated back wages. The Board debated whether the receipt of a draft article for the merger that was received starts the time line for the required town meeting. Mary Brazie will confirm.

GRANTS:

The Town has been awarded an \$81,500 Municipal Vulnerability Action grant towards foundational action which bring climate activities and action to Egremont. Engineering studies on Karner Brooke will be conducted, public outreach regarding climate issues, and a review of zoning and

policies regarding climate change will take place.

The Town, in partnership with Lee, has been awarded a \$1,500,000 million dollar Community Development Block Grant for housing rehabilitation. This is Egremont's third round of this grant.

The Town has been awarded a \$51,000+ grant for the engineering and design of a replacement culvert on Blunt Road. In the future the Town will apply for the funds to do the construction.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS:

The Board will meet on September 12 at 8:30am to conduct interviews for membership on the Municipal Housing Trust Board.

The Board will hold its next regular meeting on September 19 at 10:00am.

Meeting adjourned at 11:51am.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.24/sept5

The recording of the minutes is posted on the Town's web page at www.egremont-ma.gov for 90 days. Any attachments noted are on file at Town Hall.