

**Georgia Regular Selectboard Meeting
Via ZOOM Web Conferencing
Monday July 27, 2020 7:00 pm**

Approved: **Approved**

Present: Selectboard: Matt Crawford, Steve Lamos, Tara Wright, Jason Burt, Scott St. Onge,
Selectboard Clerk: Sam Gould, Town Administrator/Treasurer: Amber Baker

Absent: All Present

Public Present: Buddy Meilleur, LCATV Production Manager; Matt Young, Ascent Consulting LLC; Todd
Cadieux, Highway Foreman; Kyle Grenier, Highway Oversight Committee; Suzanna
Brown, Georgia Conservation Committee; Debra Holland, Concerned Citizen.

Matt Crawford opened the regular Selectboard meeting for July 27, 2020 for the Town of Georgia via ZOOM at 7:02 p.m. to discuss regular business.

Additions, Changes or Deletions:

None

Public Appearances:

Amber introduced Matt Young, Ascent Consulting LLC to the Selectboard. Matt Young then provided the Selectboard with an overall plan and concept design for the new Town Garage.

Discussion followed on; the entrance from Plains Road, location of the materials storage building(s), location of the retention pond & mound system, the cost of moving the salt/sand shed, the overall process timeline and the use of the current building.

At this time Matt Young is working up the presentation board and he stated that he is available to attend public forums.

Kyle talked about ways of presenting the plan to the public at this time due to the effects of COVID-19 on public gatherings.

Amber informed the Selectboard that she has worked up all the numbers for the Selectboard to present to the taxpayers on the overall cost and the savings over time.

Suzanna Brown provided the Selectboard her recommendation that public displays are setup for taxpayers to view and that a way is developed for taxpayers to ask questions.

Matt Young recommends at least one public forum, an additional tab added to the website along with a questions and answers page.

Matt Crawford publicly thanked Matt Young and the Highway Oversight Committee for all their hard work and support on the project.

Matt Young departed the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Review of Past Minutes:

Motion to approve the July 13, 2020 regular meeting minutes by Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

Review of Warrants:

Amber informed the Selectboard that AP47 includes an over budget expense that will be discussed later in new business #4 Emergency Communications and Dispatching Services Contract. At this time the Selectboard moves the review to occur after the discussion.

Tara asked Amber when the paving expense will appear before the Selectboard. Amber informed the Selectboard that the contract is paid upon completion and not paid based on what has been completed to date. Scott concurred with Amber that the contract was written that way. Amber then informed the Selectboard she is concerned that Pike will not return to complete the work if they pay them prior to project being completed.

Selectboard Concerns:

None

Administrators Report to Selectboard:

Unfinished Business:

1. Hazard Mitigation Plan Update: Amber informed the Selectboard that the Town is still awaiting state approval which is expected in August. Once approved the Selectboard will need to adopt the plan.

2. COVID-19 Updates: Amber informed the Selectboard that the Town offices will continue to follow all state COVID-19 policies and that masks will be available for members of the public who forget to bring any and wish to enter one of the buildings.

3. Lazy lady Island:

Debra Holland informed the Selectboard that her family has camps across from the island and that she supports the Town's efforts to deal with the growing cormorant issue.

Matt informed the Selectboard members that the Friends of Northern Lake Champlain and the St. Albans Watershed Committee may have funds available to help make contact with the owner.

Amber also informed the Selectboard that she was able to find a phone number on one of the past tax bill checks received and that she has also received other possible contact information from the public since the St. Albans Messenger article ran.

Matt asked Suzanna to have the Georgia Conservation Committee also get involved.

Amber stated that this item will remain on the unfinished business list until solved.

Debra Holland left the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

4. Purposed Road Standards Changes: Amber presented the selectboard with a few minor wording tweaks for their approval prior to posting.

Motion to approve the minor word changes as provided by Amber on 27 July 2020 by Steve, seconded by Jason, all in favor.

5. Silver lake Road Culvert: Amber presented the Selectboard with a legal opinion provided to the Town which Matt will share with Suzanna. The opinion basically states that as long as the Georgia Conservation Committee is using their own funds the Town will not be required to perform any other state/town requirements. At no time can Town general funds be used to update a Class IV Road.

Discussion followed on; the effects of the Town's class IV road agreements (legal opinion is none), the Georgia Conservations Committee's plans to remove the culvert and replace it with a ford crossing, setting of a precedence and the Georgia Conservation Committees ability to fully fund the project.

Motion to allow the Georgia Conservation Committee to remove the culvert and replace it with a ford crossing as long as it is within their budget by Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

Suzanna brown left the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

New Business / Action items:

1. Uncompleted Paving (Pike Industries): Amber informed the Selectboard that she received a reply from Pike today stating that it was not an error on their part but a miscommunications issue. In the end Pike wants to be paid from the Town, Pike must complete the paving contract.

Discussion followed on; Pikes tonnage versus the tonnage quoted by all others, how close are we to 100% completion (1/2 mile left) and that this is not the first time we have had this issue with Pike.

The Selectboard decided to move this to the next meeting to allow Amber and Todd more time to work with Pike.

2. Formation of the "Northwest Vermont Communications Union District": Amber recommends that the Town joins the new communications district. The goal is to help towns gain better internet and cell phone coverage. The current COVID-19 pandemic has shown this is a major issue especially when it comes to education.

At this time there is no cost to be a member but cost could be incurred in out years.

Motion to Join the Northwest Vermont Communications Union District with the Town Administrator as the Town point of contact by Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor. Tara will be listed as the alternate town representative due to her experience in the communications field.

3. Town of Georgia Assessor's Office Policy Update: Amber presented the Selectboard an updated Assessor's policy.

Discussion followed on; why do we need this if they are contracted now, the rewriting of wording in paragraph 3.1.1 to remove "At no time shall" if we do require the policy still and does this cover the office as a whole.

Matt asked the selectboard members to think about the policy and to determine if there still is a requirement for the policy.

Amber to speak with Bill Hinman about this policy and if it is needed now that we no longer have a Lister Clerk or a Lister Board and bring this information back to the Board.

4. Emergency Communications and Dispatching Services Contract: Amber informed the Selectboard that she talked with Interim Police Chief Maurice LaMothe to find out why the bill was ~\$10k higher than estimated. He informed her that Georgia is not the only town to call about this. Like the other towns we budgeted based on what Gary informed us the cost would be but the St. Albans city Aldermen decided in January to charge based on population even though the St. Albans Police Department recommended against it. This caused our bill to jump up to \$56,832.

Discussion followed on; the contract, the quality of the service provided and switching to a different provider.

Scott stated that the contract reads that the Town is to be provided a good faith estimate by 1 December, which we were and is what was used to set the budgeted amount, but the Aldermen voted to change the amount charged in January.

All Selectboard members agree this is not acceptable and that we may need to engage legal.

Amber to follow-up with questions to City Manager Dominic Cloud and Interim Police Chief Maurice LaMothe and let Board know her findings.

Motion to approve AP47 while withholding the dispatching fees by Matt, seconded by Steve all in favor.

5. 2020 Tax rate: Amber provided the Selectboard the 2020 Property Tax Worksheet which shows the grand list increased to \$6,244,049.15 and the approved budget of \$1,934,395.00. This will set a tax rate of 0.3098 a 0.0128. The overall homestead tax rate increase is \$.0556 of which ~90% is for education.

Motion to approve the Town Administrator's recommendation to set the Town of Georgia Tax rate at 0.3098 by Scott, seconded by Steve, all in favor.

6. Update status for Landon Baker: Landon Baker completed the Firefighter 1 course and is now officially an active member.

Matt publicly congratulated Landon and all others who have completed this rigorous course.

Administrator's Correspondence and Tasks:

Planning is hoping to adopt an interim bylaw agreement to be used until the DRB has been completed.

Masks will be required in all public places on 1 August per the state.

There have been several complaints about the use of Skunk Hollow Rd during the Rt 104A bridge reconstruction. The issue is being monitored and the Sherriff's office informed.

The Library is planning on using an app to forward all phone calls to an actual person. They have

purchased a cell phone for Bridget but AT&T service does not work at her home so they are working the issue. Both curbside and window pickup is available at this time.

The Historical Society did a walk through the old Town Clerks office and voted to accept the building as long as it also comes with new flooring, electrical and heating. The donor is working with his accountant to see if he has the ability to do this and still write it off. Amber stated she will keep the Selectboard posted as this moves forward.

The school is giving the plowing contract to the Town which will require the Highway Department to acquire a snow pusher.

In answer to the Selectboards question about liability when it comes to the Rummage sale building and the newly acquired 5.4 acres, amber informed the Selectboard that we have liability insurance that provides coverage.

Amber informed the Selectboard she expects to have all three requested quotes to fix the oil tank issue with the Rummage Sale building by the end of the week.

Treasurer's Correspondence: None

General Correspondence: Minimal discussion.

State of Vermont Correspondence: None.

Brochures/Newsletters/Workshops: None.

Executive Requirements: None.

Other Business Found Necessary: None.

Town Administrator Tasks review:

Motion by Steve to enter executive session under 1 VSCA §313 with Todd Cadieux to discuss contracts, labor relations agreements with employees, arbitration, mediation, grievances, civil actions, or prosecutions by the state, where premature general public knowledge would clearly place the state, municipality, other public body, or person involved at a substantial disadvantage by Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

Executive session started at 8:37 p.m.

Executive session ended at 8:59 p.m. with no actions taken.