

**Georgia Regular Selectboard Meeting
Via ZOOM Web Conferencing
Monday August 24, 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; David Vincent, Planning Commission; Cindy Deyak, Zoning Administrator; Suzanna Brown, Planning Commission & Georgia Conservation Committee; Lary Martel, Planning Coordinator; Rob Meader, Conservation Commission; Rep Carl Rosenquist; Catherine Dimitruk, Northwest Regional Planning Commission; Emily Johnson, Planning Commission; Ed Simon, Planning Commission; Chris Bouchard, Conservation Commission; Bridget Stone-Allard, Library; Gary Deziel, Library; Paula Ralston, Library; Chris Gonyeau, Concerned Citizen; Ken Minck, Conservation Commission; Todd Cadieux, Highway Department Road Foreman, Peter Mazurak, Conservation Commission.

Matt Crawford opened the regular Selectboard meeting and public hearing for August 24, 2020 for the Town of Georgia via ZOOM at 7:01 p.m. to discuss regular business.

Additions, Changes or Deletions:

Amber present the Selectboard with the following

Add: Warrants for review AP54 and PR34.

Add: Public appearance of Suzanna Brown in her role as Georgia Conservation Committee Chair.

All additions and changes accepted

Public Appearances:

Matt informed the Planning Commission members and the Library Trustees that each department within the town will be appearing before the Selectboard in order to keep all departments informed on the proposed highway garage project.

Amber then updated everyone on the current status of the \$3 million dollar project and that the proposal is on schedule to be brought before the public and to appear on the November ballot.

Discussion followed on; the savings a 20 year bond will provide (\$700k), what happens after the vote, DRB and zoning requirements, the cost to taxpayers (~\$30 per \$100k of assessed value at max year), the effect of the towns growing grand list, protecting the towns equipment, cost now versus the future (cheaper now), growing space, cost to bring the current building up to standards if the vote fails (~\$600k), the letter sent out with the tax bills, website page and email for Q & A's is up and running,

location of renderings, setting up open house visits, adding pictures and or videos to the website, taxpayer funds spent in the past year just to maintain the current building (~125k for the roof, electrical and some OSHA upgrades), drainage issues for the current building (will cost ~\$75k to 100k if vote fails), conversion of current building to cold storage (is part of the bond vote), current building heating expense (\$1200 - \$1500 per month), no increase in town roads but a large increase in their usage as the town grows, keeping ahead of repairs and safety issues with the current building and roads and adding a cost breakdown of the proposed new building to the website.

Public Appearance of the Planning Commission:

Lary Martel presented to the Selectboard and the public the following:

The Town of Georgia is developing comprehensive amendments to the Unified Development Regulations. The comprehensive amendments have been delayed due to Vermont's COVID-19 State of Emergency declaration. In order to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare and provide for orderly physical and economic growth the Selectboard in consultation with the Planning Commission has determined that an interim bylaw amendment is necessary. The interim amendment is listed below. All other provisions of the regulations remain unchanged.

Interim Amendments:

Permit Expiration, Commercial Uses

For commercial uses only in the I-1, I-2, SV, and B districts the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment as part of conditional use or site plan review may approve an expiration date for conditional use, site plan and/or building permits beyond what is otherwise allowed in the regulations.

First Floor Uses, SV District

Principle residential uses are not allowed on the ground floor of buildings in the SV. Through conditional use review, the Zoning Board of Adjustment may waive this requirement and approve residential uses on the first floor if:

1. an equivalent square footage of commercial development is included elsewhere in the development or building, and
2. in the judgement of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment the proposed mix of uses meets the purpose of the SV District as described in Article 2 of the regulations.

Phasing, South Village

The Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment may require development to be planned and phased so as not to burden the ability of the Town to provide adequate facilities and services.

Motion to approve the interim bylaws with changes for 2 years or until the UDR is completed by Steve,

seconded by Scott, all in favor.

Public Appearance of the Georgia Conservation Committee:

Suzanna Brown asked the Selectboard to approve the Georgia Conservation Committee spending budgeted funds to repair the culvert on the class IV portion of Silver Lake Road.

Motion to allow the Georgia Conservation committee to spend up to \$4k to repair the culvert on Silver Lake Road by Tara, seconded by Steve, all in favor.

Public Appearance of the Library Trustees:

Paula Ralston informed the Selectboard of what the Library has accomplished to date in order to provide library services and their phased reopening plans.

Bridget Stone-Allard discussed the funds spent, the research completed and the library's reopening plans in greater detail. She informed the Selectboard that plexiglass has been installed along with several other COVID-19 response improvements and that the library is keeping up with all other libraries in their demographic range, so far so good. She also stated that they have been receiving some great community support in their efforts.

Gary Deziel publicly thanked Amber and Sharon for all of the work they have done for the library during this time and thanked Matt for his seven years of service to the community.

Bridget then thanked Amber for all of her help in getting the cell phone setup and running.

Paula informed the Selectboard that she is meeting with the library's backyard neighbor to talk about squaring off the land to allow for the installation of an ADA compliant door.

Public Appearance of Chris Gonyeau:

Chris Gonyeau informed the Selectboard that he was not sure that they knew the reason why he is requesting stone to fix his driveway. It was not because of damage that occurred due to the beaver dam but due to the release of the beaver dam by Old Stage Road.

Amber informed Chris that the Selectboard has pictures taken by Todd and maps of the area in question in their packets.

Chris explained that the sudden release of water caused a large whirlpool to form that developed a 10 – 15' hole which is affecting the embankment holding up his driveways bridge. He further explained that each time the dam has been released the erosion increases further damaging his embankment and what he has done to date working with the town to have stone delivered to fix the issue. Chris also talked about the liabilities incurred when damage occurs downstream due to a beaver dam being released per state laws.

Todd stated that he did visit the site, took pictures but could not find any fresh erosion or damage. He also stated that the culvert was plugged up rather than it being a beaver dam. He explained to the Selectboard that the culvert in question is a four-foot culvert, that a full release was never done, and flow mitigation was in place during the release process. When the highway department released the

water, it was almost over the road but they still did a controlled release throughout the day and that the culvert was never at full stream.

Chris then informed the Selectboard that he worked with engineers during the construction of his bridge and how they informed him that smaller culverts cause more downstream damage during water releases than larger ones due to the buildup of water pressure, like holing one's thumb over the end of a hose. He also talked about his discussions with the state when he had to release a dam on his property in the past.

Scott brought up that the town does need to have a set process in place for individuals to bring forward issues to the Selectboard when things happen, what can the town do realistically, a lack of evidence of damage and he questions the ability of the town or Chris to place stone in the stream without a state waterway permit.

Chris stated that he understands that he will not receive any stone from the town and also unsure about the requirements for a waterway permit from the state to place stone in the stream. He further stated that he believes that issues like this need to be brought forward to the Selectboard in a timely manner regardless of who is attending or not attending a Selectboard meeting.

Matt informed Chris that the matter was brought forward to the Selectboard in a timely manner and that it was voted on during a warned meeting. He then asked the members of the Selectboard if they wished to change their past vote from nay to aye.

Jason, Scott, Steve and Matt all maintained their original nay votes. Tara was not present at the past vote, so she abstained. The Selectboard maintains its original vote of Nay.

Steve stated that the Selectboard does the best they can based on the information they are provided.

Discussion followed on, how the town is working to improve policies and processes, a need for a complaint process and that many policies and procedures have been updated in the past year.

Chris informed the Selectboard he is available to meet with them on site to show them the damage.

Review of Past Minutes:

Motion to approve the August 10, 2020 regular meeting minutes by Steve, seconded by Matt, all in favor.

Motion to approve the August 21, 2020 special meeting minutes by Matt, seconded by Steve, all in favor.

Review of Warrants:

Amber informed the Selectboard that Matt approved PR34 and AP52 earlier today.

Motion to approve AP53 by Scott, seconded by Jason, all in favor.

Motion to approve PR35 and AP54 by Scott, seconded by Steve, all in favor.

Selectboard Concerns:

Tara presented the Selectboard with an update on the Communications Union Districts (CUD) \$60k grant and asked if anyone had any thoughts on where the town could use communication updates. Matt brought forward that the town beach has little to no cell coverage and that makes it hard for the town to have events there with vendors. Tara thought that was a good idea and will bring it up at the next CUD meeting. She believes it can also be tied into the entire area in order to show that the upgrade will provide year-round support.

Scott informed the Selectboard that we need a policy and or process in place that helps guide individuals in bringing issues to the Selectboard. It should cover the Who, What, Why, When, Where and How. He also talked about the need to always use legal language and lawyers whenever the town deals with contracts and changes to them to allow for proper documentation. Scott also asked if a second signatory was now needed as tonight is Matt's last action as a Selectboard member and Steve is away.

Amber informed the Selectboard that as the Vice Chair Steve will assume all of Matt's duties and become the Chair and that a new Vice Chair needs to be voted on. She suggests that they wait until a replacement Selectboard member has been selected so they are also present for the vote. All Selectboard members agree that this is how it should happen.

Motion to allow Scott St. Onge to sign documents until the Vice Chair position has been filled by Tara, seconded by Steve, all in favor.

Administrators Report to Selectboard:

Unfinished Business:

1. Hazard Mitigation Plan Update: The state has approved the towns plan.

Motion to approve the Town of Georgia's hazard mitigation plan by Matt, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

2. COVID-19 Updates: No new update at this time.

3. Lazy lady Island: Amber informed the Selectboard that she has sent the tax bill and the letter out via certified mail and that several state and local agencies will pursue a legal means to deal with the cormorant issue if the letter does not come back signed.

4. PIKE Industries Paving Contracts: Amber provided the Selectboard copies of PIKES emailed response to their questions. She asked if the town should fight with PIKE or close out the 2020 paving plan.

Discussion followed on; PIKE always being the cheapest, PIKE never completing the work, PIKE not being a reliable contractor for multiple years and adding PIKE to the towns non-preferred vender list.

All Selectboard members agree that the town develops a non-preferred vender list and that PIKE Industries is added to the list.

5. Employee Appraisal Forms: Amber asked the Selectboard if they had any feedback for the new employee appraisal forms.

Tara asks that performing tasks without supervision is only for tasks that are done by an individual.

Steve has several written down at home and will provide them when he returns.

Jason and Scott see no issues with the appraisal as written.

6. Highway Bond Ballot: Amber informed the Selectboard that she has been in discussion with VLCT and Stitzel, Page and Fletcher about the bond language and the ballot. It is recommended by the attorney that the bond vote question not on the same ballot with the national ballot. Stitzel, Page and Fletcher suggest that we run concurrent votes, which we can do. This will require us to mail out ~3,900 new ballots, on a different color paper, that citizens will use to vote on the ballot concurrently with the national vote this November. Several minor language revisions will need to occur and the funds will come out of our general contracting, general contingency and postal budget lines.

Discussion followed on, changing the bond vote to March (we cannot at this time), Town Meeting Day type meeting in November, the new bond and resolution language, using stamped return address envelopes, postal charge for envelopes not returned (Amber will research), the cost of the mailing, where we stand on the town garage budget line (good at this time), how many hearings we should or could have, ballot confusion, having the mail in ballots arrive prior to an open house and ensuring all documents are written by our attorneys.

Motion to accept the resolution of necessity by Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

6.1 Highway Bond Ballot language:

Motion to accept the bond ballot language by Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

Discussion followed on having the square footage on the ballot. The Selectboard determined that this is not necessary and tasked Amber with working with the attorneys to remove it from the language unless we are legally obligated to show the square footage.

Motion to remove the square footage language from the bond ballot after seeking legal advice and some grammar tweaks as suggested by Scott by Steve, seconded by Jason, all in favor.

Motion to approve the special town budget language by Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

6.2 Highway Bond Voting Day Location:

Motion to use the school as the voting day location unless something changes by Steve, seconded by Jason, all in favor.

7. Recycle Shop Fuel Tank: Amber informed the Selectboard that no money from the recycle shop goes to the church. The recycle shop simply falls under the church's EIN for tax purposes. The funds made by selling items is used to pay the shops bills and to help support town citizens in need. They have a committee that reviews all cases of need and provides funds to support (small amounts) individuals on a case-by-case basis. The cost to fix the oil tank will be \$2,500 - \$3,500 but, they plan on closing down during the coldest months and using a space heater when possible during the less cold months.

The recycle shop asks that people stop dumping their trash in their dumpsters as this is their largest

expense and all it does is take money from those in need.

Discussion followed on; the issues inherent with buildings without heat or minimal heat at times, the new laws that caused the oil tank to fail inspection and the possible use of one of the current town garage bays if the bond vote passes.

8. Building Donation: Tara asks that this item remain as unfinished business until the Historical Society completes their acceptance of the building. Matt further suggests to the Selectboard that they remain firm on their stance not to spend any of the town's funds on this building in the future.

New Business / Action items:

1. Town Hall Cupola Repair Estimate (Northeastern Contracting): Lary Martel found a contractor to take a look at the cupola and the roof leak. They then provided us an estimate of \$6k to do the repairs and to remove the bell. Amber recommends the Selectboard accepts the estimate.

Motion to accept Northeastern Contracting's bid of \$6k to repair the Town Hall cupola, the roof leaks, removing of the bell and the speakers by Jason, seconded by Steve, all approve.

Discussion followed on adding an additional \$500 to cover any unforeseen issues. It was decided that the contractor inspected the work to be done and that \$6k should cover the work. The funds to do this are cost neutral as they are from impact fees.

2. ADA Parking at the Beach: Amber provided the Selectboard pictures of the work done by the Highway department to complete ADA parking at the beach for their information. The signage is on order to complete the requirements.

3. VTrans Project to resurface US Route 7: Amber informed the selectboard that as of now the state plans on resurfacing Rt 7 starting in 2021 unless something happens to change this.

4. Response Percentage per SOGs: Provided as an FYI for the Selectboard.

5. Bill Hinman New Work hours: Provided as an FYI for the Selectboard.

6. Jamie Burdick EMS Resignation: Amber will send Jamie a thank you letter from the town.

Amber will check with VLCT to see if the Selectboard will be required to hold a reorganizational meeting as Matt was the chair or if vice chair automatically becomes chair.

Administrator's Correspondence and Tasks:

Treasurer's Correspondence: No issues at this time noted by Amber.

General Correspondence: No discussion.

State of Vermont Correspondence: None.

Brochures/Newsletters/Workshops: None.

Executive Requirements: None.

Other Business Found Necessary:

Todd informed the Selectboard that he found a snow pusher for sale in Billerica Massachusetts for \$1,450 that will meet the needs of the Town. Amber stated that Billerica is not in a green zone which could require Todd to have to self-quarantine himself for two-weeks if he goes there.

Discussion followed on; travel to and from non-green zone requirements, availability of other pushers closer to town, the cost of a new one and the prices being lower at this time of year.

Town Administrator Tasks review:

Motion by Steve to enter executive session under 1 VSCA §313 with Amber Baker and 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, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

Executive session started at 10:00 p.m.

Executive session ended at 10:45 p.m.

Decision out of executive session: Decision to hire two of the applicants interviewed to backfill the loss of one employee and to hire a fifth employee for the Highway Department.

Respectfully submitted by Samuel Gould.