

**Georgia Regular Selectboard Meeting  
Via ZOOM Web Conferencing  
Monday June 08, 2020 7:00 pm**

**Approved:**           **Approved**

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

**Absent:**             Jason Burt

**Public Present:**   Buddy Meilleur, LCATV Production Manager; Todd Cadieux, Town Highway Foreman; Lary Martel, Town Planning Coordinator, Chris Smith, VT Fish & Wildlife; Kent Henderson, Chair, Friends of Northern Lake Champlain; Fred Pogmore, US Dept of Agriculture; John Gobeille, VT Fish and Wildlife.

Matt Crawford opened the regular Selectboard meeting for June 8, 2020 for the Town of Georgia via ZOOM at 7:06 p.m. to discuss regular business.

**Additions, Changes or Deletions:**

Change: Amber informed the Selectboard that Tim Smith's appearance has been cancelled.

Change: Amber asked to bring State of Vermont Correspondence #1 the 2020 EMS Award Notification Georgia First Response forward.

Change: Amber asked that New Business #8 be moved to Public Appearances.

Matt asked everyone to reach out to Andrew and congratulate him and his team.

Matt said that we are aware that the tragic death of George Floyd has triggered unrest, outrage, and violence. It has again brought to light a simmering anger about the failure to address systemic racism and bias in all its forms.

We have heard from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns that will be working on helping VLCT members – towns like Georgia – to promote inclusion, embrace change, and encourage transformative thinking, mindful of those who have been mistreated, excluded, and targeted.

We agree with the VLCT that silence is neither an option nor a strategy and Georgia will be working on this issue with VLCT to make our community a better place.

The selectboard agreed with the changes and additions.

**Public Appearances:**

First Public Appearance – Lazy Lady Island

Chris Smith brought forward his concerns about the growing cormorant population on Lazy Lady Island.

He has also heard concerns from anglers, other residents and friends all asking what can be done.

Matt stated that he had been in touch with the St. Albans Messenger and they believe that there is a real story here to pursue for an article and that he will let them know what occurs during tonight's discussion.

Kent Henderson informed the board that the Friends of Northern Lake Champlain normally deal with phosphorous issues and the algae blooms they cause but by doing some research he has discovered a link between the cormorant population and increased phosphorous. As such they have sent letters to the owners asking for permission to destroy the eggs but all letters are returned unopened.

John Gobeille stated that nearby Rock Island has a permit for egg destruction that has not yet been used but this may change as the cormorant population begins to grow there now also due to the population growth on Lazy Lady Island.

Fred Pogmore stated that in 2006 there was an egg destruction permit for Lazy Lady Island that ran out in 2015. During that time the cormorants were not a major issue and research was the main focus of the permit although they did destroy nests. They have also been unable to contact the owners. He has recently performed a rough population count from his boat using binoculars and counted 190 nests. Cormorants destroy trees with their guano, which makes the soil very acidic and by skinning the trees. At this time, he believes the trees on the center of the island as beyond saving.

Amber stated that she has contact with the owners who recently put in a change of address with the town for tax purposes. The land is in trust and she suggests sending letters to the new address. John stated that the family that used to own the island have all passed away.

Kent then stated that it is becoming a wastewater problem as the phosphorus count around the island is increasing and asked if the town could condemn the land allowing the town to take action. Amber stated that the building is not habitable, but the town has received legal advice that legal action is not viable at this time.

Matt stated that we need to get this issue out to the public and that the town will work on working with the owners. John was not sure what the state could do but there is the possibility of disease outbreaks, which has occurred in the past from large cormorant populations as they are transmutable to other livestock and some maybe to humans so something needs to be done. Fred agreed with John on the disease issues but his department is not regulatory, so they do not have the ability to do anything. He also noted the higher phosphorous counts and the effects on fishing.

Matt suggested that a letter be drafted up and signed by all parties to give it more weight and send it to the new trust address. Amber will also pull together all documents she can find on the island.

At 7:36 p.m. Chris Smith, VT Fish & Wildlife; Kent Henderson, Chair, Friends of Northern Lake Champlain; Fred Pogmore, US Dept of Agriculture; John Gobeille, VT Fish and Wildlife. Departed the meeting.

Second Public Appearance – Request from the Planning Commission to change Town Road Standards.

Lary Martel presented his case and recommendation that the Selectboard accept the standards and regulations as described by the state. At this time most municipalities within the state do use and follow these regulations all of which make good sense, provide good roads, driveways and reduces confusion

for developers and builders. The regulations cover gravel levels, culverts, widths and more. He also talked with Fire Chief Keith Baker, who agreed that the state regulations are more in line to the needs of emergency services as the road widths would allow the larger and heavier fire trucks room to maneuver. He also stated that the town is one of the few who actually own the culverts costing the town funds and labor costs to maintain that could be used for many other projects and maintenance projects. These culverts should be owned by those who placed them. In most towns this is an ordinance, but it could also be placed in town regulations, if this is adopted all past work would be grandfathered. Todd informed the selectboard that some towns even monitor the work done to ensure that the work done is maintained and will revoke permits as required. He also agreed with Lary that the town should not own the culverts and that it would be a savings for the town.

All Selectboard members agree to Lary's recommendation

Lary also informed the selectboard that he is working on estimates from vendors for the repair of the Town Hall cupola.

Discussion followed on; repair or replace, bell removal, what is the actual damage, funds availability to have an inspection performed.

As the funds are available to perform an inspection, Lary will work to have one completed to provide a comprehensive list of the damage and build a comprehensive repair list.

At 7:58 p.m. Lary Martel departed the meeting

#### **Review of Past Minutes:**

Motion to approve the May 11, 2020 Regular meeting minutes by Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

#### **Review of Warrants:**

Motion to approve check warrant PR 37 Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

Question posed by Tara on the cemetery lawn mowing. Amber stated that it was actually for the new fence installation.

Question posed by Tara on the flowers. Amber stated they were for the Town Hall and yes they were purchased at Costco not locally as they would like to do but it was half the cost and she must also be fiscally responsible.

#### **Selectboard Concerns:**

Question posed by Tara on the dock installation. Amber stated they are now in.

Question posed by Tara on the library curbside pickup. Amber stated it is now up and running.

#### **Administrators Report to Selectboard:**

#### **Unfinished Business:**

1. Hazard Mitigation Plan Update: Amber informed the Selectboard that the plan has been submitted to

the state for approval.

2. COVID-19 Updates: Amber presented to the Selectboard the newly developed COVID-19 Safety & Health Plan which follows the format provided by the Vermont League of City and Towns and as recommended by the state.

Discussion followed on; why do we need this as the requirements seem to change daily, how will or should we keep it up to date once we adopt it, changes to some of the wording.

Changes to the document after discussion.

1. In paragraph 2.1.1 change Selectboard Chair to Deputy Health Officer.
2. Add wording at the beginning allowing the Town Administrator to make changes as required and that the Selectboard will review the document every two weeks.

Motion to adopt the COVID-19 Safety & Health Plan with changes as noted above by Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

3. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Amber provided the Selectboard the MOU with the changes as requested during the May 11, 2020 regular Selectboard meeting.

Motion to accept the MOU as written with a date added by Scott, seconded by Steve, all in favor.

MOU is to be distributed to all employees of the Town of Georgia.

4. Building Donation: Steve, Tara and Amber toured the building and site. They found the building to be in very good condition. Steve noted that the basement casement windows and the power service entrance are the only two items of note and they are not major issues. The owner has not set a time limit to accept the offer but the town should not make him wait long.

Steve suggested that the building could be used to house the rummage sale and the food shelf or the historical society, as it does have vaults. They will just need to check out the building to see if it will meet their needs. He also suggests that anyone one who does move into the building are required to stay for 2 to 3 years.

Discussion followed on; letting the public know about the building to see if there may be other community, non-profit, based entities that maybe interested in using the building to support the town, placing a notice on the website, the benefit to the town of accepting the building and land, the status of the current rummage sale building, property taxes and the septic system restrictions.

It was decided that a notice be placed on the website and that the owner be notified that the town is strongly reviewing the acceptance of the building and land.

**New Business / Action items:**

1. Beach Sign: Amber will attend and speak at the ceremony as the town representative. Matt asked that she send all of the Selectboard members invitations.

2. LCATV Channel Changes: Channels 15, 16 and 17 are now channels 1075, 1085 and 1095.

3. 2020 Fall Fest Cancellation: Due to coordination issues and not knowing what the COVID-19 environment will be, the annual Fall Fest has been cancelled. Matt also informed the Selectboard that the Gatherings on the Green have also been cancelled at this time.

4. Former Homestead Campground Asbestos Inspection: Amber informed the Selectboard there have been several complaints about the trash and debris on the site and the trash that has been blowing around. She informed them that the State did find asbestos on site and that the owner has been given notice to properly remove all trash and debris within the next 30-45 days.

5. New Town Garage Bids: Scott informed the selectboard that 3 full bids and 3 partial bids were received and reviewed. The Garage Committee recommends bid number 3, Wiemann and Lamphere. They provided the lowest bid, are a reputable organization and have a Georgia resident who has donated his time to the project.

Motion to approve the committee's recommendation of Wiemann and Lamphere proposal of \$83k by Scott, seconded by Steve, all in favor.

Discussion followed on; funds availability for phase I, what does phase I entail, will it be valid in future years if the voters vote down the proposed bond, the effect of COVID-19 on voters' income and the ability to pay a new bond.

The funding for phase I is in the current year budget and the bid for phase I was under budget. As phase I provides the Selectboard with what is required to bring forth the bond to the voters in November it is good for future years if the bond is voted down. Phase II is where the plan is fully flushed out and this would occur after bond approval.

6. Vermont Local Government Resolution: Resolution: All cities, towns and villages in Vermont are essential, and Vermont local officials support fair and direct federal emergency aid to reopen and rebuild local American economies.

Motion to accept and adopt the Vermont Local Government Resolution by Steve, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

7. Vermont State Police Contract Renewal: Amber asked the Selectboard to accept the Vermont Department of Public Safety Traffic Control/Enforcement Services contract.

Motion to allow Amber to sign the contract with a date of May 1, 2020 for \$14,532.48 not to exceed \$15k by Steve, seconded by Scott all in favor.

**Treasurer's Correspondence:** No discussions.

**General Correspondence:** No discussions

**State of Vermont Correspondence:** Moved to Changes additions and deletions.

**Brochures/Newsletters/Workshops:** None.

**Executive Requirements:** None.

**Other Business Found Necessary:**

**Town Administrator Tasks review:** Stated within the minutes above.

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 Scott, seconded by Scott, all in favor.

Executive session entered at 8:58 p.m.

Decision made out of executive session: Per the road foreman's recommendation, the board agreed to hire Landon Baker on a full-time seasonal rate, with no overtime pay authorized.

Meeting adjourned by Matt at 9:28 p.m.