

## Rockingham Selectboard

Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 6 pm in the Lower Theater

Present: Chair, Peter Golec, Vice-Chair, Elijah Zimmer, Rick Cowan, Bonnie North, Susan Hammond, Selectboard; Scott Pickup, Municipal Manager; James King, Kaytlynn Monroe, Bethany Rocha, National Grid; Gary Fox, Development Director; Alyssa Harlow, Finance Director; Amy Howlett, Saxtons River Village Trustee Chair; Bonnie Anderson, Stan Talstra, Barbara Ternes, Jamey Berrick, Residents

Zoom: Corey Schutzmann. Josh Holsapple, Joshua Holden, National Grid; Alyssa Harlow, Finance Director; Deborah Wright, Becky, Carolyn, residents

Press: FACT TV, Alex Stradling, Brattleboro Reformer Susan Smallheer  
Board of Liquor Control

1. A) Application for First Class License  
B) Application for Third Class License ( 287 Rockingham St. Joy Wah Restaurant)
2. A) Application for Second Class License (97 Westminster St.)  
B) First Class License (83 Westminster St Athens Pizza) *Zimmer moved to approve all License applications as stated, North seconded and motion carried..*

Approve Minutes of February 20, 2024: *North moved to approve minutes of 2/20/24, Cowan seconded. Motion carried.*

Additions to the Agenda for Routine Administrative Matters and/or Pressing Matters that will require ratification at a future meeting: Berrick requested to add to Tri-board agenda a clarification on the political sign policy. Wright thought it was agreed that signs were not allowed on municipal property- no matter who the candidate.

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda (3 minutes per person): None were given.

Manager's Report- Pickup said they submitted a press release with a request for volunteers to serve on Town Committees, as many empty seats were becoming available on April 1. email [manager@rockbf.org](mailto:manager@rockbf.org) He said Highway was busy working on the muddy roads in rural Rockingham roads. In the Village, ash tree removal has begun. Golec added that WNESU misquoted the vote for Town Meeting and all items on the Warning would be voted on the floor on April 1. (Meeting Monday, April 1st 7 p.m.)

1. Presentation River Valley Reliability Project (National Grid) – King said the project was from Wilder to Bellows Falls; project includes relocation and a reconductor of the line, work will be in National Grid ROW easement. Monroe said the entire project would replace 509 structures, and updates would reduce future maintenance and repair costs giving a more reliable service. Bellows Falls

is receiving one updated connection; south of the hydroelectric station. Schutzmann said there were required permits from the Agency of Natural Resources and reviews: Section 10, Section 106, and Section 7. Construction was scheduled from 2026- January 2030. Zimmer asked where Walpole residents could comment. Hammond asked about vegetation management and what kind of pesticides were used. Schutzmann said if herbicides were used they would be in accordance with federal and state guidelines. Berrick asked if this was an upgrade or would increase Rockingham's reliability. Comments to Project hotline: 833-874-6988 and more information at [www.rivervalleyreliabilityproject.com](http://www.rivervalleyreliabilityproject.com)

2. BF Alumni Association Requests for Alumni Weekend- Golec said Athens Pizza is catering, alcohol served by Donovans and alumni association will set-up and clean-up with Ruggiero trash removal.
  - A) Waypoint Center Use and Fee Reduction Request- Golec suggested \$125.
  - B) Entertainment Application
  - C) Application for Use of Alcohol on Municipal Property

*Cowan moved to charge the standard fee for \$50 and reduced fee for \$125 for a large event, North seconded. Wright suggested the Tri-Board review the fees and asked the point of the policy if the Town allowed for reductions. North moved to adopt t Cowan seconded for a total usage fee of \$175. Motion carried. Hammond moved the entertainment and alcohol use applications on municipal property, Zimmer seconded, motion carried.*
3. BFDDA and VT Dept. of Housing Community Development Application for Use of Waypoint Center and Fee Reduction Request- The request was use of the inside space and platform from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, June 5. Golec said this would be catered by Smokin Bowls. Discussion was to charge \$50 base fee with \$85 for use of the inside space, plus \$5 for electronic use, and \$250 for the platform for over 50 people. *Zimmer made the motion to approve the use and to charge \$50 base fee, \$85 inside, \$5 electronic, \$250 outside space, for a total of \$390 for the Waypoint Center on Wednesday, 6/5/24, Cowan seconded, motion carried.*
4. Review Draft Lease and Purchase Agreement (BF Train Station)- Pickup said the agreement should be presented on April 2 for the newly elected Board to approve. He said the Town questioned language in the draft to ensure that a sub-agreement with tenant was eligible for sales of alcoholic beverages. It was determined that a

state permitting process will need to be followed and not be a part of the lease. Berrick asked about the cost and the length of the land lease agreement. Pickup said the P&S agreement was to purchase the building, and a separate lease under the land would be a long-term lease with the State. Berrick questioned the money approved by voters (\$75K) and what had already been spent from the general fund, with another \$150K requested on 4/1/24 warning, Fox explained that the \$75K was approved toward the purchase of the station only and that is what it is to be allocated to. The general fund budget is approved annually, and the funds spent from the general fund on the train station are the regular items those funds are budgeted for every year. In the train station case, the highway engineering line is there to address road work items that require highway engineering, such as to address ROW issues. Depot Street did not exist, and there was engineering work required to create that ROW, and those ROW points were required to put into a lease. Other general fund allocations to the train station were from the Planning and Development offices Planning funds and Development funds. These funds are budgeted with the intention of funding pre-development planning work and studies and are what they were allocated to in the station project. The project is 3-stages – this predevelopment work and the purchase are all the first stage. The second stage – exterior work like restoring the masonry façade, windows and doors to US Department of the Interior Historic preservation Standards, is fully funded with grants and match. Fox said the largest portion of funding required is for the third stage, restoration of the interior and all new electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems. The Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant will fund a good deal of stage 3 and requires match funding. The \$150K bond article is matching funds for the interior rehabilitation, and the total CRISI match is \$350K. In response to Jamey's question about transparency for all aspects of the project, Fox said the Town must follow the NEPA and Section 106 Historic and Archeological regulatory requirements with no more than 30% design specifications funded with a partial notice to proceed (PNTP), and upon completion of NEPA and Section 106 the Town receives a final NTP to utilize project grant funds that are allocated to stage 2 and stage 3. Full design and engineering can come after the NTP, and that design is required to complete the scope and cost estimates needed to complete funding applications for the third stage which is two years out from beginning, and those funds cannot be allocated more specifically, nor new grant funds for match be applied for, until we have that detail and are closer to implementation due to grant agreement start and end periods. Fox explained the 12 to 18-month delay on the P&S Option and Lease is

due to many aspects of working the Railroad and VTrans Rail Property Division including ROW for Depot St, coordination on their platform work and restoration of the canopies, and requirements for use of space outside the station and more.

Berrick asked about a project manager (PM)/owner's representative and if they would approve the design consultants. Fox said they had received interest from 3 qualified consultants and their statement of qualifications were due on April 3. Cowan asked about hiring a PM after hiring design team. Fox said that current Town staff/steering committee had worked with all the qualified design firms submitting proposals, and ensured the Board that the team here can choose firm with the best chemistry for the Town for this project, without engaging the owners rep during the proposal scoring and selection process. Berrick asked about the vapor testing costs. Fox said these were off-gases from contaminants on the Island, and at the levels for the test results, there are two possible remediation methods with the lower end estimated in the \$10K range and the method on the higher end in the \$25K range. Cowan asked if it was beyond threshold. Fox said one section tested below threshold and is not a problem and the other tested above threshold, and is the one which would require mitigation. The Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) report, based on air sampling, will indicate the recommended remediations and the differences between which we choose. Harlow explained that each time Pickup and Fox requested funding, she has record of the minutes of when it was approved and why: \$75K Town Meeting, \$10K ABCA, \$115K ARPA train station redevelopment. Pickup reiterated they had expended no grant funding yet, because of requirements by each funding agency. Purchase \$75K Town, DTF \$125K, and ARPA \$50K, upon NBRC notice to proceed, WRC Brownfields abatement funding, numbers are subject to change based on bids. Town Meeting 2024, Article \$150K to unlock \$1.8M. Pickup said the process is deliberate and confusing, and each funding organization has different requirements. Berrick questioned WRC remediations and general fund use. Fox said the numbers are on the website in the workplan scope schedule budget document, but there are many moving parts.

5. Discussion of 37 Main St. property- Main Street Arts (MSA) offered 37 Main to Saxtons River, the SR Trustees had discussed the gift of the property at both meetings in March. She said with the municipal planning grant a feasibility study identified resident supported top projects that included (after Brownfields study and demolition): a multi-use building, a park, and a Fire Station. Cowan said MSA had received a quote to demolish the building for \$60K. Fox explained clean-up

costs for private vs. public development, private parties/individuals could access brownfield loans but do have to pay them back, whereas, nonprofits, tribes, municipalities could access brownfield grants which do not have to be paid back. Cowan said it's a key location, and .4 acres prime acreage. Fox said with environmental testing the ground water was clear, and from previous studies in 2014, and the 2022 study indicated the feasibility of 3-story housing with 2 commercial spaces on the ground floor and 9 apartment units. Cowan said the consultants would take the charge to fit the character of the neighborhood. MSA understands the building is decaying and is an eyesore, and looking for funds to demolish the building. Howlett said the SR Park and MSA building had successful contaminant remediations. Zimmer, a Selectboard member appointed to the BFADC board, suggested BFADC could be the entity to take on this project. The Select Board agreed they needed more information before accepting the gift of 37 Main Street.

6. Grant Updates-

- A) FEMA AFG (AED) Equipment Grant- Cowan recommended adding the recycling/transfer station to the list to receive AED's. (Note: Chief Shaun McGinnis said because the transfer station is in Westminster that is not an eligible location for the equipment purchased with this grant- Village only properties). *North authorize the Chair to approve the BFVC local match funding of \$1,851.43 from the Fire Equipment Fund. FEMA Assistance to Firefighter grant application for twenty (20) Automated External Defibrillator's (AED's) at \$1,944 each for total program costs of \$38,880 for a federal funding request of \$37,028.57 and 5% local match of \$1,851.43, Zimmer seconded and motion carried.*
- B) USDA CF Grant for Extrication Tools- *Cowan authorize the Municipal Manager to execute and sign the USDA CF grant application and Chair to approved the local match funding of \$10,240 from the Fire equipment fund for the extrication tools and struts/stabilizers for federal funding request of \$30,720 with a local match of \$10,240 at a total program cost of \$40,960, seconded by Hammond, motion carried.*
- C) FY2023 Historic Preservation Fund- Semiquincentennial Grant- Pickup said this was for information purposes, and no local match was required. The funding would be for interior work, and only buildings built pre-

Declaration of Independence were eligible, Rockingham was applying for the full \$700K.

D) 2024 Sustainable Energy for Schools and Municipalities Program

Application- Pickup said the Town Hall roof has been reinforced, this will allow for a solar array on the roof. This grant requires a local match, \$20K for project completion, and there was an expected savings of \$200K in energy costs to maintain sustainability and building viable. Rockingham is also looking at Library and Waypoint Center. Hammond asked about energy storage for use in power outages.

7. Financials- Golec mentioned that lights in the Highway budget were at 91% and would be overbudget. Zimmer said the maintenance was over by \$5K. Pickup explained when the lamp posts were first purchased it was an early version of LEDs and not easy to change, the additional costs were for conversion. Zimmer agreed the conversion would make it simpler and offer a huge savings to the Town. Golec commented that the recycling heating costs were up \$2K, and fuel though budgeted at \$400, was up to \$1600.

Review & Approve Orders, Bills & Warrants- *None*

Review Agenda Items for next SB meeting on Tuesday, April 2, 2024 at 7:30 pm

- Organization meeting with new Board members

Review Agenda Items for Tri-Board Meeting- Tuesday, April 30, 2024

- Fire Feasibility Report- Triton
- Tax Sale
- VHB, VTrans presentation updates on Depot St Bridge Project

Other Business- Cowan announced it was Hammond's last meeting, and thanked her for the 10 years on the Board. Wright asked what the tax rate would be if all Articles passed on April 1. Golec said .10 increase from last year. Wright asked about the Golden Cross contract doubling, and Opera House was 5x what it was in past. Golec assigned Articles to be read at Town Meeting.

Executive Session- *None needed*

Adjourn- At 8:45 pm Cowan moved to adjourn at pm, seconded by North, motion carried.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Recording Clerk Betsy M. Thurston \_\_\_\_\_  
Betsy Thurston, Recording Clerk