

**Town of Moretown  
Office of the SELECT BOARD**

**DRAFT** – Unapproved minutes of the 9/2/14 selectboard meeting

Board member present: Tom Martin, Reed Korrow, Rae Washburn, Michelle Beard, John Hoogenboom

Guests included: Brian Ward, Lisa Ransom & Scott Baughman, Tom & Martha Douglass, Ricky Blake, Don LaRocca, Cherilyn Brown, Clark Amadon, Nathan Hawley, Dara Torre, Cheryl Brown as board assistant

**Public Comment Period:**

**Brian Ward re: use of town equipment** - Brian said there wasn't much in the last meeting minutes about the outcome of Martin using the town excavator for his personal use. He said Martin is becoming increasingly bold, plowing his driveway and his neighbor's driveway (relatives) with the town truck, appearing as though it was a plow route. Brian said the minutes reflect that Martin used the excavator a couple hours on Saturday and a couple hours on Sunday to pull stumps when in fact he heard pounding on ledge with the excavator for 2-3 hours on Friday; several hours of the same again on Saturday; and Sunday morning he heard the excavator working more. Brian said it would be pretty simple to corroborate his story by asking some of the other neighbors on Freeman Hill.

Tom said the board reached an agreement with Martin. The town is getting reimbursed for the use of the excavator.

Brian indicated that the personnel policy is pretty specific, and that he is disappointed with the action the board took to settle the matter. Brian noted what he called a "storage" yard on Martin's property, and a lot of truck traffic hauling fill.

Tom thanked the Brian for bringing the additional information to them.

**Rick Blake** – When referring to the host town agreement draft and giving people on Route 2 a tax break, Rick doesn't want to see that happen. He thinks it would be difficult to choose who and how far on the area, would get the benefit.

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**Martha** – agreed, thinking it might create more conflict to the town. Look at the long-term benefit for everyone.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**8/18/14** – Michelle moved; John seconded to approve the minutes of 8/18/14 as printed. Michelle, John, Rae and Reed were in favor. Tom abstained. Motion passed.

**8/25/14** – John moved; Reed seconded to approve the minutes of 8/25/14 as printed. All were in favor.

**ES-** Rae moved to enter into executive session at 6:11 p.m. for discussion regarding a road crew issue whereby premature public knowledge would place the town and person involved at a disadvantage. Reed seconded. All in favor.

John moved; Tom seconded to come out of executive session at 6:30. All in favor.

**Clark Amadon re: update on the new town office** – Clark said the environmental review is essentially done and no issues have been found that would hinder the project. Clark is in the process of studying how to draw down grant funds so the project can move forward to get bids done for the design/build phase, hopefully later this month. Clark notes that at some point a clerk of the works will need to be hired.

**Don LaRocca – Investment Committee** – Don let the board know about two key components he recently learned about Schwab investments that he doesn't particularly like. One is; there is no incentive to do business with Schwab. The second; is an "unlimited" Power of Attorney (POA) is the only option. An unlimited POA means that the POA can literally do anything within the account, which is not a good thing, nor is it an option in Don's opinion.

Don thinks perhaps it is time to consider using a broker to handle the investing, such as with a bank. Don said the objective is to be conservative.

Don spoke with Merchants Bank when he was interviewing banks. He will get more information and bring the Merchants Bank rep to meet with the board.

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**Nathan Hawley re: audit of 2013 financials** – Nathan introduced himself as being from the accounting firm of Pace & Hawley, and went on to provide the following points of interest:

- Pace & Hawley did an audit of Moretown’s 2013 financials and a “single audit” per federal guidelines because Moretown spent over \$500,000 in FEMA funds in 2013.
- Everything was good with the audit.
- The Management letter suggested the following:
  - A. Adopt a policy for payroll advances.
  - B. Grant reimbursement from FEMA and the State for a road project was received. One should be returned.
  - C. Prepare budget to actual expenses & for revenue reports.
  - D. Adopt an Investment Policy (already done now). It is a good idea to have someone else make the investment decisions.
  - E. Try to decrease the number of “Funds” the town has.
  - F. Create a Fund Balance Classification Policy to identify who has the authority to spend the money in that fund ie: the Savings Reserve was established for capital needs and can only be spent with voter approval. Nathan will provide a draft policy
  - G. The board should at the beginning and ending check number when approving warrants.
- In Nathan’s opinion, unless there is a good reason for switching to a fiscal year end, why bother. The current method seems to be working fine.
- Dara Torre (one of the town auditors) asked if it was a good idea for them to look at the bank statements. Nathan replied yes, and suggested they look at the VLCT checklist for auditors as well.
- From time to time the selectboard should review the activity in “Funds” such as the bridge & culvert fund. Reports can be provided for all funds.

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### **Reports & Communication, Announcements:**

**Duxbury mutual aid for hauling** – email from Martin – The Town of Duxbury would like to swap Moretown hauling for Duxbury for a day and then they would help Moretown haul for a day with our hauling needs. Martin asked for approval before proceeding.

There was discussion about how this would benefit Moretown.

Tom Douglass thinks this is a way to help Duxbury get their road products hauled because they have no money left in their budget.

The decision was not to swap hauling with Duxbury.

**Signage on private roads** – email from Martin – Asking if the town is responsible for signage for private roads, if so what type of signage does the board want him to install.

The town does provide signage for private roads. The cost for the signage is offset by the fee charged by the town for the E-911 certificate (\$50). The cost for a 911 compliant “green” sign is about \$57. The green signage is what the board would like Martin to install for all new signage going forward.

The decision was that Martin should buy and install a green sign for Jamie’s Way.

**E911 Certificate fee** – Reed moved that the E911 Certificate fee be increased from \$50 to \$125 to cover the cost of the new 911 signage and for its installation by the road department. Rae seconded. All were in favor.

**Town hall step and elevator entrance work** – Email from Martin that Ruth VanHeuven is wondering if the exterior work at the town hall can be delayed to give the plantings a chance to go dormant before they are dug up.

There was discussion that because of the condition of the front steps/elevator access the project needs to move forward as soon as possible. Therefore there will be no delay.

**MECA Program** – There was an email from Kate O’Neill suggesting since MECA is a school program, and since the topic is on the Sept 8<sup>th</sup> schoolboard meeting agenda, that the selectboard attend their meeting to learn more about the MECA program.

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Since there were several questions and an active discussion that was brought forth during Kate O’Neill’s visit to a selectboard meeting that she attended in August, board members plan to attend to listen to the discussion. Schoolboard meetings are open to the public.

**Pony Farm Road work complaint** – Email from Martin regarding complaints from Leslie Logan about the resurfacing work done on Pony Farm Road.

The board agrees that Martin handled the situation sufficiently so that the board need not take further action to contact Ms. Logan.

**Change in Australian Voting** – At 2014 Town Meeting, there was discussion about doing away with Australian ballot voting. On March 31<sup>st</sup> of this year, there was a public forum. One of the topics at the forum was whether or not to do away with voting by Australian ballot. The selectboard was not advocating for the change, just opening up discussion in an effort to increase the attendance at Town Meeting. The change would involve money articles over \$5,000.

Discussion followed that in the 1980’s when the decision was made to have a vote by Australian ballot for expenditures over \$5,000 was a lot of money then, for what you would get now. Perhaps the \$5,000 amount should be higher. The change could only be done via a vote.

There is no plan at this time to make any changes but, the voters will be asked their opinion at the next Town Meeting or by a formal poll beforehand.

**Mad River Valley Planning District (MRVPD) Steering Committee news** – John reported that the MRVPD and MRV Trails Collaborative partners have developed a MRV Active Transportation Plan, intended to create a blueprint for trail development, management, and funding for year-round recreation opportunities. MRVPD is seeking funding for the Transportation Plan, including a \$1,000 financial commitment from Moretown.

The board will discuss this more at their 9/15 meeting to give board members time to look at the plan.

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**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Personnel Policy** – Will be reviewed to see if revisions are necessary.

**Blodgett litigation** – Michelle moved; seconded by Reed to enter into executive session at 8:07 for the purpose of discussing civil litigation where premature public knowledge would clearly place the town at a disadvantage. All were in favor. Cheryl was invited to stay for the discussion.

John moved out of executive session at 8:22. Reed seconded. All were in favor.

As a result of the executive session Tom moved to forward a response to the town’s lawyer Paul Gillies as drafted and approved tonight, relating to the Blodgett litigation. John seconded. All were in favor.

**New Business:** None tonight.

**Documents for signature:**

**Cargill contract and an American Rock Salt contract** – were both signed and will be forwarded to Martin. The price per ton for salt from Cargill is significantly less than from American Rock Salt, so Cargill will be the main supplier with American Rock Salt to be used only if salt cannot be bought from Cargill.

**Warrant # 46** was signed as submitted for check #'s 16341-16349

Reed moved; Michelle seconded to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.

There will be a special meeting of the selectboard held on Monday September 8<sup>th</sup> for the purpose of reviewing and selecting a contractor to do the Mountain Road reconstruction.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cheryl Brown