

Sandgate Select Board Meeting – November 6, 2017

Called to order at 6:30 pm

Attendance: Suzy dePeyster, Mike Hill, Tom Santelli, Karen Dzialo, Karen Tendrup.
Also present: Erin McDermott, Melissa and Willie Mattison, and Jim Henderson

Citizen Comment: Karen Tendrup told the Board that the town children thanked the Select Board for the use of the Town Hall for a Halloween potluck.

Dog Warden Update: Erin McDermott reported that since an electric fence has been installed at the Bill Walsh residence no further complaints have been received. At the November 20th Select Board Meeting Erin will discuss problems of excessive barking at the Johnson residence on Sandgate Road. Erin will contact the neighbors about the meeting.

October 16 minutes – Tom Santelli motioned to accept as is.
Mike Hill seconded. All in favor.

Select Board and Road Orders were signed.

2018/2019 Budget Requests:

Not all the usual requests have been received to date.

Karen Dzialo will look at last years' budget to see who is missing.

Truck Update: The new truck is not ready. We expect delivery by mid-November.

West Road Dry Hydrant – A tree was removed and fill was added for access.

Road Report: Mike Hill reported he's getting ready for winter. The older truck (not the one being traded in for the new one) has been over at Delureys to have work done in order to have it ready for winter.

Better Back Road Grant: Jim Henderson and Mike Hill met with Fitzgerald, our storm water management plan engineer. Two projects were selected to have top priority and will be submitted for grants: Excessive water run-off on Wuerslin Road which will involve additional culverts and both grass line ditches and stone ditches to control and redirect water. Estimated cost will be \$16,085. The Town will be responsible for 20%. The second project is raising the road bed, adding ditches and

culverts at the Beartown end of the Sandgate Road. Estimated cost is \$16,970 with the town contributing 20%. A third project is the end of Hamilton Hollow Road where the road narrows and water drains from the Claire Merritt property to Hopper Brook.

The Storm Water Master Plan Report will be presented to the Select Board by Jim Henderson at the December 18, 2017 meeting. This report identifies all of the storm water issues throughout the town. Many of the problems can be corrected by the Town as regular maintenance.

Winter Maintenance

Mike told the Board that Willie Mattison has agreed to work as a sub-contractor for winter plowing. He will start on November 15, 2017 until April 15, 2018. He'll be guaranteed 20 hours a week at 20 dollars an hour.

Correspondence: An email was received from residents Ge Trombley and Charlie Pike expressing concerns. *The email can be viewed in its entirety as an attachment to these minutes.*

The Board reviewed the concerns and responded as follows:

- Wind Storm 10/30/17 – Trees on power lines cannot be cut by the Town. Mike Hill had to wait for Green Mountain Power to cut those trees.
- Regarding the complaint that the town truck was parked in a residents' driveway: The resident needed assistance starting her generator so that she would have power for her mother's oxygen machine. Mike took care of it and, since it was urgent, used the town truck.
- Charlie stated that he called Tom Santelli 2 times and left messages, however there were no messages on the answering machine. The Board agreed that for whatever reason, if Tom Santelli is not available, residents should have other options. The best solution is to call the town garage at 375-8358. Also, a message can be sent via email directly to Mike at mhillsangatehighway@gmail.com (please note that there is no "d" in sandgate in the email address). Tom Santelli's number is 375-9297. When power is out answering machines don't work. Just keep calling.

- Regarding road signs advising residents of road conditions: The Town has 24 hours to do this. It was agreed by the Board that “Road Closed” signs should be appropriately placed. There will be safety grant in Spring 2018 that covers signage.
- Wood Chipper: The wood chipper was returned to Rupert because they called, needing it back. The town pays \$25 per hour to Rupert when the machine is in use. The Town has not addressed purchasing a wood chipper.
- Town Driver and Unprofessionalism: There is no cell service at that location and *service and the grader does not have a radio.*
- West Road Dry Hydrant: regarding the West Sandgate Road dry hydrant having to be done twice, the Town did not incur any extra expense. The contractor made all corrections needed. The West Road dry hydrant project is being closely monitored.
- Mower Repair and Maintenance: It was discussed by the board that making the costs of running equipment and maintenance easy to find was a possibility.

Adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Karen Tendrup made the motion and Tom seconded. All in favor.

Next Meeting: November 20, 2017 at 6:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Dzialo

November 6, 2017
Town of Sandgate
c/o Suzanne dePeyster
Selectboard Meeting - 11/6/17
Re: Citizen's Concerns

Dear Select Board Members:

We are unable to attend tonight's board meeting. In lieu of attending we are sending our list of citizen's concerns that we want the board to record in the town minutes and address.

The concerns are the following:

1. Wind Storm 10/30/17 (Monday) – Rupert Road and Chunks Brook Road had significant wind damage from the storm 10/30/17. This storm was a known threat to the area and was being tracked by weather services (radio, TV and internet).

The storm caused trees to come down on both roads blocking access to the entrances. The access to Rupert Road from West Sandgate Road and the entrance to Chunks Brook Road from West Sandgate Road were blocked by fallen trees.

Part of Rupert Road, heading towards Sandgate and Rupert had large trees that were blocking travelling on the road. Local citizens were forced to cut these trees in order to travel the road because there was no town service. The fallen tree at the access point of Rupert Road was down most of Monday.

- a. Charlie Pike and Curt Winslow drove by the town garage Monday morning and saw the Road Foreman in the sand lot with the dump truck. About ½ hour or so later they observed the town truck parked in the driveway of residence of West Sandgate Road. About ½ hour or so after they saw the town truck at Wayside. Meanwhile the trees that were blocking access to these roads and cleanup required on other areas of the roads mentioned were not being taken care of.
 - i. We are concerned that the Road Foreman's priorities were misdirected on a day that both of these roads needed immediate attention.
 - ii. The Road Foreman should have anticipated wind/tree damage given that the storm was being tracked and reported on in the media. If he was unaware of the situation he should have sought out information (i.e. driving and inspecting the roads) in order to properly attend to the conditions of the roads mentioned.
- b. Charlie Pike called Tom Santelli 2 times, and left messages, to advise him about the road conditions and to ask why the Road Foreman wasn't out taking care of the roads. Tom did not call him back.
 - i. If Tom isn't available he needs a backup select person who will take the calls.
 - ii. With two roads being inaccessible, the Road Foreman should have set up road signs advising people of that road's conditions. It is a concern that the lack of signage for this situation could create a liability exposure for the town and could put citizens at risk.
- c. 10/31/17 (Tuesday) - Charlie observed that the Rupert Town's wood chipper was being returned by the Road Foreman. With so much damage it is hard to believe that the wood chipper had to be returned the day after a storm and couldn't be used for cleanup of the roads mentioned. If the Town of Rupert

needed their chipper back it begs the question of why the Town of Sandgate doesn't have their own wood chipper.

- i. So, why doesn't the town have its own wood chipper?
 - ii. Does the town pay the Town of Rupert for the use of their wood chipper? If so, what is the expense incurred to date?
 - iii. Is a purchase of a wood chipper in the next budget? And if it isn't, why not? It is a concern that the town is dependent on another town for this type of equipment.

2. Town driver and unprofessionalism - Ge called Tom Santelli several weeks ago to file a complaint. Tom called Ge back, several days later, but Ge did not return the phone call. The complaint was the following regarding the individual who graded Rupert Road:
 - a. The town grader was park across from Ge's house on Charlie and Ge's property. It was a nice day and Ge's house windows were open.
 - b. For approximately 15 minutes Ge heard the man in the town grader talking on a radio or cell phone yelling and swearing. Ge could not see who the man was. Every other word from this person's mouth was "F*** this", "F*** that", "F*** her", "Who the F*** is she", "I want to get the F*** done, so I can F*** off tomorrow", etc.
 - c. This type of unprofessional behavior by a town employee, elected official or subcontractor is unacceptable. It is a poor reflection on the Town of Sandgate. This should not be treated lightly. It was offensive, inappropriate and disruptive to an otherwise peaceful work day at home. I'm glad that young children were not at my house to hear such language coming from a town representative.
 - d. Again a concerned that Tom does not return calls in a timely manner. If he cannot return calls, for any reason (i.e. time off, unavailable, etc.), then he needs to have a backup select person that will.

3. West Road Dry Hydrant project –
 - a. The West Sandgate Road dry hydrant had to be done twice. Suzie told Ge that the reason this project had to be done twice was that the specifications were not read and inexperienced contractor(s) were on the project. What additional cost did the town incur?
 - b. What was the Road Foreman's responsibilities on the West Sandgate Road dry hydrant project? How is the town going to ensure that the West Road dry hydrant project will go according to the specifications and not have to be re-done?

4. Mower repair and maintenance receipts – Ge's follow up to a request that was noted in the town's meeting minutes 1/16/2017.
 - a. Ge was at the Town Hall late September or early October to collect the repair receipts for the mower. The clerk pulled some months of expense receipts. After review I found the following:

November 6, 2017
Town of Sandgate
c/o Suzanne dePeyster
Selectboard Meeting - 11/6/17
Re: Citizen's Concerns

- i. The expense receipts were not in date order. This raises a concern that not all the expense receipts have been filed correctly.
 - ii. The expense receipts, from the sampling I took, didn't have what truck or type of equipment was being fixed. The receipts had a budget line to where the expense would go but this doesn't give the level of detail for a cost analysis.
 - iii. The town should have an asset list referencing the asset number to the equipment and show that asset number on every repair and maintenance bill.
 - iv. I asked that the receipts be updated to show the asset number so they could be pulled and copied so I can complete the cost analysis of the mower. Has this been done?
5. Concern that the current staffing plan is not sufficient to properly maintain the back roads.
- a. The town has almost 30+ or - miles of road to maintain. It is apparent that the plan to have (1) Road Foreman, a part time employee (now a vacant position), and subcontractor(s) is not a sufficient plan to properly maintain the roads during current and up and coming seasons.
 - b. We are concerned that given the last wind storm and the lack of road service, the up and coming winter will be a disaster. What is the town's plan to properly staff and maintain the back roads this winter?

Thank you in advance for addressing these concerns. We look forward to feedback via the minutes of the meeting on 11/6/17 and or subsequent town meetings that will address these concerns.

Charlie Pike

Ge Trombley