

**Town of Sunderland Selectboard Meeting
Monday October 9th, 2023 7:00 PM**

Members in Attendance:

Bruce Mattison
Andrew McKeever
Dixie Zens
Marty Nadler

Others in Attendance:

Mia Smith- Secretary
Laura Stone- VT Dept of Trans
Gary LaRoch- VT Dept of Trans
Jeff Dexter- Sunderland's Energy Committee's Chairperson
Todd Lawrence- Proposed Emergency Management Coordinator
Dan Levering
David Kiernan- Sunderland Planning Board, Shaftesbury Town Administrator
Ann Wedell- Mack Molding

1. Call to Order by Dixie Zens at 7:00 pm. Introduction of Board Members and guests, including VTrans Laura Stone and Gary LaRoche, as well as Sunderland Energy Committee's Jeff Dexter and Dave Levering, and finally candidate for Emergency Town Manager Todd Lawrence.

3. Approval of the minutes of the September 25, 2023 Selectboard Meeting

Mover: Marty Lawrence
2nd: Andrew
Result: Passed

3: Emergency Mgmt Coordinator

- Marty Nadler introduces candidate Todd Lawrence for Emergency Coordinator.
- Moves for board to approve his position as Emergency Coordinator.

Mover: Marty Nadler
2nd: Andrew McKeever
Result: Passed

4. Energy Committee Updates for "Green Procurement", Report on "Window Dressers", and Upcoming Forum on Climate Change.

- Non-profit out of ME that build inserts for windows to block drafts.

- Northern Benning Co./Northshire currently being serviced
- This year 40 Volunteers at Arlington American Legion, 43 hours over 4-5 days.
- \$40-60/insert. Volunteers measure windows with lasers and inserts are customized.
- Planned again for next year, keep eye out for ordering.
- Dixie Zens adds that they are built well, plastic insert with foam outside so that they fit snug.
- Upcoming forum "Transitioning to renewable energy", four speakers from diverse viewpoints (gas company, state reps, etc)
- Thursday October 26th, 7-9pm at Manchester Community Library, followed by Q&A.
- Green Energy Memorandum, "concrete actions to achieve energy goals of our state". Energy community began looking into this about six months ago, researching other Vermont towns both urban and rural as well as local and national organizations.
- Sunderland would be the first town south of Norwich that has adopted a proposal, trying to set an example for residents and other towns.
- Energy Committee putting forward a proposal to Selectboard for their review, for a meeting and Q&A in the future.
- This is a memorandum, not a policy, because it does not have requirements for property purchases.

5. Laura Stone from the Vermont Department of Transportation presentation of the Bridge work proposed on Rte. 7 south of the Rte. 313 Exit/Entrance Ramps

- Public information meeting for US Rt 7 bridge 19-5 and 19-7.
- Introduces Gary LaRoche, design manager.
- Bridges are just south of interchange with VT-313, exit 3.
- Project is funded (80% federally funded, 20% state funded), currently at an early stage at project development.
- Currently identifying environmental and cultural resources, and constraints of surrounding structures or land features.
- Bridge 19-5 has 8' span corrugated pipe arch, constructed in 1978, 162' long, 13' of fill on top, owned by the state of Vermont.
- Bridge 19-7 has 7' span corrugated pipe arch, constructed in 1979, 120' long, 10' of fill on top, owned by the state of Vermont.
- 19-5 is in poor condition, holes throughout. Meets hydraulic standard, and full width standard, not aquatic passage standard.
- 19-7 is in fair condition with heavy rust, scaling, pitting and perforation, and does not meet stream equilibrium standard of 14' full bank width.

- Resources existing at 19-5 are the northern long eared bat habitat, class II wetlands, priority wildlife passage and aquatic passage.
- Resources existing at 19-7 are the northern long eared bat habitat, and priority for wildlife passage.
- Alternatives considered: Culvert Rehab, provides about a 15 year life span. Culvert replacement provides about 75 years.
- Maintenance of traffic options, three were considered: offsite detour, phased construction, temporary bridge.
- Road closure selected, two 14-day closures within one construction season (28 total, not necessarily back-to-back), adding 3.3 miles of detour. Chosen and signed by state.
- Detours will happen between exit 2 and 3.
- To occur spring/summer 2026, total cost estimate of \$3.9 million.
- For questions, visit [project website](#).
- Resident Ann Wedell asks how conservative 14-day road closure is, Laura Stone explains that financial incentives/penalties exist for early/late openings with companies. 98% of the time roads are opened on time.
- Dave Kiernan voices objection, as Shaftbury Town Administrator, to funneling 8,500 cars through town (number cited from Laura Stone's presentation), when potentially replacing the water line at the same time, as well as traffic and safety concerns.
- Laura Stone explains that phase construction does not allow heavy load trucks, mobile homes, etc. And that phased construction takes an entire summer. Temporary bridge is hard to navigate for supersized loads.
- Ann Wedell asks if there are any restrictions of truck/freight sizes on rt 313, Laura Stone doesn't think so, but guesses most large trucks will detour to NY-4.
- Todd Lawrence asks if there will be about outreach Q&A closer to the projected 2026 construction. Laura Stone says that prior to closure of project planning, the town and other stakeholders would be invited to Q&A meeting.
- Dave Kiernan brings up the fact that ambulances use this route from as far as Stratton, Londonderry, etc. and that this would be a significant time addition.
- Conversation about impacts of large storms that might impact construction.
- Todd Lawrence asks if there is a possibility of 24-hour jobsite to expedite the project, Laura Stone says that that is possible if contractors have enough crew members to work around the clock. Emphasizing that this project works well for that since there are no local residences.
- Gary Laroche explains how risk (24- hour work site in this case) can impact contractors' bids, and make selection of bids more challenging or project more costly.

- Laura Stone directs a question to Dave Kiernan asking if a shorter road closing would be possible. Dave responds that 8,500 cars is objectionable with the elementary school crossing and downtown area.
- Andrew McKeever asks if there are any other bridges or culverts that need to be replaced soon, Laura Stone replied that there are a lot of culverts approaching “fair” condition, although 19-5 was the only one in “poor” condition. Inspections happen every 5 years.
- Gary LaRoche explains the inspection schedule based on the type of structure and condition it is in.
- Dixie Zens asks if there can be two separate contracts to work on the bridges at the same time.
- Dave Kiernan asks about going down to one-way traffic, Laura Stone responds that with the amount of traffic, two-lanes are required.
- Dan Levering asks if sleeve culvert would be possible, Laura Stone says that because the culvert is eroded on the bottom, it's unknown how much material about the culverts have eroded, and even with grout injections, it isn't feasible.

6. Public Comment- Dixie Zens asks if there is public comment

- Todd Lawrence (newly elected Town Emergency Manager) reached out to Dara Zink of BCRC to discuss the position and existing plan.
- Todd Lawrence has 10-12 hours of training for state certs.
- Town currently has an outstanding Emergency Management Plan, no formal due date.
- Updating contact info of select members, etc. for use in emergency
- October 26, 530-730 at Arlington Town Hall, power outage training scenario. Road Crew, board members, back-up emergency mgmt. Scenario similar to long-term winter power-outages.

7. ARPA Funds – VT Timber Frames Bennington VT Quote

- Dixie Zens says they are still soliciting ideas on how to spend funds.
- Projects need to be identified by the end of 2024, and spent by the end of 2026.
- Dixie Zens is getting a quote from VT Timber Frames for a pavilion on the lawn outside of Town Hall for residential meeting place. About \$115,000 with electricity, seating, etc.
- Andrew McKeever says about \$290,000 in funds still exist.
- Possible that there will be combination spending with Arlington for firefighting/emergency response.
- Andrew McKeever reminds that \$25,000 has been set aside for tech updates.

- Jeff Dexter asks if digitizing records has been included.

8. Road Liaison Report-

- Bruce Mattison reviews proposal for \$155,964 for 2025 International cab and chassis, trading in 2017 plow and truck with \$30,000 credit. Total cost will be \$125,964.
- Dixie Zens asks for a motion to sign the contract for new truck.
- Jeff Dexter asks if an EV was considered. Bruce Mattison says that it isn't affordable, Dixie Zens say that these funds are currently coming from "sinking funds" planned for replacement of vehicles.
- Dixie Zens says proposals for electric vehicles are welcome.
- Bruce Mattison says it probably isn't feasible because of cost.
- Dan Levering discussing run times with cold weather, weight of sander and challenges with storms and charging/generator back-up. Asks if town has anything in writing about how often they are turning over their vehicle, is it hours, miles?
- Bruce Mattison says it's 7-10 years, after warranty is up because costs go way up. That this contract is for a truck that won't be here for many years (2025).
- Dixie Zens asks Todd Lawrence if any airports are using EV (in reference to background in airport management). Todd discusses Reno and LAX.
- Bruce Mattison makes a motion to go with the gas dump truck.

Mover: Bruce Mattison

2nd: Marty Nadler

Result: Passed

- Road crew is currently hauling gravel, grading, getting sand, still mowing.

9. BCRC, SWIP

10. CUD Update

11. Old Business-

1. Review "Funding of Citizen Requests" draft policy

- Draft policy submitted by Marty Nadler, reviewed again by board.
- Dixie Zens reads allowed draft policy.
- Bruce Mattison asks if the board is looking to raise the amount of "training fund", the board discusses that historically the \$500 allocation has been enough.

- Dixie Zens says that this draft defines a policy so they have will have a method to act on future applications.
- Andrew moves to pass the policy for funding residents asking for training.

Mover: Andrew McKeever
 2nd: Bruce Mattison
 Result: Passed

2. Review “Welcome to Sunderland” Signage

- No prototype or design yet, waiting on the Planning Board to submit the design.
- On 7A as you come into Sunderland, proposed on northern and southern borders, about 2.5 miles apart.
- Bruce Mattison asks if funding could come from ARPA, Dixie answers yes.

3. Review “ Sunderland’s Village Center Designation.

- Waiting on a proposal from the Planning Board who is working with BCRC.
- Bruce Mattison asks if anyone has looked at the previous town plan, Dixie says there was no designation previously.

12. New Business-

- Marty Nadler met with the Bennington Sheriff, reviewed the contract.

13. Review of Correspondence/Signing of Warrants-

- Letter from Bennington Co. state attorney, State of VT v. Jeffrey Colburn, state dismissed charge (individual hit bridge with truck).
- Andrew asks who wanted town to press charges.
- Dixie Zens says the insurance company paid for damages.
- Bruce Mattison says that the garage closed the bridge to repair it and paid for damages, thinks there is a \$1000 deductible for such damages.
- Bruce Mattison says the same truck/company hit the bridge again. Damages aren't as bad.

14. Next Meeting October 23, 2023 at 7:00 PM

- Marty makes a motion to adjourn.

Mover: Marty Nadler

2nd: Andrew McKeever
Result: Passed

15. Adjourned at 8:18 pm.