

Town of Eden
71 Old Schoolhouse Rd
Eden Mills, VT 05653

December 14, 2021 Selectboard Meeting

The Eden Selectboard met at the Town Office on December 14, 2021. Present: Ricky Morin, Clayton Whittemore, Jubal Durivage, Candace Vear, Beth Spaulding, Freeda Powers, Donna Whitcomb, Rachel Garfield, Town auditors Tracey Morin & Leslie White, Jeff Johansen & Scott Griswold from NEMS, Marvin Whitcomb & Ryan Whitney from Gihon Trak Packers snowmobile club.

1. Open Meeting: Ricky opened the meeting at 6:00pm.

To accommodate those present, the Board moved to agenda item #7, then #6:

7. NEMS 2022 Budget review: Jeff Johansen and Scott Griswold came before the Board to review the proposed budget for the coming year. The budget shows an increase of \$1,246 from last year. Ricky inquired about the COVID related money that the department reported receiving last year. Jeff explained that those funds will not show up in this proposed budget. He went on to explain that some of the funds received went to paying off the building mortgage, paying off two ambulance loans and a cardiac equipment loan. Citing the explosive increase in costs of fuel, medical supplies and overall increases across the board, they are trying to look ahead and impact the next 3-5 years. He said they anticipate future costs to replace the buildings' roof and want to do what they can to minimize financial burdens going forward. Like many sectors, they are experiencing staffing shortages and will try to fill positions with part time people which saves on benefits.

They continue to offer COVID-19 testing and vaccine clinics. They offer testing at their Johnson site on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8-4. Vaccine clinics are held offering all three brands of the vaccine, at the Newport site, Thursdays from 9-2.

Jeff went over the service call numbers for Eden for last year and compared to where they are so far this year:

# of calls	2020	2021 to Dec. 9th
To Eden	102	103
Total	1278	1332

Jubal made a motion to approve the 2022 NEMS budget with \$55,621 representing Eden's share. Clayton seconded the motion. The Board voted 3-0.

6. Gihon Trak Packers Land Use: Marvin Whitcomb and Ryan Whitney came before the Board to clarify the route on the request. Recent land owner changes have resulted in the Gihon Trak Packers gaining access to trails that allow them to avoid the Dog Sledding property altogether. This alleviates potential landowner conflicts at that location and allows the snowmobilers to stay off the roads as well. Logging operations in the area of Square Road are due to wrap up soon, relieving that potential conflict of land use as well.

Marvin showed the Board a sample sign that VAST has created telling drivers and riders that their GPS is wrong and that the trail ahead of them is not a road. He said they have purchased a few of these signs and are willing to put them up and maintain them if the Town is willing to put up the posts. Ricky said it may be tough to put posts in at this time, and reminded him that signs tend to be damaged or stolen in short time. Marvin recognized this as a reality and said for this year, they are happy to put them up temporarily rather than on installed posts.

There was some discussion about why the Trak Packers don't ride the banks on the side of the town roads when they need to take roads as routes instead of trails. Ricky said in areas by Erol Tobacco's land, the shoulder is more than adequate for the riders to be off the road. Marvin said he has stopped this practice for a few reasons, and primarily for safety concerns. For one thing, he is trying to respect the Eden Highway Dept. request to ride with the flow of traffic; but this would require them to groom both sides of the road. Furthermore, when riding the bank, the riders can inadvertently knock snow onto the roadway, which is another thing both parties want to avoid for safety reasons. The final reason they stopped doing it was due to VAST rules regarding "STOP" and "Stop Ahead" signs required any time riders go from a plowed to an unplowed surface. These required signs would pose a conflict with town plows.

After review and discussion of the revised route being requested, it was agreed to amend the land use request to state *Permission is granted to the field next to the school, side road travel on South Pond Road to East Hill Road, side road travel on East Hill Road from South Pond Road to Square Road, and side road travel on Square Road for .10 of a mile.* Ricky made a motion to approve and sign the amended land use request from the Gihon Trak Packers for the 2021-2022 season. Jubal seconded the motion. The Board voted 3-0. The land use form was signed; Freeda will send a copy on to Don Goodhue.

At this time, Candace asked to address the Board. She wanted to bring to the Board's attention some changes with office bookkeeping procedures and the issues that have come to light as a result. A representative from NEMRC, the municipal computer software system used by the Clerk & Treasurer for many internal tasks, including payroll, came to the office and suggested some changes to the method of tracking vacation pay and sick time. This is a timely and pertinent change with Donna about to retire, and it has brought to light the way in which we track, use and financially compensate full-time employees. Vacation time and sick time earned will now be tracked, weekly on paychecks, making it easier for employees to be cognizant and responsible in taking their allowed time off. It is recognized that with such a small staff in each department (office and highway) it is difficult for employees to take significant

periods of time off without causing hardship within their department. Currently, the Personnel Policy allows sick time to accumulate with no cap. Vacation time in the Personal Policy, updated in 2015, states that “Unless individual approval is given by the Selectboard, vacation time cannot be accrued from year to year. Any unused vacation time shall be paid to the employee at year end (December 31st).” With the Selectboards’ review of the Personal Policy in 2015, vacation time accrued through 2015 was paid out in full to date for all employees. Since 2015 however, the practice of paying out any unused vacation time at the end of the calendar year did not happen and all full-time employees again have a cumulative balance due to them. Tracey and Leslie as auditors, helped to compile a preliminary status spreadsheet for each employee for the Selectboard to review. There were many questions from the board, Candy and Rachael looking for further clarification and re-examination of the numbers presented. The Board requested that the Town Auditors get together with the Clerk & Treasurer to ensure true numbers are available for review at a future meeting. The Board recognized that a thorough review of the Personnel Policy is needed and will be addressed at a meeting in the New Year.

Returning to the agenda:

2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda:
 - a.) Addition under #11b: Health Officer letter of resignation
 - b.) Addition under #12c: EBI Consulting notice of communication tower going in off Kittell Road.
 - c.) Addition under #12d: Lamoille County Budget Mtg. 1/10/22 at 7pm.
3. Citizens Input: Sam Crocker submitted signatures for a petition to get a vote regarding retail cannabis put on the Town Meeting Warning however, after verification of all signatures, the Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk have determined the petition did not meet the required 5% threshold in order to get the request put forward. Mr. Crocker has been notified of this.
4. Sign orders: Five (5) orders were reviewed and signed.
5. Minutes: The Board reviewed the minutes of 11/23 and 12/6. Ricky made a motion to approve the minutes of the 11/23/21 and 12/6/21 meetings as written. Clayton seconded the motion. The Board voted 3-0.
8. Eden Youth Sports: The Board received written resignations from three committee members. Ricky made a motion to accept the resignation letters of Amanda Dezotelle, Brooke Stygles and Sarah Schifilliti from the Eden Youth Sports Committee. Jubal seconded the motion. The Board voted 3-0. Freeda will send thank you letters to these residents for their time and service to the community and children.

The Board also received an email of support from Wayne Demers recommending resident Kristina Brown as a new appointee to the EYS committee. Ricky made a motion to appoint Kristina Brown to the Eden Youth Sports committee. Clayton

seconded the motion. The Board voted 3-0. Freeda will notify Kristina of the appointment.

9. Road Commissioner's Report: Plows are ready to go. Roads in the lower parts of town have begun to soften due to the warm temps. Truck #4 will go to Charlebois for repair Thursday.

10. Ratify Additions and Deletions of 11/23:

- a.) Deletion: VSP cancelation
- b.) Addition under #8: Cargill Deicing Salt price form requires signature
- c.) Addition under #10: Revised Gihon Trak Packers Land Use Form discussion
- d.) Addition under #10: Lamoille County Preliminary FY22-23 Budget Mtg. 12/2
- e.) Addition under #11: The invasive Emerald Ash Borer found in Belvidere

Ricky made a motion to ratify the additions and deletions from 11/23/21, as listed above, #10a-e. Jubal seconded the motion. The Board voted 3-0.

11. Other Business:

a.) The Board received their copies of the FY22-23 budget pages which requires a special meeting to review and set. The Board agreed to a special meeting Dec. 22nd at 6pm to begin the budget review.

b.) Health Officer: The Board received as a late addition, a letter of resignation from the Eden Town Health Officer. No action was taken; the Board will discuss at their next regular meeting on 12/28.

12. FYI:

a.) The Board received copies of a proposed redistricting map which lawmakers will consider in January, 2022. This revised map will put Eden in a house district with Hyde Park; we are currently in a district with our northern neighbors of Lowell, Westfield and Jay. Redistricting takes place every 10 years.

b.) The Board received the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) proposed 2023 dues. Eden 2023 rates are proposed at \$2,769. These rates are set based on census data.

c.) EBI Consulting notice of a communication tower going in off Kittell Road. Comments may be submitted to EBI until Jan. 9th.

d.) The final Lamoille County Budget Meeting will be via Zoom on 1/10/22 at 7pm.

13. Adjourn: Ricky made a motion to adjourn. Jubal seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:23pm.

Minutes Approved as amended on 12/28/21 by Ricky Morin, Clayton Whittemore, Jubal Durivage.

Freeda Powers, Town Administrative Assistant