

Minutes

Town Of Marlboro Regular Select Board Meeting

Thursday, March 16, 2023, 6:00pm

Attendees (in-person & via Zoom): Jim Agate - Chair, Molly Welch – Vice-Chair, Jeff Skarmstad - member, Nick Morgan – SB Assistant, Kate Kirkwood – Energy Commission, Jean Boardman - Resident

Call to Order @ 6:00pm

Regular Select Board Meeting Agenda

Identify Any Changes To Agenda: None

Scheduled Business

Unscheduled Open Public Comment - None

Approval of Minutes from March 9, 2023 – (Welch/Skarmstad – Passed unanimously)

Signature of Pay Orders - Done

New Business

Rich Earth Institute

Molly was contacted by the Rich Earth Institute to see if the Town might be interested in establishing a urine recycling drop-off (note that this process helps create highly effective fertilizer and has been an established process for many years). The Board noted that it needed more information on how this would work and Molly took the action item to contact the Rich Earth Institute for more information.

Recycling Station Discussion

At the last meeting the Board decided to set up a date for an open meeting with the town on the current status of the Recycling Station at the Highway Garage. Prior to picking a date, the Board discussed some issues (pros and cons) and discussed areas that needed more information and getting that information prior to making decisions.

Jim started off the discussion with a list of his pros and cons:

Pros: Less trips for Town residents and thus less gasoline usage down to Brattleboro waste management site to recycle; Keeps some people from just dumping recyclables in the woods or roadside; The current expense seems in line with the needs of the Town; Generally encourages recycling (Molly).

Cons: Recyclables are not deposited in the right container or left on the ground; Non-recyclables (i.e. Trash) is left at or in the containers creating work for the Road Crew; The station is used by non-residents with no process to control access.

Several topics for consideration were discussed: Jim noted that an increase in signage (Resident usage only & Area under surveillance) and possibly installing cameras to monitor the area. On the cost issue, Jeff wondered if there was a cheaper alternative to how things were currently being handled to help lower cost to the town. Finally, investigating if a different location (the area on Town Hill Road right off Route 9, that could be fenced) that might be more advantageous.

Several action items were assigned:

Nick will research the cost of additional signage and contact the current trucking company (TTT) to see if there were other less expensive alternatives and contact other area haulers that might be less expensive (including going back to previous hauler, Goodenough, that due to driver shortages needed to drop the Town). Jim will research the feasibility and costs in having cameras installed to help monitor the area.

The Board, in advance of general meeting, will investigate with Road Foreman, if it would be possible to close off the area with fencing and set up hours where recycling could be dropped off.

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The Board felt strongly that this issue needs to be brought before the Town and proposed setting up an open meeting at the MCC on Saturday, 5/20/23 @ 2:00pm (pending availability of the MCC which Nick will investigate and report back). This meeting will be heavily promoted on Front Porch Forum, Facebook, and the Town's Website to spur and increase resident participation.

Motion to schedule Open Meeting with Town Residents on the Recycling Station at the MCC on 5/20/23 @ 2:00pm (pending availability). (Skramstad/Welch – Passed unanimously)

Commemorative Bird Bath in Town Circle for David Elliott

David Elliott's sister, Melinda, approached the Select Board to see if they would approve the installation of a Bird Bath commemorating David Elliott to be placed in the Town Circle in front of the Town Office Building. The Board was generally favorable to the idea, but needs more information and has invited Melinda to attend the next scheduled Board meeting on 4/13/23 (She has agreed to attend).

Town Administrator Report

National Grid Contract – Conversations with Bob Fisher will continue next week and there should be much more information by next meeting.

Information from Margo Ghia on State/WRC Energy Resilience Program – Nick reported on his initial conversation with Margo on the Energy Resilience Program. Complete notes are attached as an addendum to these minutes.

Regional Policing Letter from WCSO update – Nick has been in touch with Sheriff Mark Anderson and is setting up a call to review the letter and provide feedback to the Board on what the Sheriff is looking to do concerning Regional Policing in Windham County.

Town Survey for State Hazard Mitigation Plan – The State has asked towns to answer a short questionnaire on top concerns towns have in regards to Hazard Mitigation plans. While the Board considers their responses, Nick will reach out to the Town's Emergency Management Coordinator to review the survey, get his input on the questions, and have him review the Board's responses before they are submitted.

Old Business

Molly accepted the role as the Select Board representative to the Ad Hoc Committee on the Energy Resilience Program from the State and WRC.

Regarding setting up Town Meeting Warning Town Wide Meeting, the Board felt that meetings in September, November, and December would be best and Nick to the action item to write up an official proposal to be reviewed and voted on at the next meeting (4/13/23).

Motion to Adjourn @ 7:03pm – (Skarmstad/Welch – Passed unanimously)

3/16/23 Select Board Meeting Addendum:

State/WRC Energy Resilience Program Margo Ghia Meeting Notes:

WRC Contact: Margo Ghia

Immediate action: **Complete Building Survey ASAP – I am on it.**

Webinar on March 23, 2023 on the whole program @ 12noon. I will be attending. The Webinar will be recorded and will be available for review after the fact should attendance not be practical.

Stages of the Program:

1. Energy Assessments:
2. \$4,000 Mini-Grants
3. Up to \$500,000 Implementation Grants
4. Revolving Funding Credits

Energy Assessments:

Current Status: Not open yet for application. Assessments will be conducted through 2023.

Scope: Still pending – maybe just single building or all town structures

Two Levels will be available:

- 1) Walk-Through with evaluation of needs to increase energy efficiency (i.e., Windows, insulation, better heating source, etc.).
- 2) More in depth evaluation including walk-through but also building plans and specifications.

One question is still pending. Margo is checking on whether the Town can request assessment of both buildings (Town Office & Garage) or whether the “free” assessment can only be done on a single building. Depending on the answer to this question may necessitate the SB and other Town officials to determine the best building to have the assessment completed in addition to deciding on which level assessment is conducted.

Once the assessment is completed a report will be provided. What is key here is that anything that is noted or specified in the report should be included in the implementation grant and will be a very large step in getting the implementation grant approved.

Based on the above, anything that the town is interested in (i.e., solar panels or anything else) should be advised to the inspectors to make sure it is included in the ultimate report.

State/WRC Energy Resilience Program Margo Ghia Meeting Notes: Page Two

\$4,000 “Mini-Grants”:

Current Status: Applications are open, grants will be available to apply for through 2024. The State/WRC assures that there will be funds available for all towns.

Scope: Grants cannot be used for implementation. The goal for the Grants is to provide information & education to residents. These include holding meetings, creating materials for distribution, etc. A list of possible uses is included in the email sent by Margo Ghia which is attached. Other options are also possible, and ideas should be brought to Margo to see if they may qualify.

In the discussions with Margo, she advised that the application for these grants is currently available and is very easy to fill out. Margo is asking about details of how to fill out, including how to request funds (i.e. – do we just request the full \$4,000, use the funds for acceptable items, while keeping and reporting proper records or expenditures, and then return any unused fund or come up with detailed plan with costs in advance.).

Margo stressed that regardless of how we request funds, a rather detailed plan would be advantageous and would make the whole project easier to implement. She again stressed that there is plenty of time, so no need to rush the planning.

One possible use of these funds and a resource to look into is something that Brattleboro and Guilford have been partnering on for some time. They have a program called “Window Dressers” where they solicit volunteer contractors and others to build window inserts for lower income persons to help Winterize their homes and make them “tighter”. While it might not be a program that Marlboro could do alone, joining the partnership might be an avenue to investigate, and then the “mini-Grant” funds could be used to help publicize the program. A definite item for the Energy Commission/Coordinators to look into and research.

\$500,000 Implementation Grants:

Current Status: Application process has not been finalized or released yet. WRC stands ready to assist with the application once it becomes available.

Scope: Details are still being worked out as to what the Implementation Grant could cover, but it does seem to relate to Town Facilities. Future Grant opportunities might

State/WRC Energy Resilience Program Margo Ghia Meeting Notes: Page Three

focus on more “resident-focused” opportunities. Margo said that she would be on the lookout for opportunities where the Town could set up a fund to assist lower-income families.

Margo again stressed that anything detailed in the Assessment report would automatically qualify for one of these Implementation Grants (all other things being equal). Once more information on the Implementation grants is released there will be more information available to review and discuss.

Revolving Credit Program:

Phase Four of this program will be a Revolving Credit Fund that Towns and Municipalities will be able to access. This Revolving Fund will provide loans and as these loans are paid back the money will become available once again. Details on this fund are still being determined and will be provided once they have been finalized.