

## Minutes

### Town Of Marlboro Select Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 6:00pm (Date changed from 2/13 due to weather)

**Attendees:** Molly Welch – Chair; Jeff Skramstad – Vice Chair; Kate Kirkwood – Member; Andrew Richardson – Road Supervisor; Nick Morgan – Town Admin/SB Assistant; Mike Purcell & Diana Todd – HPC, Linda & Don Fuhrman – Residents.

#### **BEGIN ZOOM RECORDING:**

**Call to Order @ 6:02pm**

**Sign Guidelines of Conduct - Done**

#### **Regular Select Board Meeting Agenda**

Identify Any Changes to Agenda: None

#### **Scheduled Business:**

Unscheduled Open Public Comment: None

Approval of Minutes from January 23, 2025 – **(Welch/Skramstad – Passed unanimously)**

Approval of Minutes from January 27, 2025 – **(Welch/Kirkwood – Passed unanimously)**

Signature of Pay Orders - Done

Document Signatures & Approvals

- Approve Special License for Colonel Williams Inn to cater “Mudfling” on 3/1/25 **(Welch/Skramstad – Passed unanimously)**
- Sign the yearly VT State Marlboro Highway Mileage Certificate - Done

#### **New Business**

##### **Review & Approval of Hogback Management Plan:**

Diana Todd, Head of the HMPUC Committee & HPC member, came to the Board (Mike Purcell also joined) to make the final presentation of the Update Hogback Management Plan, developed over the past 18 months by the HMPUC committee, to the Board for final approval before implementation. Diana reviewed that the purpose of the HMPUC and the new management plan was in response to the recognized need to update the management plan of the Hogback property. Further noting that HMPUC was formed to develop such a plan, with that finalized plan being presented today. The Management Plan (which will be available on the town website) has been reviewed and approved by the HMCA, HPC, and the Vermont Land Trust. And now only needs the Select Board’s approval to be put into effect. Rather than go through the entire plan (over 70 pages), Diana prepared a detailed summary of the main points and reviewed this with the Board. Diana outlined the major components of the plan as follows (*a copy of the summary/major points has been included with these minutes as an addendum*):

- Forrest maintenance
- Recreation management
- Cultural management (specifically management of historic buildings and sites)
- Permissions on use of the conservation area

After this review and questions on particulars from the Board, the Board advised Diana that they approve of the plan and passed the following motion: **Motion: To approve and accept the Hogback Management Plan (dated 2/4/25) as presented by the HMPUC. (Welch/Kirkwood – Passed unanimously)**

**Review of AAR with Emergency Management team (Jay & Keats) & Taiga Christie – Tabled to 2/27/25.**

##### **Accounting for Treasurer’s time doing Treasurer activities for the School Board:**

Out of curiosity the Board reviewed the amount of time and travel expenses the Treasurer’s activities for the School Board, outside of her statutory duties the Town was covering. As the amount was small (a little over \$2,000/year), the Board decided that this was a non-issue, and there was no need to try to recover these expenses. Noting however, should the amount grow, reconsideration can be taken.

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### Highway Department

*New Hire* - Andrew announced that he has hired DJ Bell, to bring the Road Crew up to its full authorized compliment of members, noting that DJ has a CDL-B license, has extensive truck driving experience as well as private snow plowing experience, and that DJ will start out at a salary rate of \$21.00/hour.

This discussion of DJ Bell's hiring did spur a brief discussion of the progress Vice-Chair Jeff Skramstad's creation of a pay scale for all town employees that will cover and standardize yearly raises in addition to the standard yearly COLA increase. Jeff reported that he is close to finalizing this scale and should be ready to present it to the Board for approval shortly.

### *Plowing of Town Office/MCC Parking lot(s) by Town Highway Dept:*

The Board and Andrew discussed the pros & cons of having a private snow plower handle plowing the municipal parking lot at the town office & MCC. Based on last year's current budget estimates, the cost is a little above or below \$2,500/year. The Board asked Andrew why the Highway Department could not handle the lot, saving this sum. Andrew noted the following:

- Due to priorities (plowing the town roads) the Highway Department would probably not be able to get to the parking lot until after it was already being used by residents, causing difficulty in a complete plow, possibly requiring several different visits to fully clear the lot.
- The current plowing is being done with a "loader" allowing for the snow to be moved out of the way, keeping all spots open.
- The leech field in front of the MCC presents potential for disaster if the large plow trucks are used to plow the lot.
- The cost involved with the current plowing arrangement is very low and minor when compared to other costs the town is carrying (he noted both the expense for the WSWMD & the Recycling Center).

After discussing these points, the sense of the Board was that there was no need to change the current status of plowing the Municipal Parking Lot, and the topic was put aside for the time, and possibly be reviewed after the Winter.

### *Discussion on developing sole sourcing program:*

There has been discussion about creating a "sole sourcing" program within the town's Purchasing Policy. Nick provided information on the regulatory aspects and what would need to be done to institute such a policy. It was discussed that the current policy allows purchases under \$25,000 to be handled by single bid (if desired), with purchases above this amount requiring multiple bids. After discussion about having detailed requirements for products (sand, rock, and other materials) so that should multiple bids be required, the bids are for products of equal quality, and for product quality being a factor in the decision-making process. As creating a "sole sourcing" would be very involved and take many hours/days of time and money, it was decided to set aside this idea for now.

### *General Updates:*

Andrew reported that the truck had been fixed and ready for use.

### **Motion to move to Executive Session to discuss personnel issues @ 7:20p (Welch/Skramstad – Passed unanimously)**

Executive Session

### **Motion to return to regular order @ 7:50p (Welch/Skramstad – Passed unanimously)**

- Any actions resulting from executive session – none needed.

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### **Old Business**

7:55-8:10p Status update on Personnel Policy re-write

Molly – General

Nick – Adjustments to Paid Holiday, Family Leave, & Work-Place Environment

#### Town Administrator Report:

*UPDATE: WSWMD plan to look to negotiate hauling deal for member towns* – Nick reported on the meeting between the WSWMD and area towns regarding the high costs from Casella for recycling and how the initial idea to have individual towns request RFPs from Casella was not the best way to work this issue. Rather, have the WSWMD do a group RFP for member towns to maximize the town's leverage in getting a better rate (mostly the "tip" rate) from Casella. The WSMD agreed that this would probably be a better way to go and committed to writing up an RFP for those towns who wanted to participate. Nick noted that several towns had decided to pass, and asked the Board if they wanted to continue, for the time being, in this group to negotiate a new deal with Casella. Nick also advised that he had been advised that Goodenough (who had previously handled Marlboro's recycling and pretty good rates but had dropped Marlboro due to a lack of drivers, was fully staffed and might be able to take Marlboro on again. Nick took the action item to reach out to Goodenough to see what possibilities there might be.

The Board then briefly discussed that due to the high cost (close to \$40,000 in 2025), there may be a need to present the information to the residents on next year's Town Warning and put it to a vote whether to continue to maintain a recycling depot or close it down and direct people to the Brattleboro or Wilmington transfer station(s). Molly also suggested possibly considering the purchase of a "car sticker" to be able to use the recycling center (noting that enforcement would be difficult, but it could raise some funds to support the recycling center). The sense of the Board was that this probably should be brought up for next year's Warning, as, as Kate expressed, it is important that the residents know what maintaining the recycling depot costs.

*Status update on Personnel Policy re-write* – Molly noted that she had gathered more information and was moving along with the re-write and was hopeful to have something to present to the Board at the next meeting.

*General Informational Updates* – Nick reminded the Board about the upcoming info meeting on 2/22/25 and asked if the Board members could get to the school around 1:15p or so to help set up chairs etc. Nick also noted that the purpose of the meeting is truly informational, as the Board will go over each article, answering any questions, but also making people realize that the Ballots have already gone out and no changes are possible. Molly agreed to act as moderator to keep things moving.

**Motion to Adjourn @ 7:59p (Welch/Kirkwood – Passed unanimously)**

## Diana Todd Summary of Hogback Management Plan: Page One

- Why did we update the Plan?
  - No rigid update schedule is required
  - had been over 10 years since original was created in 2010
  - new topics had come up that hadn't been dealt with in 2010
    - examples: e-bikes, drones
  - original plan based on total unknowns
    - would the trails be overrun?
    - what does the land contain? are there special areas that need protection?
  - professional Biodiversity Inventory done in 2018-2019 – we now know what's there
- How did we update the Plan?
  - formed ad hoc subcommittee of the HPC, including members of HPC and HMCA
  - met twice a month for over a year-and-a-half
  - informed the public that process was underway via FPF
  - updated full HPC and HMCA on progress at their regular meetings
  - shared drafts with VLT when key sections were drafted
    - why do they review? they are essentially co-owners
  - as draft neared completion, did even more outreach
    - invited Cons Comm and Marlboro Hist Comm to review and comment
    - display at Town Fair, collected comments
    - held two widely publicized public outreach meetings
      - walk-and-talk on the mountain
      - indoor evening session
  - final reviews
    - outreach to HMCA
    - review by full HPC (our parent committee)
    - final review and approval by VLT and VHCB
  - Select Board has ultimate authority, and we're asking that you now formally adopt the plan.
- What's changed in the updated Plan?
  - Forest Management
    - previous plan called for using timber harvests to raise funds, but no work was ever done
    - this plan
      - says raising money can't be the goal of active forest management
      - also says that passive management (doing nothing) is not appropriate
        - some parts of the forest are in poor health – due to abusive harvests in the past and current challenges from pests and climate change
        - other parts are in fine shape and should be left untouched
      - calls for creation of a formal Forest Management Plan by July 2026
        - active management will focus on improving regeneration, dealing with climate change, supporting wildlife
        - there will be opportunities for public review before, and educational tours during and after.
      - calls for active management of invasive species – something that wasn't even mentioned in the previous plan.

## Diana Todd Summary of Hogback Management Plan: - Page Two

- All forest management efforts involve cutting at least some trees.
  - Those logs can be sold.
  - Many of the efforts will generate enough sale-able logs to pay for themselves.
  - Some will not, and will require paying the contractor to do the work.
  - Any excess funds generated by log sales should be set aside to be used for other work on Hogback, not go into the General Fund.
- Recreation Management
  - Original plan was very worried about overuse, and called for limits on where bikes and skiers could go – but those limits were never posted on kiosks or even on the website! So the trails were essentially open to all uses. There has been over 14 years of use – no overuse or abuse, no conflicts between user groups.
  - Therefore, no need to retain the restrictive (but unknown) use limitations.
  - Future development of recreation?
    - Stated intent is to NOT end up with recreation trails crisscrossing the entire property. Leave large swaths without trails.
    - Concentrate recreation within the former ski area, and within the current area of trails on the north side of Route 9
    - Allow light clearing of former ski slopes and lift lines to open ski-able routes – note that these are not hiking trails.
  - Drones and wildlife cameras are banned (weren't mentioned in previous plan).
  - E-bikes are allowed.
- Cultural History Management
  - previous plan didn't make any decisions about the buildings
  - this plan calls for First Aid Building and Benedict Cottage to be demolished.
  - Quonset Hut and The Castle to be lightly maintained as shelters for hikers/skiers
    - but recognizes that they will decay and eventually need to be removed
- Facility Use Agreements
  - In the past, HMCA, the school, and the Museum didn't need to ask for formal Facility Use Agreements to hold events on Hogback.
  - As of this plan, all groups or events that “trigger” a permit application will need a formal permit. SB is the permit issuing authority for town properties.
  - Expect to get more requests than in the past.
  - We're encouraging HMCA and the Museum to apply for all permits for entire year at one time – to limit work for everyone.