

Town of Lincoln
Selectboard Regular Meeting
May 7, 2024

{Draft} Meeting Minutes

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/lfoLsDQzdlXkfZyexN3cu-47XclGQUeETDsb0i_gJOwIkrQqEUJffS7vsv2y1VMP.T6ALokI-nSGN3VbC?startTime=1715121040000

Vote format: YES/NO/Vacant, Absent, Abstention, Recusal

Called to order at 6:30 PM by Tim McGowan, Chair.

Present: Amanda Allen, Victor Atkins, Joe Martell, Conor McDonough

Other officials present: Van Talmage, Treasurer; Kristyn Brady, Selectboard Assistant; Rhonda Hutchins, Lincoln Historical Society; Wendy McIntosh, Lincoln Library; Dr. Amy Cole, Lincoln School District (Zoom)

Public present: Dan Guy, Caleb Casco (Zoom), Stephen John Teach (Zoom), Marilyn Ganahl (Zoom)

Public Comment

Van commended the Selectboard for leadership of the highway department during the interim period. Dan agreed and mentioned that other residents have commented that the roads have improved.

Agenda

MOTION by Conor, 2nd by Amanda to approve the agenda as written.
PASSED 5/0/0

Updates and Reports

Cemetery Maintenance Project Update

- Librarian Wendy McIntosh shared that the Lincoln Library often collaborates with the Historical Society and has been helping to feature the different organizations in town and their activities. Recently they have put up a display with stories from each of the seven cemeteries in town. [Kathryn Wyatt](#) is taking pictures in all the locations.
- There is considerable interest in our town cemeteries. Some sites have fallen into disrepair, and organizations have volunteered to help. There is a line item of \$700 in the town report for “care of cemeteries” in FY2024 and FY2025 but it seems that hasn’t been used yet.
- Wendy and Rhonda asked that these funds be administered as budgeted in the town report and that there be a plan in place to clean up five cemeteries over the next few years: Merrill Cemetery off Quaker St.; Friends Cemetery – the old Quaker Cemetery – off Quaker St.; Johnson Cemetery off the Lincoln Gap Rd near Murray Rd; Pope Cemetery behind the Historical Society building; and Eubar-Odett Cemetery at the top of French Settlement Rd.
- The Selectboard would be in charge of hiring support to do the work, but volunteers would help that investment go further. Tim recommended coordinating with the Historical Society and others

to identify top priorities. Victor heard years ago that they were all supposed to be mowed once a year, and in some years neighbors have helped out. The SB will put together a plan for discussion in a future meeting.

Treasurer Update

- On the warrant up for approval tonight is a \$1M+ tax disbursement to the school. The education tax will be set in July and new tax bills will go out in August – Van warned that people will be concerned. It might be a good idea for Board members to get a refresh on how the town finances, school funding, and town-wide reassessment will all play into the future tax rate.
- Also on the warrant tonight are the constable reimbursements, and there's a change: In the past, we have put this money in a liability account to go toward the two constables' taxes, but Matt Collins has requested a check this year. Van raised the question about whether the Selectboard should review the policy on how this is handled and make any changes. Should it move to a monthly payment? Discussion was tabled for now and the current payments were approved with the warrant.
- Also on the warrant is the refund of some overpaid taxes. Our policy is that we don't have to issue refunds, but the balance rolls over to go toward that resident's taxes next year. There are large amounts for six people, and we're offering to return the money to them now vs hold it. Tim asked if there's a better way to process the payments so that these errors occur less often. Van thought not at this point. He offered to communicate with everyone who has a credit, no matter the amount, because it won't show up on their next tax bill, due to limitations of our payment processing platform. He'll offer residents the option of asking for a refund or putting the balance toward next year's taxes. Amanda said we need to deal with it in an equitable way so that everyone is treated fairly, and the threshold for refund isn't arbitrary. Kristyn will work with Van to get a form letter out.
- There is an ARPA warrant for Conor to sign tonight with all recent payments. There are only two projects remaining that require payment when the town is invoiced.

Highway Update

- Gravel has been hauled to Ripton Rd, West Hill, Geary, Mill Rd, and more.
- Wayne is going up to the Gap Road next week to prepare for the May 15 opening. He will take down the 'Gap Road Closed' signs that day.
- What was used for hot patch hasn't worked great on the West Lincoln potholes, but we can't get any cold patch right now.
- Garage door repair is not scheduled yet. There was an error on the measurements and new doors had to be ordered.
- Tim would like to buy the highway crew some lunch for the job well done while hiring is going on.
- Dan Guy brought up the grading that took place on Elder Hill while there was still snow on the ground. He says there are now new puddles on the shoulder where the rain can't get off the road. Joe said they're slowly getting the crown of the road back to where it should be, so this will be remedied when that has been done.

Current Business and Authorizations

Accept FY23 Audit Report

- Van requested some kind of approval of the audit report, just thanking them for the work they've done and accepting their findings. They looked at our books and we're in good standing.

- The Town is not likely to work with this auditing firm again and will need to put out an RFP for a new firm.
- Van would like the SB to clarify what are the audit requirements and whether we need to change the system to match what the auditors do with fixed assets, pensions, deferred funds, adjusting journal entries, and government activities. It could come up again with another firm. It's not critical to pursue it this month or next month, but we would need a work session to get started.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Conor to accept the fiscal year 2023 audit report as drafted.
PASSED 5/0/0

Access Permit #24-029

- Applicant: Kristina Stykos
- Location: French Settlement Rd (no 911)
- Description: Access to barn from previous existing non-permitted access at schoolbus turnaround.
- Joe, Steve Gutowski, and Wayne Preston went to look at the site and would like to add to the "Conditions and Restrictions" section of the permit that they can't park in the bus turnaround once this access is established. The town will provide a no parking and/or schoolbus turnaround sign.

MOTION by Conor, 2nd by Amanda to approve access permit #24-029 with the conditions added.
PASSED 5/0/0

Hydraulic Study Proposals for Sugar Bush Hill Bridge

- The town was notified a few weeks ago that it would need to complete a hydraulic study before any repairs could be made and likely this step will help the town secure additional federal and/or state grant funding for the work.
- Two proposals came in from Fitzgerald Environmental Associates, LLC for \$7,500 and from Otter Creek Engineering for \$17,500.
- The deadline to apply for federal Hazard Mitigation Program funding is June 21. The town will pay out of pocket for the study, but it would help us apply for the funds and could be reimbursed later through the grant.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Conor to accept the hydraulic study proposal from and go under contract with Fitzgerald Environmental Associates, LLC.
PASSED 5/0/0

Website Services Contract

- New 3-year contract from Catalis (rebranded from GovOffice) is for the same annual rate of \$3,150 and includes a website refresh that could help improve user experience.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Conor to approve the 3-year contract with Catalis for website services supporting lincolnvermont.org.
PASSED 5/0/0

Plan for Leftover Lincoln School District ARPA Funds

MOTION by Conor, 2nd by Tim to approve reallocation of the leftover Lincoln School District ARPA funds from the dishwasher project for the previously approved multi-purpose room floor project.
PASSED 5/0/0

Accounts Payable & Payroll Warrants

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to approve **AP-24/45 for \$1,145,172.93** [includes a \$1,088,517.13 tax disbursement to the Lincoln School District; \$12,733.48 in refunds for overpaid taxes; \$10,594.99 for fuel; \$7,478.14 for gravel; and \$3,600 for constable reimbursements.]

PASSED 5/0/0

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Joe to approve **PR-24/42 for \$5,725.08** [pay period ending 4/13/24], **PR-24/43 for \$5,160.67** [pay period ending 4/20/24], and **PR-24/44 for \$4,090.53** [pay period ending 4/27/24]

PASSED 5/0/0

Previous Meeting Minutes

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Victor to approve SB meeting minutes for 4/16/24 regular meeting, 4/19/24 special meeting, 4/27/24 special meeting.

PASSED 4/0/1 (Conor abstained)

New Business

- There will be a Lincoln Mentors Appreciation event at Willards Woods, and Tim has spoken to Anna Howell about the details of parking and cleanup.
- ATV use on Lincoln roads:
 - Joe wants to know if the Selectboard could OK ATV use on the roads, riders are using roads now, and it might avoid private property damage.
 - Victor asked about an ATV association we could talk to. Amanda asked about speed regulations and implications for the town. Joe believed the store would get more business from ATV recreators. Dan Guy shared that there are more trail systems in other towns that do this. Victor pointed out that we do have a lot of residents who own and use ATVs on the roads now. We could make it legal for them to do that and require registration and plates.
 - Dan spoke about a neighbor whose gate posts were removed by ATV users to gain access to private property. He also said road use might not lower the instance of private property damage. Signage is often ignored.
 - There was discussion of whether the constables can step up, but Conor shared that Matt Collins has previously said that it isn't possible for him to regulate ATV use.
 - Amanda pointed out that we'd need to collect feedback from the town. She asked if there might be safety implications or risk of more fatalities. Victor suggested voting at a future town meeting. We could also contact other towns to ask how they've handled it and whether there are benefits or risks, including increased road maintenance.
 - Marilyn Ganahl shared two experiences with 4X4 users crashing on her property, one resulting in death. Others have had children/young people needing to be pulled out of ditches on private property. Lincoln relies on state police for regulation. She would strongly discourage having off-road vehicles speeding around roads where there's no enforcement.
 - Dan strongly urged the SB to put up a sign where private property meets Willards Woods and there is ATV use across that town property maintained by the Lincoln Conservation Commission. That's a beautiful piece of property and it's a shame someone is abusing it. Victor and Joe questioned whether that might stop if there was legal road use as another option.

- Selectboard will do more research, make a plan to take the pulse of the town. Victor will make a list of towns that allow it and we'll go from there.
- Discuss Lister transition plan/hiring plan for Assessor
 - Conor reminded the group that the town budgeted for FY2025 knowing Lisa Truchon would be retiring and based on the idea that NEMRC could provide someone for a higher cost. Tim will reach out to NEMRC. Amanda flagged that a main concern is having some overlap between Lisa and the new person to help with onboarding.
- Other business, concerns, ideas, etc.
 - Conor will look into who installed the Willards Woods gate and how we could make it more handicap accessible.
 - Brian McDonough emailed asking if the town could provide some gravel for the left side of the Burnham Hall exit. It's not a town building but it is a town asset that we all use. Joe will take a look at the spot to see how much gravel is needed. Everyone felt comfortable with Wayne handling.

Appointments and Employment

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Conor to enter executive session regarding the appointment, employment, or evaluation of a public officer or employee. 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3)
PASSED 5/0/0

Entered executive session at 8:20 PM.
 Exited executive session at 9:27 PM.

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Conor to hire Will Mathis as full-time Highway Supervisor and Chris Bapp as full-time Highway Maintenance Worker.
PASSED 5/0/0

MOTION by Tim, 2nd by Conor to adjourn at 9:30 PM.
PASSED 5/0/0

Respectfully submitted: Kristyn Brady