

Village of Derby Line, Vermont
Trustees Meeting
March 28, 2023
Derby Line Village Hall

Call to Order:

Present were Trustees Richard Creaser, Sandra Harrower-Garratt and Sarah Webster
Also, present were Dustin Horne, Karen Jenne, Joe Queenin, Crystal Wood, and Laurie Sanville, Village Clerk.

The regular meeting was called to order by Trustee Richard Creaser at 6:30 pm.

Additions or Deletions to the agenda: None

Sandra made a motion to waive the reading of Rules of Procedure. Sarah seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of the March 7, 2023 Regular Trustees Meeting:

Sarah made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 7, 2023, meeting as written and previously corrected.
Sandra seconded. Motion carried.

Village of Stanstead Sewer Budget for 2023:

Richard reported that in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Stanstead and Derby Line of August, 2022 Stanstead was supposed to provide us a projected budget at least by December. However, they did not. Laurie called them after our budget was finalized as per an incorrect budget Stanstead provided in February 2023 and found that that preliminary budget was incorrect. The correct budget, which we now have, is significantly higher due to the electrical requirements of the technology that Stanstead chose for the new treatment plant. The electrical costs for this membrane technology are 2 ½ times higher than other systems. Our engineers had suspected this from the beginning and stated they would never have chosen this system, but Stanstead nevertheless did choose it. Richard's research found that electrical costs will increase by 137%. All other line items in their budget have either gone down or stayed the same except for electricity. Consequently, in Canadian funds, our share of the sewer budget went from \$64,950.00 to \$99,293.53. Rates will now go from the \$86.00 per quarter (previously approved) to \$109.00 per quarter, or an increase of \$23.00 per quarter. Next year the rates will most likely go up even higher because at that point we will be also paying for our share of the bond. This will all be explained to voters at the annual meeting after providing them each with a copy of the revised sewer budget. Karen suggested going door-to-door to find out if any households have business activities in their homes for which extra could be charged. Richard noted the value of this but suggested that home businesses that do not have extra people using services at these locations should not be charged. This type of survey can be done later as it can be a useful tool in knowing the true commercial impact on water and sewer rates. Sarah suggested looking over the Water Ordinance before such a survey is done. Richard asked Laurie to place it on the agenda for the second April meeting so that it does not conflict with the annual meeting of April 4, 2023. Richard clarified that the number of users in Derby Line does not affect the amount we are required to pay Stanstead. What we pay Stanstead is exactly half of their budget for sewer and the number of users does not change that figure. Richard also explained that Hydro Quebec has multiple rate structures, but no explanation of how a municipality or user goes from one tier to another. They do, however, have systems in place, like Efficiency Vermont, to help users reduce their usage. Yet, this treatment plant is not ours so we have no control over how it is managed.

Karen asked if quarterly reports have been received from Stanstead. Richard stated that Stanstead did not provide these nor did we pursue them. So, both municipalities did not follow through with the requirements of the MOU. He also suggested that we start out with quarterly or semi-annual reports and re-evaluate the timing as time goes on. Sarah has discussed having a face-to-face meeting with the Stanstead Board to again agree on the requirements of the MOU and to set better communication between the two Boards. Dates provided her by Jean-Charles Bellemare when he is available are April 12, 13, 20, and 26. April 12th or 26th are preferable for Richard. Sarah will set up with Bellemare and advise Laurie. This will be an open meeting with date, time and location to be announced in advance.

Revision of Sewer Rate:

Sarah made a motion to increase the quarterly rate for sewer from \$86.00 to \$109.00. Sandra seconded. Motion carried.

Grants for ADA Compliant Restroom in Village Hall:

Sarah reported that she has appointments with several grantors to discuss possible available grants. She will report on this at a future meeting.

Recreation Committee:

Dustin Horne introduced those willing to serve on this committee: Joe Queenin and Crystal Wood, who were present, and Donna Griffin, Will Kulakowski and Eilish Quirion, who were not present. Their goal is to get ideas on events that can be held starting with easier ones to see what can be successful. This would be an Advisory Committee that will present these ideas to the Trustees. Richard suggested having only one person be the point of contact between the committee and the Trustees.

Regarding the new skating rink and shed, Richard noted that because of the amount of usage seen in the short time the rink was up and running, it is probably worth making the investment for sub-floor and boards for next year.

Dustin has agreed to speak about the Recreation Committee at the annual meeting so that people can know how they can get involved. After the committee is underway and they have some concrete information to offer, a letter will be sent to residents advising them of their plans. He also asked about a village ordinance that would cover fees and requirements of food and music vendors. This will be researched and Richard suggested that the committee apprise the Trustees of plans as soon as possible so that they can decide if they are logistically possible, especially when it comes to using employees for set-up of events either after hours or if taking them away from their regular village duties.

The topic of possibly renting out the warming shed to vendors either for one-time event or for a season was discussed. Richard noted that he would be willing to only allow non-profits to use it as letting for-profit businesses use it would go against the fact that the shed was donated for the village and not for commercial purposes. Sarah suggested that we create clear guidelines to follow.

Sarah reported on the success of the ribbon-cutting of the new warming shed/skating rink with approximately 60 people there.

Village Vendor Permit:

Richard provided a first draft of a vendor permit, which will be discussed at the regular April 18, 2023, meeting. One-time event permits and/or season-wide permits will be discussed as well as the number of same type of vendor. Also to be determined is whether or not vendor fees should be waived for inaugural events so that the vendors can determine if a particular event is worth their time and effort. A fee structure needs to be set for for-profit and non-profit organizations. Sarah offered to reach out to other communities and vendors for information about fees and other requirements.

Tetherball and Ballet Bar:

It was decided that as soon as the weather permits and the snow is gone, the tetherball unit and ballet bar will be installed in the park.

Business from Trustees, Treasurer and Road Foreman:

Field Trip to Sewage Treatment Plant: Sarah has been in contact with Jean Charles Bellemare about setting up a visit to the new plant. He has agreed to also have their Aquatech representative there to explain in detail the workings of the plant. He will provide Sarah with dates, which she will relay to the Board.

Better Communication: Sarah asked that everyone involved in village business try very hard to communicate in a better organized way so that all are apprised of updates.

New Business from the Audience:

Karen suggested that all meetings and events be advertised on social media with as much advance notice as possible.

She also mentioned that people are again parking on public sidewalks.

She also asked about the property tax rate for the coming year. Laurie advised that at this time she can only estimate what the new tax rate will be based on the present grand list.

Old business from the Audience (5-minute limit unless otherwise directed): None

Next Meeting: The annual meeting will be on April 4, 2023, and the next regular meeting will be on April 18, 2023 both in the village hall at 6:30 p.m.

Executive Session: None

Review and Sign Bank Statement: No

Warrants were Reviewed and Signed: Yes

The Last Check Printed: #17753

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Madeleine C. Roy, Assistant Village Clerk