

**TOWN OF VASS
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RETREAT MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 19, 2013**

The Retreat Meeting was called to order by Mayor Callahan at 3:00 p.m. Commissioners in attendance were: Blackwell, Bridgers, Callahan, Cirone and Kellis.

A. Clerk Replacement

Board members discussed the process to recruit, hire and train a replacement for the current Town Administrator/Clerk who will be retiring in June 2014. A proposed ad was reviewed. It was decided to begin advertising on November 1 with a deadline for applications of November 30. Applications would be reviewed and interviews take place hopefully during December 2013 and a possible hire date of mid-January.

There was considerable discussion as to the salary range for the position and if a range should be listed in the ad. It was suggested that the ad not list a range but say depending on qualifications.

B. Staff Salary Increases

Town Administrator brought up the fact that Andy Layton, Maintenance Technician, comes in every Sat. and Sun. to check out the park and the bathrooms at the park and does not get paid for his hours. After considerable discussion it was determined that he would record his hours on his time sheet and either take time off during the following week or be compensated for the extra hours.

Chief Deel said his officers have asked how they move up the salary range for their position. Commissioner Kellis asked why we didn't use Salary Steps that would move employees up each year. He was informed that the steps were eliminated in September 2011 when the Personnel Manual was revised because no one ever used the steps and the only raises employees have received in the last three years have been a 2.5% cola in July 2010. Commissioner Cirone felt that employees should be kept up with the cola each year. Commissioners said these items should have been discussed before the 2013-14 budget was determined. Commissioner Cirone and Commissioner Callahan were to review the current Personnel Manual as it relates to salary increases or moving up within the range and report back with a recommendation at the November regular meeting.

C. Economic Development

Town Administrator said the Mayor had written a letter to the director of the Small Town Main Street program to see if we could get some assistance in coming up with a new logo and slogan for the town. To date we have not received a response.

Mayor Callahan said he would try to get some of the business owners in town to join a committee to discuss the possibilities of revitalizing Seaboard Street.

Town Administrator said she would like the Planning Consultant, Kathy Liles, to work with DENR and see what we can do with our watershed requirements and still be able to have increased density for development. Board members agreed.

D. Beautification

Commissioner Cirone again stated her wish for sidewalks in town and proposed contacting individuals in various neighborhoods to poll them as to whether they might consider a 5 cent additional property tax to be specifically set aside for sidewalks. Mayor Callahan said he would join her in that effort.

Decorative streetlights for the downtown Seaboard Street area and a town clock were items also suggested.

They also said that in order for the town to grow it needed to project a better image both in residential and commercial districts by greater code enforcement. Town Administrator said she was going to a workshop on code enforcement on October 2 and hopes to get more knowledge on code enforcement as it pertains to non-residential buildings.

E. Cultural and Recreation

Chief Deel said that it is his hope that the Harvest Festival will be the first step in generating a sense of community and plans for more events.

Board members said there are many improvements that need to be made at the park. The siding on the concession stand at the park needs to be replaced as does the wood behind it. The building needs to be more secure before the camera equipment can be installed.

They would like to see the torn netting on the US # 1 side of the park taken down and not replaced at this time.

Also, the tennis court net may need to be replaced.

Upgrades at the Memorial Garden. Town Administrator informed the group that we need to look at replacing the benches at the Memorial Garden and need to do something with the parking area as the railroad ties outlining the area are rotten and falling apart. Also we had spoken over a year ago about replacing the sign, but the quote that was received was over \$900. Mayor Callahan said he would look into the cost of a new sign.

F. Other Miscellaneous Items Past and Present

Town Administrator questioned what to do with the Vass Family Portraits that have been in storage at the library since 2006 when we began building the new Municipal Building. Commissioner Callahan asked why they could not be placed in the Community Room. He was informed that because the room is rented out the possibility of the portraits being damaged

makes it impossible to put them in there unless they were enclosed in Plexiglas cases. Board members felt they should be brought back to the Municipal Building and put up in the offices and hallway that are not open to the public.

In November 2011 there was mention of a sign in front of the plantings at the town hall honoring the Vass Womans Club. Mayor Callahan said he would investigate when he follows up on replacing the sign at the Memorial Garden.

Benches on the porch at the Town Hall. Town Administrator is to check with Roy Grant to see if he might make benches for the Town Hall and the Memorial Garden.

Parking lot at the Town Hall needs to be sealed and restriped. Town Administrator is to get quotes for the job.

A resident of Scott Ave. between Front and South Street wants street repaved. This street has never been repaved in the 20 years she has lived there. Town Administrator informed the group that it was one of the streets we asked Riley Paving for a quote on during the 2012-2013 budget year and the price was \$18,625. The Board chose to repave South Street instead. Town Administrator to check with Riley again for an updated quote and when it could be done.

G. Fund Balance

The question, as always, is where will the money come from to do all of these projects? The available fund balance as of June 30, 2013 is \$417,377, which is 60.41 percent of our expenses. The Local Government Commission's recommended minimum is 8% of expenses. The fund balance is not supposed to be used for ongoing operations. Town Administrator is to look at other towns to come up with a Fund Balance Policy as to the percent to keep in reserve.

Adjournment

Commissioner Bridgers made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

TOWN OF VASS

Henry E. Callahan, Mayor

Attest: _____
Josephine E. Smith, Clerk