

Combined Selectboard/Trustee/VLCT Meeting on Rasputitsa Bike Race
December 13, 2023
Westfield Community Center
Minutes

Board/Trustee Members present:

Westfield: Jacques Couture

Newport Town: Steve Barrup, Roger Gosselin

Lowell: Wayne Richardson, Jennifer Blay

Jay: Dave Sanders, Tara Morse, Le-Ann Tetrault

Troy: Gaston Bathalon, Robert Langlands, Anne Quiron

North Troy: Terri Medley, Helen Croteau, Holly Ross

VLCT: Kelly Knotek (via zoom), Phill Woodward (via zoom)

Also Present: Pat Sanders, LaDonna Dunn, Lindsey Wight, Ellen Fox, Anthony Moccia (race coordinator)
Matt Wilson (Barton Chronicle)

I. Jacques called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A. Robert nominated Gaston Bathalon seconded by Tara to be the acting chair representing the combined group of Towns. Gaston was nominated unanimously. Gaston asked Jacques to continue chairing this meeting and Jacques agreed.

II. Overview of Race by Anthony Moccia

- A. The event is scheduled for April 20, 2024 however, it will be a three day event with the actual race being held on Saturday. There is no rain date since the race will be held regardless of the weather conditions. This year the race will be utilizing Jay Peak as its base of operations and event host. There will be a maximum of 1,500 riders.
- B. Anthony gave a brief history of the race which is heading into its ten year anniversary. It began in Newport City but has been held at Burke for the past number of years.
- C. For the actual event there will be 5 waves of approximately 300 riders each leaving from Jay Peak every 30 minutes. The course will be marked out approximately two days before the event to account for road closures or detours. Race coordinators will work with the towns to determine the conditions of the roads for use.
- D. Volunteers will be stationed throughout the course and there will be two scheduled stops for water and food.
- E. Informational mailers will be sent out to all Townspeople with pertinent race information. One week before the race there will be signs placed on the road warning traffic of the race date. As suggested by Tara, Anthony will send a brief article about the event to the Town Clerks to be put into all of the Town reports.
- F. Anthony mentioned that they are trying to emphasize that this is an event /rally NOT a race. The only prize awarded is for last place. He did mention that there is no way to dampen peoples' competitive spirit, but the race organizers constantly emphasize that all riders are expected to obey all of the rules of the road.

III. Discussion with questions and answers.

- A. Gaston emphasized the need for insurance by the event organizers and that the Towns want to make sure that they have no liability with regards to the event. Anthony assured the members present that they are willing to hold all liability and that volunteers will be covered under the event insurance, not the towns.
- B. Phil from VLCT described what insurance and liability coverage would be required and that the event would have to follow all bicycle standards with regards to the use of Town roads. NVDA recommends each of the municipalities be named as additionally insured by the sponsor. The primary liability need

to be on the sponsor of the event. Anthony will give Gaston the sponsor's insurance documents to be shared with the Towns.

- C. Jacques expressed his concern regarding the scheduling of the race during mud season and the amount of damage that could occur from the number of vehicles traveling the roads which includes bicycles as well as the volunteer's cars and motorcycles. He also expressed concern that damage to the roads may result in additional repair costs to the towns.
- D. Ellen and Lindsey expressed concern regarding environmental impacts that could occur as a result of the race such as excessive garbage and landscape disruption. Anthony indicated that the race organizers are trying to stay as green as possible with regards to environmental contamination. They try to use foods that are wrapping free (fruits, nuts, vegetables etc.) and water will be supplied from large water tanks rather than handing out plastic bottles. Clean –up crews will follow the racers and try to pick up as much debris as possible. The goal of the organizers is to have as little impact as possible and to leave as small a footprint as they can
- E. Discussion about the use of emergency services evolved around liability and how they would be utilized. Of the greatest concern was the liability for the towns that pay for those services and how that could be transferred to the race organizers.
- F. Anthony mentioned that the race organizers would like to work closely with town personnel and the town road crews to identify safety hazards on the individual roads and where volunteers need to be stationed.
- G. Anthony is working on obtaining all of the permits he needs from VTrans and mentioned that he needs letters of support from each of the Towns granting Rasputitsa Dirt permission to use the roads.

IV. Executive Session

- A. Wayne made a motion seconded by Richard to enter a finding that premature general public knowledge involving communication with council would place the public body at a substantial disadvantage. Motion passed unanimously.
- B. Jennifer made a motion seconded by Tara to enter into executive session for legal consultation and to invite the people still in the room to attend. Motion passed unanimously and the combined Boards entered into executive session at 7:08 p.m.
- C. Boards returned from executive session at 7:19 p.m.
- D. Gaston made a motion seconded by Lee-Ann that the Towns of Jay, Troy, Village of North Troy, Westfield, Lowell and Newport Town join together to develop a joint agreement with Rasputitsa Dirt to conduct an event on the towns' roads on April 2024; contingent upon a positive vote by each Selectboard at their next scheduled meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Schedule follow-up meet and future plans

- A. All Board members present felt that all expenses incurred by the Towns with the exception of some legal council should be passed on to the event organizers.
- B. The contract should include wording for the whole event weekend. Gaston will contact the Lawyer previously used by the town of Burke for his input and will work with VLCT/NVDA to draft a contract for review at the next meeting.
- C. Gaston will generate a list of possible dates for the next meeting. Tentatively Monday, January 8, 2024 works best for most Towns, however the emergency services and road commissioners need to be included.

VI. To Adjourn

- A. Holly made a motion to adjourn seconded by Richard and the meeting adjourned at 7: 45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Sanders