

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney, Vermont
Monday, December 21st, 2015
7:00 P.M.
REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES
APPROVED 1/4/2016

Select Board Members Present: N. John Arrison
Daniel Boyer
C. Peter Cole
Lynn Esty
David Fuller

Jim Mullen, Town Manager

Others Present:

Charles Horton	Edith Stillson	Mychael Spaulding	Mike Barrup
Wanda Gropler	Westley Hazeltine	Kelly Murphy	Darrin Spaulding
Bonnie DuPrey	Colin Butler	Amy Beth Main	Tracey Dauphin
Josh Dauphin			

1. Call to Order

Mr. Arrison called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

2. Comments from Select Board and Citizens on topics not on the agenda

Select Board

Mrs. Esty said she had misspoken at the last Select Board meeting – she said she remembered something differently from what was recorded – the vote on the fire truck was to put it back on the 2017 budget cycle for the long-term debt – it was not to do a bond vote – that vote is to take place at tomorrow’s Fire Commission meeting.

Mr. Fuller said that years ago there was a man named Henry Hicks in town. Mr. Hicks was one of the very few individuals who has helped this town a great deal. His estate left a large amount of money to the school to be used as an interest-bearing account, which spends thousands of dollars of interest a year (see the Town’s Trustees accounts). His great grandson is a young man named Karson Lewis, 23 years old. He lives on Chimney Ridge Road. His parents are Gary and Kim Lewis. All three (Lewis) sons grew up and went to school in Weathersfield. Karson was recently operated on for a cancerous brain tumor. He also had a stroke and has lost most of his vision. This young man needs the help that the hundreds of schoolchildren have received from the Hicks funds over the

years. A fund has been set up to assist with medical expenses – it can be found on Facebook. Mr. Fuller urged everyone to help.

Citizens

Darrin Spaulding asked the Select Board to place an article on the upcoming Town Meeting warrant that would call for disbanding the Fire Commission for one year on the grounds that both departments are now working together well, seats on the commission are difficult to fill, and both chiefs still have to come to Select Board meetings for various reports and such. Josh Dauphin concurred and added that the Fire Commission does not appear to play a strong role.

Mr. Arrison urged the chiefs to get this on a petition. He said it would be discussed at the next Select Board meeting. The Board will be meeting on January 4th and January 11th. January 14th is the last day that the Clerk's office will be open to receive petitions for Town Meeting. Mr. Mullen said that the Clerk asks for 125 signatures (119 are required). He offered to help with the wording.

3. Review minutes from previous meetings – December 9, 2015 Special Meeting

Motion: To accept the minutes of the special meeting of 12/9/2015.

Made by: Mr. Boyer **Second:** Mrs. Esty

Discussion: Mr. Fuller said that the meeting was warned as an executive session for personnel (Town Manager search), but the minutes do not say executive session. Mr. Arrison said the executive session was not called because it was not necessary (no one from the public was present). Mr. Cole said either way the topic of the meeting was the Town Manager's search. Bonnie DuPrey said that warning the meeting as an executive session was a way of telling people that they couldn't go (to the meeting). Mr. Arrison agreed that the agenda perhaps should have been printed a bit differently. He said if the public had showed up it (the meeting) would have been an executive session. Mr. Fuller also said that the minutes reflect that the discussion was about the search process and "related topics". He said he would like an opinion on the matter. Mr. Cole said an opinion would be helpful for future reference.

Vote: No vote was taken on this motion.

Motion: To table approval of the December 9th minutes.

Made by: Mr. Boyer **Second:** Mrs. Esty

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Review minutes from previous meetings – December 7, 2015 Regular Meeting

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. Mrs. Esty said that the last sentence under item 5b is incorrect ("except that it has no money in it") as there is money in this reserve fund. As this is what was actually stated at

the meeting, it was agreed that the minutes could not be changed, but that the record should show that the fire equipment reserve fund does indeed have money in it (\$7360).

Motion: To accept the minutes of the December 7th, 2015 meeting as written.

Made by: Mr. Boyer **Second:** Mr. Cole

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

4. Fire Services Evaluation – Cost of Evaluation

The consultant said at the last meeting (conference call) that to do the job properly it was going to take 100 hours. He has agreed to work at \$50/hour.

Motion: To increase the amount to be paid for the fire services evaluation up to \$5000.

Made by: Mr. Cole **Second:** Mr. Fuller

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

5. FY2017 Budget Review (with Budget Committee)

Budget committee member Amy Beth Main was present to assist in the discussions.

A. Review draft FY2017 Solid Waste Budget

Mr. Mullen said this budget is similar to the budget presented a couple of months ago when the punch ticket price was increased to \$3.50. The only real change comes from formal notification from Windham Solid Waste Management District (WSWMD), who claims to be in drastic financial shape and that they need to start charging the five out-of-district towns that use their services \$35/ton for disposal of their recyclables. Our agreement with them says that they will only charge us the transportation costs and not for recyclables. Mr. Mullen said that WSWMD appear to want to start charging in January, but there has been no formal notice of this.

Mr. Mullen said we send 300 tons/year to WSWMD. He said he budgeted 350 tons for next year. At \$35/ton, this comes to \$12,250. The whole Solid Waste budget is a quarter of a million dollars, so this amount is not a huge cost to absorb in terms of the total budget. This amount has been added to the budget and the budget balances without raising the punch ticket price above \$3.50 and without raising the per parcel price above \$38. Mr. Mullen said this could be re-examined in July when the tax rate is set and make any necessary adjustments at that time. (Every dollar raises \$1500.) Punches can be adjusted mid-year as well if needed.

Mr. Mullen talked with Richard Svec in Cavendish regarding their zero-sort program. It is obvious that we are moving toward zero-sort recycling and the Board will have to put out a request for proposals for handling our recyclables. The cost to get rid of recyclables through Casella is about \$27/ton. \$70/ton is charged when it is dumped at the facility in Rutland. The products are then sold on the spot market every month. Cavendish receives some of that revenue back, hence the net cost of \$27/ton. This is better than what we have been paying WSWMD. Mr. Mullen said

that WSWMD is slowly getting out of the recycling business. If they close, what will happen to our budget when we have to go out to bid for zero-sort? Mr. Mullen said that there is enough money in this budget to handle that based on the information from Cavendish.

Mr. Arrison asked if there is enough money in the reserve fund to set up another compactor. Ms. Main said there is \$59,162, but Mr. Mullen said \$25,000 of that is reserved for closure costs. The Town could ask the waste district across the street if they will provide a grant or a loan.

The budget committee will be proposing a policy to the Select Board at the meeting in January – no sticker, no entry to the transfer station. There is a 4:1 ration of people coming to transfer station and leaving without disposing of any trash (just recyclables). Therefore, the Town effectively pays the disposal cost. While this is not a big budget item, it is a principle.

The Swap Shop is also an issue. There are two employees at the station – one watches the recyclables, the other watches the compactor. No one watches the Swap Shop. People are dumping materials that really should be thrown away, thereby avoiding the punch ticket cost. Every Monday, Westley moves the junk to the C & D dumpster. Therefore, a portion of the C & D dumpster contains junk that the Town pays to dispose of. There were no immediate ideas of how to solve the problem.

Mr. Arrison said he would like to see data from a town with zero-sort but a larger population than Cavendish. Mr. Mullen said cardboard and glass could be collected separately as a cost-cutting measure. The RFP could state “zero-sort with options”. Mr. Mullen suggested looking at Cavendish’s RFP.

Mr. Fuller asked what the fund balance for solid waste is. Mr. Mullen said \$13,709.

B. Review Capital Paving Plan

Mr. Mullen and Mr. Hazeltine, with assistance from Ron Puchalski of All States Asphalt, developed a budget for reconstruction of Amsden School Road, and a proposed scope of work and budget for Reservoir Road and Weathersfield Center Road.

They recommend taking care of Weathersfield Center Road first – to protect the investment made in 2010 (\$431,600). Chip sealing is recommended. The cost is \$550,000, but the project would be eligible for a Class 2 Highway Paving Grant of

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

\$175,000 in either FY19 or FY20, which would lower the cost to \$425,000 (with inflation) - \$85,000/year for five years.

Reservoir Road needs 0.75" shim coat and chip seal. The cost is \$285,000 in FY24, but the \$175,000 grant lowers the cost to \$110,000 or \$22,000/year.

Amsden School Road cost will be \$438,000 in FY29 or \$88,000/year for five years. Amsden School Road is not eligible for a paving grant. This would cover reclamation of the existing road, adding 12" of gravel, reclamation, paving with a 2.5" base course followed by a 1.5" wearing course. The Town would replace four culverts and remove shade trees.

The Board was concerned with the extended timeframes. Mr. Mullen said the problem is twofold – one, if the road is turned into a gravel road now, how often will we have to grade it given the amount of traffic on it. The second is dust. Mr. Mullen recommended trying the section between the transfer station and the first hill as a trial. Bomag it (hire out, it's fairly cheap), add the 12' of crushed gravel on it (highway can do this), bomag again and put a good topcoat on it (surepac or pavement grindings) and see what happens. If that works, keep doing sections all the way down through. The Town could also approach VTrans for the pavement grindings stored in Perkinsville and put that down as the topcoat.

Mr. Arrison said that based on these figures, the Town would need to put \$100,000 a year into paving every year. Right now, there is nothing in the paving budget.

Mr. Mullen said these three roads represent 58% of the Town's paved roads.

Mr. Fuller said at 6/30/15 the highway fund balance was \$90,000. He asked for an itemized account of how that money has been spent for the next meeting. His biggest concern was for Amsden School Road. Moreover, since it does not qualify for a grant, the Town needs another strategy. He is reluctant to return it to gravel given the history of Tenney Hill Road. He asked what work on the Amsden School Road can we do that will gain us twenty years. He asked Mr. Mullen to provide a cost breakdown of the proposal for Amsden School Road. He wants the voters to decide the course of action once they are given the facts.

Mr. Mullen said the cost would be \$210,000 if the road is not paved.

Mr. Arrison said adding anything to this budget will be difficult given that there is already a 6% increase. However, Mrs. Esty said if it's not done this year, then when.

It will not get any cheaper in the future. It was agreed to revisit the numbers again at the next meeting.

C. Review draft FY17 Capital Replacement Plan and Long Term Debt Schedule

The draft schedule show the costs associated with the paving project discussed above. Two loan votes scheduled for Town Meeting are the police cruiser and replacing Engine 3 for West Weathersfield. Mr. Mullen provided a revised estimate of what we have to borrow for Engine 3. It would be \$229,000 or \$45,800 for five years. This adds \$4000/year to the schedule for five years.

D. Review draft Reserve Funds Budget

Mr. Mullen said there is no change to the reserve funds from last time, except for moving some things around. \$7000 was added to the general fund line item for fire equipment (turnout gear).

Mr. Fuller asked about the \$15,920 in the reappraisal fund. Mr. Mullen said this comes from the state (not local taxes) and is intended to pay for reappraisal when it becomes necessary. At present, a reappraisal is not necessary as our Coefficient of Dispersion is at 99.6 and improving. (100 is perfect.)

Special articles include highway maintenance, highway equipment, motorized fire equipment, library, and police cruiser. It was agreed to put the highway maintenance article back in the highway budget.

Mr. Arrison expressed concern about two articles relative to the motorized fire equipment – using \$146,000 for Engine 3 and requesting \$15,000 to put back into the fund. He felt it would be confusing to voters.

E. Review draft FY2017 Municipal Tax Rate Computation

There will be a 6.6% increase in taxes as the budgets now stand, assuming all of the special articles pass and no increase in the Grand List. The amount to be raised by taxes is up by \$115,000 because last year we used \$98,000 of fund balance to reduce what is needed to be raised by taxes. We are actually up by only \$17,000 ($\$115,000 - \$98,000 = \$17,000$) which represents a 1% tax increase.

Ms. Main stressed the importance of long-range planning for the Town and its value in addressing the cost of change.

Mrs. Esty asked what percentage of the budget is made up of special articles. Mr. Mullen said \$65,000 out of \$1.8M.

F. Review draft FY2017 General Fund Budget

Mr. Butler said there were no changes in this budget since the last meeting. Mr. Mullen said the Board will adopt the budgets on January 11th at a special meeting. Mr. Fuller said he would like to see a sheet that says the delinquent taxes have been lowered to a certain amount and what that means in terms of income to the general fund (i.e. loss of income from the interest payments on the delinquent taxes).

G. Review draft FY2017 Highway Fund Budget

Mr. Hazeltine said he is comfortable with the budget as it now stands.

6. Review Warning for 2016 Town Meeting

Mr. Fuller asked that the \$39,000 for the police cruiser be itemized to show the cost of the extended warranty.

Mrs. Esty said the \$209,000 for the fire truck should be changed to \$229,000. Mr. Fuller felt that “fire truck” is a bit vague and suggested a more detailed description of the truck to be purchased.

The cost of printing the Town report and mailing it to every household in Town was discussed. Mr. Mullen feels that the report should be online and only those requesting a paper copy should receive it in the mail. Others felt that every taxpayer is entitled to a printed copy and what they do with it is their choice. Mr. Fuller suggested getting students involved in putting the Town Report on the website.

Ms. Murphy suggested a joint meeting with the School Board prior to Town Meeting to get acquainted with each Board’s budgets and issues.

7. Rewrite of Large Gathering Permit Ordinance (Final Reading)

This item was tabled.

8. Approve list of Grand List Errors and Omissions – Listers

Motion: To make the adjustments to the 2015 Grand List book as put forth by the Board of Listers.

Made by: Mr. Boyer **Second:** Mr. Fuller

Discussion on the motion: Mrs. Esty asked the total amount difference. Mr. Mullen said it is several million dollars’ difference (reference changes to Vermont Transco and Vermont Electric Power). Mr. Butler said it is \$4,000 for each fund. Mr. Arrison asked why the substantial changes to Vermont Transco and Vermont Electric Power. Mr. Butler said that the property was assessed at more than 100% of the assessed value, which State statute does not allow.

Vote on the motion: Unanimous in favor.

9. 2016 Certified Equalized Education Property Value

The Board received a memo from Vermont Department of Taxes regarding the Certified Equalized Education Property Value and the Coefficient of Dispersion. As was discussed earlier, this is improving. The memo is an FYI only and no action was required or taken.

10. Sign Bank Resolution to move Reserve Funds to new, higher interest producing account – Steve Hier, Treasurer

The Board received a letter from Steve Hier asking the Board to authorize moving the Town’s reserve funds to a new account with a better interest rate.

Motion: To authorize the Treasurer to move these reserve funds as (proposed) and allow the Board Chair to sign on behalf of the Board.

Made by: Mr. Fuller **Second:** Mrs. Esty

Vote: Unanimous in favor

11. Appointments

A. Budget Committee (One Opening)

Brenda Richardson

Gregg Adamovich

Motion: To waive the Budget Committee policy and appoint both (applicants).

Made by: Mr. Fuller **Second:** Mrs. Esty

Discussion on the motion: Ms. Murphy asked if the Board had ever done this before. She said she was concerned about setting a precedent. Mr. Fuller defended his motion on the grounds that the Town has trouble getting enough volunteers to fill boards and so didn’t want to turn someone away and that the role of the Budget Committee is purely advisory. He offered to make two motions instead – one to waive the policy for one year only and two to appoint both applicants. No one asked for these motions to be made.

Vote on the motion: Esty, Fuller, Arrison, Boyer – in favor; Cole – opposed.

Motion carries.

12. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for December 21, 2015 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$40,224.48
	Payroll	\$12,885.68
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$35,212.29
	Payroll	\$8,868.90

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$7,525.16
	Payroll	\$1,026.64
Library	Operating Expenses	\$471.29
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$5,303.00
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Reserves		\$1,775.74

Made by: Mr. Fuller **Second:** Mr. Boyer

Discussion on the motion:

Connecticut Valley Environmental - Mr. Arrison and Mr. Fuller asked for an itemized list of expenses relative to the access to the Town Forest.

Repairs to the police pick-up truck – Mr. Arrison commented on the \$5113 expense for repairs to the police pick-up truck. Mr. Mullen said the deductible is \$1000 and that the Town had also received \$600 to re-stripe the truck, making the out-of-pocket expense only \$400.

Mr. Fuller asked about the \$1000 deductible. Mr. Butler said it is standard statewide, based upon VLCT’s insurance requirements.

Reimbursements to individuals – Mr. Fuller expressed concerns regarding third-party purchasing. Mr. Butler said the Town (credit) card was at its limit and some charges were put on a personal card. He said he has asked Mr. Hier to increase the credit limit, but Mr. Hier was opposed to doing that. Mr. Butler said the consequence is the Town paying over-limit fees or asking employees to use their own (credit) cards to make charges. Mr. Fuller said he was opposed to increasing the limit as well. All agreed that the present limit of \$1000 is low. Mr. Mullen said that this is the Board’s current policy and it would require the Board’s action with Mr. Hier’s concurrence to change it. Mr. Fuller said if a charge is that high, it ought to be coming through this (the manager’s) office with an appropriate request. Mr. Mullen said there are only two cards – he has one and Mr. Hazeltine has the other. So if someone wants to order something the Town doesn’t have a vendor for, then it has to be purchased with the card. What Mr. Butler is saying is that we accumulate \$1000 on the card rather quickly. The Treasurer should be the one to make a recommendation on this matter.

Ms. Murphy asked if bank statements are being reconciled on a monthly basis. Mr. Mullen said yes, they are. The new assistant treasurer comes in once a week and does it.

Vote on the motion: Unanimous in favor.

13. Future Meeting Agenda Items

14. Executive Session: Personnel and Contract

- **Hiring new Town Manager**
- **2016 Service Award Recipient**

Motion: To enter executive session to discuss personnel and contract.

Made by: Mrs. Esty **Second:** Mr. Boyer

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The Board came out of executive session at 9:35 PM.

Motion: To hire Ed Morris as Town Manager for Weathersfield.

Made by: Mr. Boyer **Second:** Mr. Cole

Vote: Unanimous in favor

15. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

N. John Arrison, Chairperson

Daniel E. Boyer, Vice-Chairperson

David T. Fuller, Selector

C. Peter Cole, Selector

Lynn Esty, Selector