

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board
Meeting
West Weathersfield Fire Station
7:00 PM, SEPTEMBER 21, 2015

MINUTES
APPROVED 10/5/2015

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

Jim Mullen, Town Manager

Others Present:

Edith Stillson	Darrin Spaulding	Michael Levellen
Ernest Shand	Kelly Murphy	Michael Barrup
Patrick Howe	Josh Dauphin	Mychael Spaulding

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

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No comments.

Citizens

Ms. Murphy said she was waiting for Nate McKeen to discuss snow removal at the school. Town Manager Mullen said he had received the request to discuss this matter too late to put it on this agenda, so it will be on the next meeting's agenda instead.

Mr. Spaulding said that all outdoor burning is banned for the time being due to the dry conditions.

3. Review minutes from previous meetings – September 8, 2015

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. Correct the spelling of Nancy Nutile-McMenemy on page 4.

Motion: To accept the minutes as amended.

Made by: Mr. Boyer **Second:** Mrs. Esty **Vote:** Unanimous in favor

4. Maple Street Reconstruction Project

a. Approve Notice of Award to Nott's Excavating, subject to VTrans approval

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Town Manager Mullen said that two bids had been received for the project – one from Nott’s Excavating and one from Bazin Brothers Trucking. Nott’s bid was the lowest at \$422,390.02 for the Pavement Reclaim Alternate #2.

Mr. Mullen said that DuBois & King have completed the required bid analysis with which VTrans has concurred. The Town is now authorized to issue a Notice of Award to Nott’s Excavating.

Motion: To issue a Notice of Award to Nott’s Excavating, Inc. for the Maple Street Reconstruction Project [Weathersfield PLH MAPL (1)] for the Total Bid Cost of \$422,390.02 for the Pavement Reclaim Alternate #2, and to authorize the Town Manager to sign the Notice of Award and other contract documents.

Made by: Mr. Boyer **Second:** Mr. Fuller **Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Construction will start in the spring. The Highway Department will replace the culverts just ahead of the project start-up.

5. Approve 10/10/15 WWVFD Coin Drop

WWVFD is seeking approval for a coin drop on Route 131 west of Downers and Route 106, north and south of Downers on October 10, 2015 between 8 am and 4 pm. The Police Chief has already given his approval.

Motion: To approve the request for a coin drop for the WWVFD on October 10, 2015 on Route 131 west of Downers and Route 106 north and south of Downers between 8 am and 4 pm with a rain date of October 11, 2015.

Made by: Mr. Boyer **Second:** Mrs. Esty **Vote:** Unanimous in favor

6. Weathersfield Center Meeting House: Approve letter of support for steeple repairs

Mr. Arrison said the Church is applying for an historic preservation grant to repair the Meeting House steeple and thought they needed a letter of support from the Select Board for the application. They have since learned that the letter is not necessary.

7. Weathersfield Fire Services Evaluation Committee: Approve Committee “Charge”

Mr. Mullen presented a draft of the Weathersfield Fire Services Evaluation Committee – membership, purpose, timeline, deadline for letters of interest to serve, and appointment of members. The Board reviewed and discussed the draft. They agreed to insert the words “present and” after the word “evaluate” in the purpose statement and corrected the timeline dates to 2017.

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Motion: To approve the draft version of the Weathersfield Fire Services Evaluation Committee with changes outlined above.

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

Discussion:

Mr. Arrison said the Board could vote on it tonight or wait until there is a full committee.

Mr. Fuller said the Board needs to charge the committee with what to do. He said this was the first time he had seen the draft document. He said the focus of the committee needs to be narrowed. Or the alternative is to let the committee decide for themselves.

Mr. Mullen said one person had applied to be on the committee, but they withdrew their request. No one else had asked to be on it. The due date is the next Board meeting.

Mr. Mullen said it is important to have at least the purpose of the committee decided. It was agreed that it was important to look forward, not back.

Motion: To approve the draft of the Weathersfield Fire Services Evaluation Committee with the addition of the word “present” to read, “To evaluate present and future fire services”.

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

Discussion:

Mr. Howe expressed concern about potential members not having any knowledge of fire services.

Mr. Arrison said he was concerned that the committee might conclude that the only way to perform the evaluation comprehensively is by hiring an unbiased outside consultant. He said he would support that recommendation, because he said it will be difficult to find people (to serve on the committee) that aren’t already biased. He also agreed that it will be difficult for members with no fire service knowledge to evaluate what the Town needs. He felt confident that an unbiased, knowledgeable consultant could be found.

Mr. Dauphin wanted to know if it will be up to the committee to decide what they are to achieve as far as information, where to get it, how to get it and what they should be looking for? Is this something the Select Board should decide? Mr. Arrison said that no one was really prepared to answer that yet, although he said the committee may want a paid consultant to gather information they request.

Mr. Fuller said comparisons would have to be made and information shared. He felt there should be a preliminary report for 2016 Town Meeting. Mr. Arrison concurred

that the voters would appreciate that an attempt is being made to move the process forward.

Ms. Murphy suggested having the Fire Commission work with the consultant, rather than try to find five new committee members. She made the following points;

- Fire commission is making quorum with a select board member and two fire department chiefs;
- Now the Board is suggesting creating a 5-person committee to start studying something that the fire commission in theory is supposed to have the most knowledge and information about;
- This will mean trying to find 5 more people on top of what you are already missing on the fire commission;
- Then get to a point where well we can't get what you want with this committee so now we have to go to an outside source and pay somebody
- Why not use the fire commission and the tools that it's made for and have the fire commission work with the outside consultant to gather the information and do what it is you want them to do?
- It will take that long (until 2017) because both fire departments – every piece of data you need, every question that you are going to have, will fall on volunteers to find time to create the spread sheets and pull all the information together;
- The fire departments run the risk of gathering data for a committee who may then decide they need a consultant, then having the fire departments (possibly) repeating their efforts.

Mr. Arrison asked the Board for their opinion of Ms. Murphy's suggestion. Mr. Boyer agreed with it, if the Fire Commission is willing to do it.

Mr. Fuller said much of the required information should already be known, e.g. an inventory for insurance purposes, a list. Mrs. Esty said the inventory has been submitted to the board multiple times. Mr. Fuller said he did not recall seeing any such list. Mr. Fuller stressed that it is not the services that the departments provide, but rather the business relationship with the Town. He said he hopes the goal is to put this information in a report that is easy to read, that is not "long-winded". He said maybe what's needed is a group who have nothing to do with this as it "lowers the tone and the anxiety". He repeated that he has not seen an inventory specifying each department's equipment. He said there will be a value to the list and then (that will lead to a discussion of) what each department thinks it needs.

Mrs. Esty said that much of the needed information is already generated by the commission and handed in to the select board. She said she could see this (committee) as a subcommittee of the fire commission which would reduce duplication and extra

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effort. She said the Commission was meeting the tomorrow night (Tuesday, 9/22) and this could be discussed.

Mr. Arrison said he would feel more comfortable if the Fire Commission were operating with five active members. Mr. Fuller said no new appointments could be made until someone resigns.

Mr. Dauphin said he understood the logic behind asking the Fire Commission to take on this evaluation, but felt it would result in having to put aside the Commission's regular work to accommodate the new task.

Mr. Howe expressed frustration that the department has spent numerous hours compiling equipment inventories, assigning costs, and turning it in to the Board (twice), only to have a member state that he has never seen it. Mr. Boyer said he had never seen it either.

Ms. Murphy asked how much money will the taxpayers have to absorb to make a municipal fire department when you take two nonprofits and put them together as one. A 5-member committee of volunteers will have a hard time in their spare time to answer all of the questions. The major point is how much money it is going to cost the taxpayers to create this municipal fire department and taking the finances from the two fire departments and trying to evaluate what that's going to look like. Right now the bulk of the money is coming from fundraising from both fire departments. There's no guarantee that that's going to continue when it's a municipal fire department. That amount of money has never been calculated and that's what going to drive this conversation.

Mr. Fuller said there is nothing in the draft committee charge about creating a municipal fire department. Ms. Murphy said it may not be in that document, but it has been suggested as a possible option in earlier discussions.

Mr. Arrison said the committee has to be created first. He said he understood Mr. Dauphin's concerns, but felt the Fire Commission was the best group to handle the evaluation. He said he was concerned that too much time will be spent trying to form the committee and nothing will get done.

Mr. Fuller asked Mr. Mullen if VLCT has these types of consultants. Mr. Mullen said this is a common exercise. He said the Board could postpone making a decision on this until the next meeting, when he will have information from VLCT and the Fire Commission will have a recommendation. Mr. Arrison agreed.

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Mrs. Esty withdrew her motion. Mr. Boyer withdrew his second.

8. Update Large Gathering Permit Ordinance: Review current text of ordinance

The newest version of the ordinance is dated 1987. Mr. Mullen said on the whole, the ordinance isn't too bad. What is missing is designation as a civil or criminal ordinance. (There is no penalty for failing to apply for a permit.) He also said that the threshold of 100 people seems low. Mr. Arrison agreed and said he'd like to increase it 150.

Mr. Mullen said the old ordinance (1950 version) differentiated between types of events (e.g profit-making events vs social gatherings). The Board discussed how to approach the differing situations. Mr. Mullen will ask VLCT for some sample ordinances.

9. Appointments

10. Approve Warrants

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

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$53,927.20
	Payroll	\$12,212.32
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$35,467.99
	Payroll	\$8,319.46
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$7,381.28
	Payroll	\$1067.86
Library	Operating Expenses	\$280.95
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$5,542.05
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$300.00
Reserves		\$53.14

Made by: Mr. Fuller **Second:** Mr. Boyer **Vote:** Unanimous in favor

11. Future Meeting Agenda Items

Mrs. Esty said that the Board had agreed to revisit punch ticket prices at the October 19th meeting.

12. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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Made by: Mr. Boyer

Second: Mrs. Esty

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 7:49PM.

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