

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board

Bow Baptist Church

1102 Route 5, Weathersfield, Vermont

Monday, October 17, 2016

7:00 PM

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

APPROVED 11/7/2016

Select Board Members Present: Daniel Boyer
C. Peter Cole
Lynn Esty
Amy Beth Main
Kelly Murphy

Ed Morris, Town Manager

Others Present:

Charles Horton	Hal Wilkins	Bette Jo Esty
Wanda Gropler	Colin Butler	Edith Stillson
Julia Lloyd Wright	Wes Hazeltine	Will Hepworth

1. Call to Order

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

2. Comments from Select Board and Town Manager

Mrs. Esty announced that there will be a memorial service for long-time Zoning Board member Ted Goddard on October 22nd in Bennington.

Mr. Boyer announced that there will be a Trunk or Treat event on Saturday, October 29th at Hoisington Field from 4-6 PM. Anyone who would like to participate should call Mark at the Library at 674-2863.

3. Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda

BJ Esty announced that October 18th is Service Day at the school. Departments that provide services to the community will be on hand with their vehicles. It is also Fire Prevention Day.

BJ asked for clarification on the timing and manner of presentation for the committee reports that the Select Board has requested. Mr. Morris said the reports can be either written or oral and that the schedule for reporting had not yet been decided.

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Mr. Horton complained that he had seen a town employee using a Town-owned vehicle to go to the bank on Friday. Mr. Boyer said there are times when it is acceptable for an employee to do that. Mr. Hazeltine explained that he was working on Friday (7 AM – 2:30 PM) and had gone to Bellows Falls to get much-needed department supplies. He stopped at the bank during the trip. Mr. Boyer said that that was “perfectly fine”.

4. Review minutes from previous meetings – 10/3/2016

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. None

Motion: To accept the minutes of the October 3rd meeting as written.

Made by: Mrs. Esty **Second:** Ms. Murphy

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

5. Weathersfield Festival Review and Revenue

BJ Esty said that all in all the Festival was a success and that everyone was looking forward to expanding and improving it for next year. The event raised \$75.

Motion: To move the \$75 raised from the Festival to the Parks & Rec budget and to be earmarked for next year's Festival.

Made by: Mrs. Esty **Second:** Ms. Main

Vote: Unanimous in favor

6. Energy Coordinator Update

Ms. Wright updated the Board on the wide array of activities and events that she has hosted or been a part of. She said there is a “loose” energy group – known as the Ascutney Area Energy Collaborative (AAEC)- that will not come to board meetings or take minutes but that will assist with energy-related projects for the Town. They are currently assisting in editing the Town Plan. The group was recently awarded a grant with which to hire an “energy organizer”. The funds are being held in Cavendish. No one has been hired yet. The group is also looking to be part of the “weatherize the Upper Valley” project involving Reading, Cavendish, Weathersfield, and Windsor. She assured the Board that AAEC does not represent the Town of Weathersfield.

Ms. Wright said that she works primarily with homeowners now. She cited the success of the improvements at the highway garage and said she would like to work on putting solar panels at the school to help reduce their \$50,000 annual electricity bill.

Ms. Murphy suggested that one or two questions about energy be included in the survey that the Board will be distributing soon as a means of gauging public interest in funding energy-related works. (There is an energy reserve fund set up by the Town Meeting, but it has not been funded.)

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7. Planning Commission, HCRS Zoning Issues, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Conservation Commission Update/Hal Wilkins

Mr. Morris said that the Planning Commission is applying for a \$9200 Municipal Planning Grant . The funds if awarded will be used to help synchronize the Town Plan and the Zoning Bylaws and to do some visioning for Ascutney and Perkinsville.

Motion: To approve the resolution for a Municipal Planning Grant for 2017.

Made by: Mrs. Esty **Second:** Ms. Main

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Mr. Wilkins said that the Town Plan should be finalized soon. He anticipates adoption by January 2017. He said he would like to see more public participation in the work of the Planning Commission.

In Zoning, the former Amsden Schoolhouse property just completed their flood hazard review with the Zoning Board and is set to move forward. The current status of the former Amsden Store is in question. It, too, is in the flood hazard area and is being renovated for residential use. He has received an application from HCRS for either an appeal or an application for a permit – the application is incomplete - regarding the former Althea Tucker house in Perkinsville. It will be heard by the ZBA next Wednesday at 7PM at the WWVFD. Both the Town and applicant have legal representation.

The Conservation Commission has a volunteer doing their minutes. They are learning the process of creating and publishing minutes in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. The Commission recently removed all of the trash at the end of Ferry Road.

Mr. Wilkins is quite busy with permits, zoning enforcement, and a FEMA buy-out in Amsden. Ms. Murphy said she was glad to hear that the bylaws are being enforced as enforcement has been lacking.

8. Documentation for Nonprofit Allocations

Ms. Murphy said she would like to see the Town have a more formal process for gathering information from any non-profit organization that is seeking funding from the Town. She feels it is important for accountability and transparency. She shared with the Board a form she had obtained as an example of what she was looking for. The form asks for five documents that any nonprofit would have to provide annually anyway, so the Town's request would not be overly burdensome. She asked that it be put into use for this the upcoming budget/Town Meeting.

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Motion: To utilize the Town of Weathersfield nonprofit request form.

Made by: Mrs. Esty **Second:** Ms. Main

Mr. Morris said that the Town apparently used to do this in the past and felt it was probably a good idea to do due diligence once again.

Mr. Butler said that while he supported the idea, he was concerned that voters may think that the information provided by the nonprofits has been validated by Town Staff and Town Staff is not equipped to do that. He asked the Board to table the idea until the process had been completely defined. Ms. Main thought it was up to the public to review the information. Ms. Murphy said that at the very least, if the IRS determination letter is not submitted, the nonprofit would not get any money. She said the Town will not be doing any filtering. She asked that the form be put into use now (as a means of putting the nonprofits “on notice”) while they continue to work out the details. Mr. Morris suggested putting a disclaimer in the warrant article.

Currently the nonprofits submit a request for funds once every five years. A request for an increase in funds requires a new submission regardless of the time since the last application. Funds awarded remain in the budget for the five years. Mr. Cole said the Board could work on any policy changes during the upcoming budget discussions.

Vote on the motion: Unanimous in favor

9. Fire Services Discussion (Fire Commission Update)

Mr. Boyer stated that the Commission is now full and that they meet on the first Wednesday of each month alternating between the two fire stations. At the last meeting the Commission discussed the fire agreement, dry hydrants that need repairs (Rt 131/Gulf Road and Cascade Falls Road); and an annual operating budget for a combined fire department. It was a very productive meeting and enjoyed by all present.

10. Approve Spending Highway Maintenance reserves for Amsden School Road Project

Mr. Morris said that the Amsden School Road has been repaved and completed under budget. He asked the Board to approve spending \$47,918.44 from the Highway Maintenance Reserve fund to cover the cost.

Motion: To approve spending \$47,918.44 from the Highway Maintenance Reserve Fund to cover the cost of repaving Amsden School Road.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

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Mr. Morris said the police department is working to keep overweight trucks off of the newly paved road.

11. Budget Update

Mr. Butler said that the Town is now one quarter of the way through the fiscal year and that there are no significant anomalies, except for the legal line. Legal expenses have far exceeded their budget for the past three years. Mr. Cole said that it may signify a budgeting issue if the expenses continually exceed the budget. Mr. Butler said the Town currently has about \$1M in cash in the bank. Taxes will be collected again soon, so cash flow shouldn't be a problem for a bit.

12. Strategic Planning/Budget Discussion (Continued from 10/3/2016)

Mr. Morris said the Board needs to write a mission statement because it is imperative to know why town government exists and where it's going in the future. Mrs. Esty said she wanted to be sure that the Town Plan is a part of the strategic plan.

Mr. Morris said that area towns have similar overall missions, but each town is unique. Springfield, for example, is focused on economic development. Weathersfield will be different, perhaps focusing on building a strong, healthy community or focusing on developing recreational opportunities within its natural resources. The Town should think about “branding” itself – how does it want to be known? He said he has been working with Town Staff on this and is encouraged by the conversations and discussions it has spurred.

Ms. Murphy said she had googled town mission statements and viewed several different types. Ms. Main said she looked at area towns. Mr. Cole said that providing services is the primary function of every town. How those services are prioritized will be unique to each town. Mr. Boyer said the Town should take advantage of the recreational opportunities afforded by Mt. Ascutney. Ms. Main said the Town needs more lodging and restaurants. Ms. Murphy said the Town needs more full time residents/taxpayers. She said the Town also needs more rental housing.

Mr. Morris said that strategic planning is just starting in Vermont. RPC and VLCT are just starting to talk about it. It is more common in business and will take more time to develop in government. He wants to keep it on the Board's agenda to continue the discussion.

13. Appointments

Motion: To appoint Nancy Heatley to the budget committee.

Made by: Mrs. Esty **Second:** Ms. Main

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Vote: Unanimous in favor

14. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for October 17, 2016 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$270,629.06
	Payroll	\$13,161.57
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$52,145.60
	Payroll	\$8,745.86
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$6,530.90
	Payroll	\$616.10
Library	Operating Expenses	\$13.89
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$508.33
Reserves		\$0.00
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$329,827.78
	Payroll	\$22,523.53

Made by: Mrs. Esty **Second:** Ms. Main

Vote: Unanimous in favor

15. Future Meeting Agenda Items

16. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

deForest Bearse

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Daniel E. Boyer, Chairperson

C. Peter Cole, Selector

Kelly Murphy, Selector

Lynn Esty, Selector

Amy Beth Main, Selector