

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board

Martin Memorial Hall

5259 Route 5, Ascutney, Vermont

Monday, October 3rd, 2016

7:00 PM

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

APPROVED 10/17/2016

Select Board Members Present: Daniel Boyer
Lynn Esty
Amy Beth Main
Kelly Murphy

Absent: C. Peter Cole

Ed Morris, Town Manager

Others Present:

Edith Stillson
Brenda Richardson
Colin Butler

1. Call to Order

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

2. Comments from Select Board and Town Manager

Ms. Murphy said she had been confronted by an angry citizen who claimed that when the Select Board moved surplus funds from the fund balance into a variety of reserve accounts they had violated the wishes of the Town Meeting. Ms. Murphy said that according to the record, the only reserve fund not funded by the voters (at the last town meeting) was the Library Capital Improvement Fund and the Select Board had not moved any of the surplus funds into it because of that vote. All of the other reserve funds had been approved by the voters.

Mr. Morris said that VLCT staff attorney, Garrett Baxter, had confirmed that the Town's reserve accounts are legal and the Board's actions in funding them are legal as well.

Mrs. Esty asked about the status of the police cruiser. Mr. Morris said it should be arriving in the next couple of weeks.

Mrs. Esty said that there are a couple of families in town whose wells have gone dry and asked how they can be helped. Suggestions included the Aid to Weathersfield Residents in Need fund, the fire department and the Red Cross.

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3. Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda

There were no comments from citizens.

4. Review minutes from previous meetings – 9/19/2016

Motion: To accept the minutes of 9/19/2016 as written

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

5. HCRS Zoning Issues/Brenda Richardson

Ms. Richardson said she had been updated by Mr. Morris and ZA Wilkins and was willing to let zoning take its course. She asked that the topic be placed on the agenda for the next meeting, however, which Mr. Boyer agreed to do.

Mr. Morris provided a brief summary of events to date for the benefit of the Board and the viewing audience. The Town is working closely with the Town Attorney to ensure that legal process is being followed.

Ms. Richardson said the people in the village are getting impatient with the length of time it is taking to resolve their issues with the use of the property.

6. Budget Update

A long-term planning worksheet has been given to each of the department heads. Mr. Morris is working with the department heads to develop their visions for their departments in the next 3-5 years as a means of helping to develop their budgets and to guide the Select Board in their budget discussions. Some excellent ideas have arisen as a result of these conversations.

At present the budget committee consists of Mike Todd, Cynthia Porter and Brenda Richardson. The committee is set up to have five members. However, Mr. Morris said he was opposed to new members being appointed once the committee has begun discussing actual numbers. Ms. Murphy suggested posting a closure date for appointments on the Town's website.

Mr. Morris said he has begun budget conversations with the two fire departments.

Ms. Murphy asked if a “history” of the developing budget could be given to the Board so the Board could see what departments are requesting, where changes are made by the budget committee, where changes are made by the Manager, and so on. Mr. Morris said such documentation will be provided. He stated that the budget committee is an

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advisory group only and that he while he will listen to their recommendations, may not always agree with them.

7. Strategic Planning/Budget Discussion (Cont. from 9/19/2016)

Mr. Morris asked each of the Board members to describe what “community” means to them.

Mrs. Esty: A place where everyone works to together for the betterment of all; a place where everyone knows they will be heard

Ms. Main: A place where everyone is working toward a common goal, regardless of socioeconomic standing

Ms. Murphy: Transparency in town and school government

Mr. Boyer: A group of people (friends, neighbors, relatives) in an area working together for a common good

Mr. Morris urged the Board members to talk to people in the town to learn more about what they want and think is important. All of this information helps set priorities when developing the budget. He said he is doing the same.

Mr. Morris and the Board reviewed a draft citizen survey to be used to gather more information from townspeople about the state of the Town and what they might like to see happen. It is hoped to have the survey available in November both on line and in hard copy at the polls on voting day.

Mr. Morris asked the Board members to think of three things they would like to see in the next budget. He offered suggestions – staff compensation, road projects, staffing levels, etc. This lead to a discussion of overtime in the highway department and whether it would be cheaper to hire another person and whether the extra person would allow more projects to get done each year, even if it would cost more than the overtime currently being paid.

Ms. Main said she would like to see more work done on road projects and infrastructure – that these areas need both more planning and more funding. Mr. Morris said he is working on a long-range paving plan and that he is starting to track road repair data.

Mrs. Esty said the long-term debt schedule is of great concern and should be added to the plan. Mr. Morris said that the reserve funds will help to eliminate some of the debt.

Mr. Morris also said he wants staff compensation to be part of the discussion. Staff have not had a raise in two years and have been asked to contribute more money to their health insurance premiums, which realistically amounted to a cut in their pay. The Board needs to create a “compensation philosophy” for guidance. Good benefits and

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pay help keep the labor force stable. Mr. Butler said he is looking at towns across the state to find “peer communities” for comparison purposes.

Mrs. Esty urged the Board to consider holding a joint meeting with the School Board for the mutual benefit of both boards and ultimately for the Town.

8. Transfer Station Update

Mr. Morris said his number one priority is to get the transfer station under control. At present it is the recyclables that are costing the most to handle. He met with Jim Toher from Casella who offered to develop alternatives to how our transfer station is operated. The most promising of his alternatives appears to be zero-sort with a large compacter. There would be about \$30,000 of up-front costs. It appears that this model will greatly reduce our hauling needs (and associated expenses) with a savings that would allow us to pay the start-up cost back in two years. Glass would be held out of the mix as it is cheap to ship to Springfield, and people would be encouraged to separate out their returnable bottles. There is already a cement pad in place at the transfer station and three-phase power is available. Things look promising.

9. Fire Services Discussion

The next meeting of the Fire Commission is on Wednesday, October 5th at WWVFD.

10. Delinquent Tax Discussion

Our delinquent tax total is down to \$211,105, \$82,461 of which is from a single property. The process put in place by Jim Mullen has worked well. Mr. Morris thanked Mr. Butler for creating software that has vastly streamlined the process.

11. Appointments

No appointments were made. It was agreed that the Ancient Roads Committee can be removed from the list.

12. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for October 3, 2016 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$60,027.08
	Payroll	\$12,582.67
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$4,221.46
	Payroll	\$9,128.63
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$3,951.91
	Payroll	\$902.39

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Library	Operating Expenses	\$300.83
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$5,601.73
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Reserves		\$650.00
Grand Totals	Payroll	\$22,613.69
	Operating Expenses	\$74,753.01

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

13. Future Meeting Agenda Items

Mrs. Esty and Mr. Boyer would like to hear periodic reports from appointed boards, appointed personnel, and department heads.

14. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

Daniel E. Boyer, Chairperson

C. Peter Cole, Selector

Kelly Murphy, Selector

Lynn Esty, Selector

Amy Beth Main, Selector