

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board

Martin Memorial Hall

5259 Route 5, Ascutney, VT

Monday, November 7th, 2016

7:00 PM

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

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

Ed Morris, Town Manager

Others Present:

Donald A. Huntley	Bette Jo Esty	Nancy Heatley	Edith Stillson
John Esty	Westley Hazeltine	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 struggling greatly from witnessing a “heated conversation” between a community member and a town employee during the previous meeting's “Comments” agenda item. She wanted to personally apologize to the employee for not stepping in and saying something. She said that conversation never should have happened in the manner in which it happened. She said that the Board should set the standard on how community members speak to the Board, to other people, etc. and such exchanges should always be respectful to all parties.

3. Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda

BJ Esty extended a big thank you to everyone who participated in the town's first annual Trunk or Treat event. She said almost 100 kids and 20 vehicles participated. It was a great turnout, everyone had a lot of fun despite the weather, and she looks forward to a bigger and better event next year.

Brenda Richardson asked to have the river house put on the agenda for the next meeting. She said she had 200 pockets made for the vets.

Edith Stillson made a complaint about the Swap Shop at the transfer station. She said people feel it should be closed down. She said one of the employees at the station tries

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

to clean it up and two hours later “you'd never know it”. Mr. Boyer thanked her and acknowledged that it is an issue the Board has been grappling with. Brenda Richardson said she had helped Sandy (LaMois) clean out her barn (as she is selling her house) and that may be why there is complaint.

John Esty said he had a concern about his insurance based on some information that “had just come to light”. He gave some background information based on Select Board meeting minutes. In Late October/early November 2015, the employees agreed to pay \$15 a week towards their insurance premiums, starting January 1st, 2016. According to the January 4th minutes, according to Mr. Mullen's written report, there was no COLA for FY17 and no raises would be given out in FY17. So not only did the employees contribute \$15 a week, they received no raise and no COLA. At that same meeting, Mr. Todd suggested that the select board consider 5% of the premium be paid (by the employees) instead of the \$15, because it would be more equitable to the employees and would allow for changes in premiums over time. The minutes do not show any actions being taken at that meeting or any thoughts on the suggestion. At the January 5th budget committee meeting, they discussed the health insurance impacts on the budget and agreed that the flat \$15 employee contribution being implemented may not be the correct approach. They recommended that beginning January 1st, 2017 that a contribution of 5% of the premium be charged to each participating employee. At the January 11th, 2016 Select Board meeting, the budget committee recommends that employees contribute 5%. Later during that meeting, it was changed to 7%. He said he couldn't find anywhere in the minutes where the increase from 5% to 7% was discussed. At the January 14th meeting, under the heading, “Review the draft of FY17 municipal tax rate computation”, the General Fund and Highway Fund budgets include increasing the overall contributions by employees towards the town's cost of medical insurance from 5% to 7%. The 2% increase would occur January 1st, 2017. Later in that same meeting, a motion was made by Mrs. Esty and seconded by Mr. Boyer to approve the budget and other documents as discussed and amended that evening with formal approval to occur at the Select Board meeting on January 18th, 2016. The vote was 3-0, with Arrison, Esty and Boyer in favor and Fuller abstaining. On January 18th, the FY17 budget was approved with the 7% increase.

Mr. Esty said he was concerned that these changes were implemented but not discussed with any of the personnel. They were recommendations that came to the Board with no back-up that they were going to be implemented. He said Mr. Morris had come to the highway department to speak with the employees on October 26 of this year to explain some of the changes that are happening in the upcoming insurance season. It was then that they learned of the change from \$15 a week to 7% of the premium. It was a shock.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Mr. Esty said that the overall premium is going up 4.9% for every plan. The increase for him, going from \$15 to 7%, is 48%. He will be paying \$22 a week starting January 1st. He said Don (Huntley) is on a family plan and will go from \$15 a week to \$31 a week, which is a 107.8% increase. It will cost him \$0.78/hour to have the Town's insurance. He said he (Mr. Esty) will be paying \$0.56/hour on the two-person plan. He did not think this was equitable. He wondered if there was anything that could be done.

Mr. Boyer said the board went through a long, hard discussion about this. At that time, the \$15 was roughly equal to 5% of the premium not seeing what that would do further "down the line". The board had decided on the percentage as opposed to a fixed figure so that they wouldn't have to recalculate the contributions every time the premiums changed.

Ms. Main said she recalled that 5% was roughly \$17.50. Mr. Butler said the \$15 is pretty close to 5%. The budget committee took into consideration what other town functions were paying towards it (e.g. teachers were paying 12% towards theirs), and the percentage takes into account the "flux of benefits".

Mr. Esty said they were already paying \$15 a week – it just wasn't expressed as a percentage. Mr. Boyer repeated that the Board chose to use the percentage to simplify the annual calculations and budgetary considerations. That way, when the premiums increased, the employees' contributions would increase accordingly. Mr. Esty said then if the premiums are increasing by 4.59%, his contribution should increase by 4.59% as well – not 48%.

Mr. Boyer said he wasn't sure how the contributions increased from 5% to 7%. Mrs. Esty didn't remember either. But she said she did remember asking the Town Manager if he was having conversations with the employees about this and they were assured that there were such conversations happening with the department heads. She said she would have to review the meeting minutes and watch the video tapes. She said it was not the Board's intention to increase it drastically. She said she didn't know if the board could do anything about it at this point though.

Mr. Esty said that what concerns him is that he has to make a decision to either accept or decline the Town's insurance by November 15th.

Mr. Butler said it was the budget committee that recommended the 7%. He said there were two or three people on the budget committee who were "very interested" in the town's employees sharing a "larger and larger" proportion of the cost of the health insurance premiums. There was a dissatisfaction with the level of improvement that would result from the change from \$15 to the 5%. Through discussions the 7% was built

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

into this year's budget. He said he didn't recall the Select Board having a lot of input into the actual percentage rate that was set – he said he thought it came from the budget committee. He said the budget committee meeting minutes are pretty brief and don't provide a lot of detail. Mr. Boyer said the select board minutes don't provide that level of detail either and that they would have to watch the SAPA tapes to witness the actual conversations. He said he was “blind-sided” when Mr. Morris told him how much the employees were going to have to pay as it was much more than he had anticipated.

Mr. Boyer asked Mr. Butler if there was anything they could do. Mr. Butler said this (insurance cost) was like any other line in the budget – the Board could choose to spend, over-spend, etc. - it is all “at your own peril”. The Board is answerable to the voters. But the Board could choose to do something different than what's budgeted.

Mr. Morris said Mr. Esty had brought this matter to his attention this day and because of the November 15th deadline, advised Mr. Esty to bring it to the board for this meeting (even though the board would not be able to take any action because it wasn't warned). If the board were to choose to act on it, they would have to call a special meeting to do so. He asked Mr. Butler to prepare the figures to compare the cost of 5% vs 7%. The difference would be an increase cost to the town of \$2,229 (based on the actual Blue Cross changes that the town received).

Ms. Richardson said she recalled the budget committee discussing \$250 a month as the proposed contribution, based on Ms. Main's personal contribution of \$500 a month for her own health insurance. She said, “That's how we got there.”

Mr. Morris said that if we start looking at the private sector (for comparison figures), then the entire compensation packages must be compared – not just insurance contributions – because government employees have always been paid less than their counterparts in the private sector, but the compensation package makes up the difference.

Mr. Boyer asked for feedback from the rest of the board. Mr. Cole said he has a conflict because his wife is a town employee, but he acknowledged the difficulty the employees are facing with the increase in their contribution. Mrs. Esty said it concerned her that this wasn't discussed with the employees because the board had been assured that it was. She said she would like to revisit it and look at some calculations in writing. She said if the board needs to have a special meeting before November 15th, so be it. Mr. Boyer said he went along with the 5% instead of the flat \$15 because it seemed like a good idea because of the ease of updating the budget.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Mr. Morris said in moving to a percentage, Wes will actually pay less than the \$15 a week. But the people on the family plan, will more than double because the family plan is a lot more expensive than the single plan. He said the percentage is probably the right way to move toward.

Ms. Murphy said she also would like to see some figures before moving to a decision. She said the employees should be given at least three months for a meeting with the Town to say this is what is anticipated if there's a particular date on which the new insurance rates are set to give them ample time. She said she wants to see where other municipal insurance state-wide is falling for comparison.

BJ Esty said the \$15 contribution was the employees' choice. They came together as a group and agreed to offset each other. It would make the same impact on everybody.

Wes said he came up with the \$15. He said he took 5% of the total insurance for his crew and divided it by the number of his crew and came up with the \$15. He said his crew wanted everyone to pay the same amount. So those on the single plan would pay a bit more (than they needed to) to help those with the family plan. He said he designed this system for his department and did not know that the Town Office employees were paying the same amount. He said the increase to 7% will be a different amount for each person and that is a completely different approach to what had been agreed to by the employees.

Ms. Main asked if he couldn't take the 7% and do the same thing. Mr. Morris said it could be done, but there had been substantial talk about moving to the percentage. Mr. Boyer said he wanted to move toward making things more equitable for everyone.

Mrs. Esty said that even if they move back to the 5%, it will not solve the problem of everyone paying an equal amount.

Mr. Morris said the transition from \$15 to 5% (or 7%) will be the biggest change. Increases will be more modest after that.

The board agreed to hold a special meeting on November 10th at 6PM to continue the discussion. Mr. Esty thanked the board for their consideration.

4. Review minutes from previous meetings – 10/17/2016

Motion: To accept the minutes of October 17, 2016

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

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Ms. Murphy asked for a correction on page 4, under “Nonprofit Request Form”. The sentence stating, “If the letter from the IRS is missing...”, should be corrected to read, “If the IRS determination letter is not submitted...”.

Ms. Esty agreed with the correction.

Vote: Unanimous as amended.

5. 1879 Perkinsville Schoolhouse Update

BJ Esty started with the announcement that there is now a new toilet in the building. Project manager, Matt Keniston, had provided a list of accomplishments to date, but Mrs. Esty chose not to read it as the time was short. She said there has been a great deal of volunteer work provided that cuts down on the cost of the projects. Some work has been done by paid contractors as needed. A lot of money was spent at the beginning of the project to get the mold remediated. The basement looks beautiful now. The dehumidifiers have been turned down lately which indicates that the heating system and drainage work have been effective. The Food Shelf is doing well in the south classroom. It always looks good and people are using it. The committee is now concerned with getting the ADA ramp installed and done professionally. It will have a standing seam roof over part of it which will have to be matched up with the existing roof. That will be a heavy cost. The committee has done some fund raising (over \$1000 raised at a recent silent auction); some raffles are coming up soon; and donations continue to come in from the Historical Society. Mrs. Esty thanked everyone for their donations. The Committee has applied for a Historic Preservation Grant and is waiting to hear the results. The grant application seeks funds to continue repair work on the windows. She thanked Matt for all of his work on the project and for getting volunteers to help and thanked the Board for its support.

Ms. Murphy asked if the ramp was to be paid for by town money or are grants being sought. Mrs. Esty said the committee's funds are running low, so they might have to seek a bond for the ramp. Ms. Murphy said to keep in mind the USDA Rural Development program for Vermont and New Hampshire. They are accepting applications now. Because Perkinsville is an incorporated village they are eligible for grants (whereas the rest of Weathersfield is not). Mrs. Bearse said that as of the 2010 census, Perkinsville no longer qualifies. Ms. Murphy asked about “the other handicap accessibility through the state of Vermont?” She said it had been looked into for the library for their ramp. She said the project would probably qualify, but the application must seek to make the entire building handicap accessible and not limit the project to just the ramp. It does require a match, but Ms. Murphy felt the committee's fund raising would cover it. She referred Mrs. Esty to Mr. & Mrs. Shand and Ms. Nutile-McMenemy. Mrs. Esty thanked Ms. Murphy for the information.

Mr. Boyer thanked Mrs. Esty for all of the hard work. Mrs. Esty replied, “It has taken a village to raise this child.”

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

6. Fire Services Discussion (Update from Fire Commission Meeting)

Mr. Boyer said there had been a Fire Commission meeting on November 2nd. Mr. Boyer reported that the budget was the biggest discussion – what the fire services felt they needed for the upcoming budget. So much time was spent on the budget, that the John Woods report discussion was postponed. Some line items are proposed to be increased – the repair budget, for example. He said it's very impressive to see that now the departments are working together when purchasing supplies and equipment so as to get a better price (with the larger group ordering). They are also working with mutual aid on large purchases as well.

Mrs. Esty asked about reports called for in the Fire Agreement. Mr. Boyer said that had been two meetings ago and the chiefs had been wondering if doing the budgets with Jim Mullen and Ed Morris before having the Fire Commission work on them first meant they weren't following the agreement.

Mrs. Esty said that there is more than just a budget report that's required – there's an inventory list, and two others she couldn't recall. Mr. Boyer said the inventory lists are being made and he had seen the inventory sheets from both departments. He said they are getting them up to date and are trying to keep them that way. He told Mrs. Esty that if she wanted a physical inventory at a specific time to let him know and he would put the request forward as the select board representative to the commission.

Mrs. Esty asked that the Commission provide copies of the reports to all of the board members so they can stay informed. Mr. Boyer asked if there was something additional that Mrs. Esty wanted, as the commission minutes are available online and he gives an oral report each month, she should let him know. Mrs. Esty said she was satisfied with that. Mr. Morris said he would try to remember to forward the commission minutes to the select board when they are received.

7. Ford F350 Price Reduction and Auction Approval

Mr. Morris said attempts to sell the truck at \$7000, \$6500 and \$6000 have been unsuccessful and asked to be allowed to lower the price to \$5000.

Ms. Murphy asked if the price has to be left open if they choose to auction the truck or can you go in with a minimum. Mr. Morris said you set a minimum as a reserve that everyone knows or it can be left blank. If the minimum isn't met, the Town has the option to go with the highest bid. He said he had spoken to someone about it at Town Fair and it sounded like a good deal. The auctioneer does all of the work for you. He puts a buyer's premium on the sale so it doesn't cost the Town anything. Mr. Morris recommended against going to auction first. He'd like a chance to try and sell the truck with the reduced price first. He felt

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

he had a better chance of selling it now as winter is approaching. The lower blue book value is right around the \$6000 range, but this truck has some rust and other issues.

Motion: Approve the Town Manager to advertise the Highway Department 2006 Ford F350 for an amount of \$5000, and as Plan B, give him approval to use the auction service when that time comes and utilize the option (the Town Manager) talked about where you keep the reserve hidden, go with what it is and then you have the choice to lower it or not.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

8. 2018 Budget Update

Mr. Morris apologized for not having an update prepared – he came to work today and found we were losing 44,000 gallons a day out of the water system. The break was found in the area that is being worked on – a line was “clipped”. It required shutting down half of the village, which was a lot of work. He thanked the highway department for rounding up extra buckets and helping to fill and distribute them to the places that needed them.

Mr. Morris said his primary reason for putting this item on the agenda was to start making the board aware of some of the budget items that have been discussed. He said it has come to his attention that in the past few years, the budget comes to the board after it has been “whittled down quite a bit”. He said he wasn't clear if the board has ever received the “up-front numbers” of what people are asking for. Mrs. Esty said no, the board does not see those numbers. Mr. Morris said he would send out some numbers in the next few days, although the next time the board sees them, they will be different as work will continue on them.

Highway Staffing

Mr. Hazeltine has been asking for additional staff for a number of years, and Mr. Morris has been talking to him about this. Mr. Morris said he has a philosophy of taking care of the employees we already have first before we add more employees. An idea they have been talking about and developing figures on is the possibility of moving Tyler from the transfer station, at 27 hours a week, to full-time and allowing him to use the additional time to help Mr. Hazeltine. It would mean adding benefits, but so would adding another full-time employee. It would help both Mr. Hazeltine and one of the employees we already have. He said Mr. Hazeltine is in favor of this idea and he is looking at how he could use Tyler and if it would be worth doing.

Ms. Murphy suggested looking at whatever choice is made if it will offset some of the overtime and relieve the other employees enough to allow them to take their own vacation time. Mr. Morris said he (Tyler) wouldn't be able to cover for someone fully (like another full-time person could), but he can help somewhat. For example, he said at times John Esty

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

and Don Huntley come to the Town Office to work on small projects – Tyler may be able to relieve Don on those jobs, so Don could be out on the road with the highway crew.

Ms. Main asked to look at the cost of a full-time employee as compared to the overtime, on average, that we are currently paying. She said, for example, this week there was 50 hours of overtime in the highway department. What will that look like over time and how will that compare to a full-time position? Mr. Morris said some of that will be hard to eliminate because of times when they have to be called in during off hours to plow snow or when projects run over in the afternoon. He said this comparison will be hard to make, but he would look at some numbers.

Fire Services Increases

Mr. Morris said he wanted to bring forward the fire services numbers. He said he is recommending increasing the maintenance item quite a bit. \$2500 a year has been allocated for several years and this doesn't go very far with fire trucks. That doesn't even “change a few tires”. This year alone Ascutney is already at \$6000 (there were several big issues that had to be taken care of) and we're not even half way through the year. WWVFD is asking for \$6500; Ascutney is asking for \$7500.

The fire departments are asking for a \$40,000 stipend (per department). Last year was \$22,500. They have provided a breakdown which will be provided to the board.

Ms. Murphy asked if there will be a vote (resulting from the John Wood report) at the next Town Meeting. Mr. Morris said it might not be ready by this March.

The fire departments had wanted \$52,000. After meeting with Mr. Morris and Mr. Butler, that number was reduced to \$40,000. He said, “We're not proposing that this is what we think it should be”. However this is what went through the Fire Commission. This number may be different later after going through the budget committee. He said he thought it was important for the board to know what the fire departments feel they need to run the service. Mr. Boyer said the Fire Commission did vote to move this budget on to the board.

Salary Increases and Benefits Discussion

Mr. Morris said once again that the board needs to look at full compensation packages in these discussion in order to make comparisons fair, whether they are between towns or with the private sector. He said it is important as they move into the budget to analyze and look at the benefits, but look at no raises to offset what we have implemented on the the employees. What the employees have to pay on out of pocket expenses goes up every year, so it important to know how the benefits change and how that affects the employees at home in addition to the costs that the town passes on to them.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Ms. Main asked if there were any benefit in looking at other plans that are not the platinum plan, but creating the option for the HSA so those out of pocket costs are offset in a different way. Mr. Morris said we can and those are all offered to the employees right now. He said this was something he and Crystal have been doing – they spent some time explaining the different programs, which seems to have been very beneficial to the employees. He and Crystal will try to increase the educate a bit so employees know what is actually being offered. He has told all town employees, including the library, that they can see Crystal anytime to discuss benefits and costs to find which one will benefit them the most.

Long-Range Capital Debt Schedule and Planning Philosophy

Mr. Morris said the board had touched on this in strategic planning; they had talked about it when discussing the reserves; and we need to keep planning to put some money aside as we can to try and get on the other side of taking out loans. If we can do that we can pay the same amount as a loan payment into a reserve and then pay cash for the vehicle when it's time and save the taxpayers the cost of the interest payments. This in turn will allow us to purchase other things instead of paying interest to the bank. It will be really hard to do on fire trucks – but the fire department has made a good long term capital plan that the board will see soon. It is a bit shocking at first because some of the numbers are big, but it's moving to that other philosophy – the first steps are big. What they have tried to do is save up enough money to pay for half of a fire truck when it's time to buy one. They are recommending putting the equivalent of a full truck payment (\$40,000) into the reserves.

Mrs. Esty said the long-term debt schedule doubles in the next five years. What will this proposal do to that? She said she didn't want to pay double the taxes. Mr. Morris said he and Mr. Butler are looking at different things that could be done. He said for example they looked at moving one highway truck forward which levels those numbers out a little bit. Just the way they were staggered made for a really big increase one year. Without the reserves we'd be pushing ourselves in that corner where those things will need to be replaced and we will have to take debt out to pay for it.

Ms. Richardson asked if the town had looked into getting a secured bank loan. Mr. Morris said we have really cheap interest rates anyway, but it still adds up over time. He said it just makes sense when we have a little bit of a surplus, instead of giving that back and mounting the debt for long-term, if we can set that little bit aside that's already been collected and pay down that debt schedule, then you won't see those spikes in the tax rate that people really don't like.

Ms. Murphy said she hoped that they were going to continue with the plan of meeting with the school, because there is the potential of two spikes at the same time. Mr. Morris said the second Monday of December is the tentative date. It is a normally scheduled school board

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

meeting date. He said David Baker thought it was a great idea for the two boards to get together and that he would be willing to come to the select board meeting any time.

Mr. Boyer said it is encouraging to see the fire departments looking at long-term now. Mr. Morris said he has been really pushing them and that may have been part of the confusion on whether we're doing the budgets the right way. He said he brought them in before we started and told them that he didn't want them coming in at the end (of budget discussions) with their budget; that he wanted to include them as he does all the rest of the department heads, to be included in meetings. He and Mr. Butler work with them to help them put together a budget that they think will work. And it's not about just cutting in the beginning – it's talking about what each department thinks it needs a year and a half from now; what kind of equipment do you need or wish you had; we really try to talk through and build a good budget that we can work from. He wanted to include the fire departments in that as best he could and that's where the meetings with he and Mr. Butler came from. This has spurred discussions on what equipment (beyond trucks) will they need five, six, seven years from now. What will need replacing, how often and what means is most economical. It helps all parties get on the same page.

Ms. Main asked how the fire department budget compared with the John Wood report. Mr. Morris said it hit “pretty close”. He said the Wood report is in their discussions as they are talking about these things – for example, whether or not to replace the mini pumper when the time comes. He (Mr. Wood) didn't have a lot of equipment requirements from them. Some of the things that came in the first budget – the \$52,000 – was hose testing, pump testing, and other costs – that were added on top – we've discussed some of those, talked about different ways to fund them that may be a little cheaper. Some of them are still in the budget, some are not. The overall philosophy of the John Wood report, of what we're going to with fire services, we're not far enough along to be budgeting for that yet.

Mr. Morris is hoping to have some numbers for the board soon.

9. Transfer Station Discussion/Single Sort Proposal

The transfer station has been losing money. In 2015, we lost \$29,587; last year we lost \$34,505. We currently go through Windham Solid Waste who collects our recycling. They are having financial troubles. They wanted to raise our rates starting July 1. After much negotiation and talk of leaving their service, they put it off till August 1, but they incorporated a fee raise. Our charges were \$0.00 per ton and they were charging us for the hauls. They raised that to \$35 per ton but did not raise the hauling. Our average hauling fee is \$485 to pull the three containers out of the facility (cardboard, paper and plastics). It costs \$135 to haul the glass to Springfield. We also pay a \$30 per ton charge (\$291 per container). (He encouraged everyone to pull out all redeemable bottles and cans as it helps our scholarship program and reduces our costs to haul it away.)

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Mr. Morris provided data on the cost of the recycling program (and trash disposal costs).

Mr. Morris and Mr. Boyer have met with Casella quite a bit. They asked the Casella rep to look at every possible way of collecting trash and recycling for the town. He said if we looked at putting a compactor in and moving to zero-sort recycling, that would be the most cost-effective method. He provided numbers, using our numbers to look at options, and then Mr. Butler analyzed them against our numbers to confirm his findings.

He said the proposal is to put a 4-ton compactor on the recycling side of the transfer station; moving to a single-sort style of recycling which will allow us to collect 1-7 plastics again; the glass will continue to be separated as it is now. We should start now and continue to encourage the bottle redemption and pull those out of the recycling stream as much as possible. He met with Casella and the person who does compactors for a living and they analyzed the transfer station. Under the current recycling side is a concrete pad with a ramp already in place. This would allow people to drive up and throw their recycling down into the compactor which is the best set-up you can have. The old cardboard baler is in the building right next to it and has 3-phase power to it, so we are really close to a power source. It's almost the "perfect storm" for a set-up. This set-up will maintain the traffic flow as well. There will be some work that the highway crew will need to do. We received a quote from Casella and the compactor rep of a brand new, 4-yard compactor of \$25,274 to purchase. He estimates it would be about \$4000 for the electric work and for the highway crew to pour 12 more feet of concrete which is recommended for the compactor to sit on. He would also like to add a small warming hut for the employee who would be on that side. The total estimate is around \$30,000 to put this project in. If we move to this idea it will save us approximately \$4312 per year in mostly hauling fees.

Ms. Murphy asked if there were any revenues at all from the current program or if it is purely an expense. Mr. Morris said that the whole system is an enterprise fund so it is set up to bring in revenue on the trash side which is supposed to cover the recycling side. If it is run as efficiently as possible, it is supposed to break even. It is not supposed to make money. It is supposed to pay for itself.

Mr. Butler said to keep in mind that the state has changed the rules of the last few years on what is trash and what is recycling.

Ms. Murphy asked if a for-profit business could come in and just run the transfer station? Mr. Morris said he had spoken to Casella about their cost of doing that would be and it was substantially higher than what we are providing it for, as they want to make money.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Ms. Murphy asked what the potential change factors might be. Mr. Morris said they could start charging us more for hauling or if the cost of fuel goes up again, we would pay more for hauling, but we would make more money on the recycled plastics. He said this is an extremely volatile market. He said we had reserves for a long time and then we lowered the sticker prices to purposely get rid of the reserve and then we experienced the volatility.

Ms. Main asked what type of commitment we would have with Casella. Mr. Morris said it would depend on what type of contract we write with them. He said contract specifics have not been discussed at all at this point. If this is something the board was interested in doing, then we would move forward with contract talks and negotiations. It would have to be put out to bid. He expressed gratitude to Casella for their willingness to help with this research as it would have taken the Town much, much longer to do it. (He said that was not a plug for Casella, however.) The Windham Solid Waste District is going to RFP a regional transfer station plan., so we may want to wait and see how that turns out before we start building anything.

Mrs. Esty asked if the compactor could be rented rather than purchased outright. Mr. Morris said it could be leased, but did not recommend it because it is an ongoing expense forever. The compactor could be paid off in six years and would last twenty years (or more). A lease-to-own option might be worth looking into. Another option might be re-built compactors (they are \$2000 - \$3000 cheaper).

Ms. Murphy asked for clarification of “easier and safer recycling”. Mr. Morris said it's easier for the people as they just drive up and throw in their recycling as opposed to walking back and forth in front of traffic as they do now. It is also easier for the employees as right now they have rakes and they dig through the materials to pull out what doesn't belong in there. Mr. Butler added that people won't have to sort materials at home.

Mrs. Esty asked about our contract with Windham Solid Waste. Mr. Morris said we just signed a new one, but we have a 60-day out-clause.

No action was required at this meeting, but Mr. Morris wanted the board to start talking about this especially for the budget. He said this is looking like the best way to go right now. There is the \$30,000 cost, but we have \$60,000 in the reserve. We could spend that, put it in, and start moving forward. With our new costing schedule and moving to this, we may see a surplus at the end of the year (if everything stays the same).

Mr. Boyer said it was almost 9:00 PM.

Motion: To extend the meeting to finish up the agenda.

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

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Mr. Cole asked if there was anything that could be put off till the next meeting. Mr. Morris said #11 could be postponed. Ms. Murphy said #12 could be put off because “that policy’s got some issues”.

Vote: Unanimous in favor

10. Budget Committee Resignation

Brenda Richardson has submitted a letter of resignation from the budget committee.

Motion: To accept the resignation with regrets.

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

Mr. Boyer thanked Ms. Richardson for the time and energy she has given to the budget committee. It is appreciated.

Vote: Unanimous in favor

11. Grant Update (Municipal Planning, Better Connections, Hazard Mitigation)

Mr. Morris said he wanted to give the board a quick update. Last meeting the board signed the Municipal Planning Grant for \$9200 (the town's portion is \$400 – RPC will split the match if we allow them to facilitate the meetings). What we're looking at doing with that is in the packet. It is a series of meetings planned to beef up the town plan that was just written. What we're looking at there is long-term village planning. The plan in that grant is to host two meetings on each side of town in each village to discuss what the citizens of town would like to see the villages become in the future. It will also encompass a couple of joint meetings between the select board and the planning commission to move some of those thoughts forward. Talk with Regional Planning about building that addition to the town plan, to just beef up that portion of our town plan, but also to talk about some of the strategic planning we've done in here and maybe put some goals together that would be select board strategic plans that went along with the town plan changes. It will probably be regional planning but we might have to RFP out. Whoever is working us through that will put together an overall implementation plan as well and that would be submitted back to the state. That's what the Municipal Planning Grant will entail.

Another grant has come up – the Better Connections Grant. It is a \$50,000 grant (the exact match amount was not available at this meeting). This application is not due until January. It is based around planning and transportation in villages. We talked about what is our village plan and start to build some transportation alternatives - some different ways of implementing what we are already saying we want to do. It would not implement or provide engineering of anything, but it may start some artist renderings of what the village might look like with sidewalks, bike paths, etc. It might fund feasibility studies to provide costing. We are in the early stages of discussing what the grant might do for us. The initial thoughts are just to continue that planning phase and slowly push into the implementation of the other grant.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

(We are currently working under a municipal planning grant to align the zoning with the town plan.)

Mr. Mullen had put in for a Hazard Mitigation Grant to do some hazard planning, one of the goals – we've always earmarked our hazard plan to regional planning and regional is pushing to have towns have their own hazard plans so they can be a little more specific to the towns themselves. Mr. Mullen was awarded the grant before Mr. Morris arrived and the grant specified not to start until the sub-grant agreement. During our audit it was brought to our attention that we had been awarded this grant but never received the sub-grant agreement so we had never started on it. We did some pushing with FEMA and the state and we have received our sub-grant agreement. Mr. Morris received the signed copy back this day from the state. We have a start-date of November 4th. We will start moving forward with that. There should be an RFP for services available at the next board meeting. We will put together a committee with the fire chiefs, police chief, a rotating select board member, and a highway representative. There will be a few consultant meetings and a public meeting or two, and the consultant will write the plan and present it to the board for approval. We have approximately a year to get it done. RPC recommends getting the RFP out right away and getting the plan written within six months as it often takes FEMA a few months to approve plans that ask for changes.

12. Review *Social Service Appropriation Policy*

Mr. Morris said he wanted to address the policy right away because we are asking people for these documents. Ms. Murphy said the “policy goes against the policy”; there is much mixed messaging. She said the whole policy needs a complete rewrite. She said she was willing to work on rewriting it, but “what's going to drive how this policy lays out is this question in the 5-year deal.” If it is done on a yearly basis, it will simplify the policy. She would like that answered before she starts to rewrite it. She cited an example of how the policy enables a nonprofit to get on the warrant without having to submit any information at all.

Mrs. Esty asked what Ms. Murphy would recommend. Ms. Murphy said either put together a committee that reviews requests and make recommendations to the board – empower the committee to do the research, interviewing, etc. in place of town staff or put the requests on the ballot and the voters will annually vote on them. She said nonprofits can change significantly during a five-year cycle and envisioned taxpayer money going to nonprofits that are “having major issues” without (the town) knowing what's going on.

Mr. Morris said he thinks voters may be thinking that when they vote on the nonprofit requests on the ballot each year, that those are the only nonprofits to whom the town is providing funds in that year. They do not see the other large sum of money that has already been approved. Ms. Murphy agreed with that. Mr. Morris said if only four or five

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

nonprofits appear on the ballot each year, the voters do not realize that the town is funding twenty different organizations in addition to the those on the ballot.

Mrs. Esty said the reason the town chose the five-year cycle was to shorten the length of the ballot. Mr. Morris agreed and added that then it becomes a matter of how do you order the requests on the ballot because voters are inclined to say yes to only so many and those at the bottom of the list may lose out purely on the basis of their position on the ballot.

Ms. Murphy said the town has to set some criteria on how this would be done. She cited some examples of towns in New Hampshire to illustrate the idea that there are a variety of ways the town can about doing this. The most transparent method is an annual vote and let the taxpayers decide what they want to provide.

Both Ms. Murphy and Mrs. Esty said that many people were not aware that funds were being continually provided to nonprofits on a 5-year cycle.

Ms. Main said it is important for taxpayers to know what the organizations are providing to the town throughout the 5-year time.

Mr. Cole said he never considered the annual funding for each organization during the 5 years as being "automatic". The board has the discretion to fund or not during budget discussion based on the reports received. Ms. Murphy said there have been no reports and she said she didn't recall any such discussions during the budget discussions last year. And even if the board had those discussions, they have no information on which to base their decisions. Mrs. Esty agreed that in looking through the Town Report, it was learned that some agencies were on the ballot without submitting any information to the Town and they received funding anyway.

Mr. Butler said that all of the agencies receiving funding directly from the budget are all listed individually at the bottom of the budget. In that way, the board can decide who to fund or not. Ms. Murphy asked how many agencies are we talking about. The exact number was not known, but was estimated at 15. The funding amounts vary widely.

Ms. Murphy asked for guidance from the board on how they wanted the policy to be revised with regard to this discussion. Mr. Butler said some towns set a fixed amount to allocate to all social service agencies and then agencies apply for those funds. The individual articles could be eliminated from the budget and a committee would do the screening. The other two options are to put all agencies on the ballot every year or continue with a 3 or 5 year cycle and request reports from each agency each year during their funding cycle.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Ms. Murphy asked what the total allocation is right now. Mr. Butler said currently \$123,600, which includes the library at \$106,600, in the appropriations line. He said about \$17,000 is given to social service agencies. He read the amounts given to each agencies in the budget. Visiting Nurses gets \$9600; \$1800 goes to the bus services.

Mr. Morris said we could also provide a list to voters of who is already being funded so it is clearer. The discussion centered mainly on the length of the funding cycle.

Ms. Murphy said that going with a funding cycle of 3 years is fine, but the town must insist on having a report from each agency each year of their cycle and those reports must be in the town report each year or funding will be withdrawn. She said the board can decide what information to put in the report (to save page space) but the town should have complete information, as dictated by the town, from each agency each year.

13. Appointments

Motion: To appoint Christian Huebner as fence viewer.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

14. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for November 7, 2016 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$97,076.74
	Payroll	\$19,238.58
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$53,829.21
	Payroll	\$14,178.39
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$7,051.29
	Payroll	\$1,335.45
Library	Operating Expenses	\$1,934.94
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$8,476.26
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$200.00
Reserves		\$325.00
Grand Total	Operating Expense	\$168,893.44
	Payroll	\$34,753.42

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

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

Ms. Main and Ms. Murphy said once again there is a lot of overtime. Mr. Morris said that most all of the police overtime is through a grant and is reimbursed through the state. Mr. Boyer said with winter coming on there will be overtime.

Mr. Boyer said he and Mr. Morris have been talking about a “ride-along program” where board members tell the highway foreman they each would be “more than happy” to see what the highway crew does when they plow snow. They will call you when they are expecting a storm and you get to ride along with them. Mr. Morris said he has been meeting monthly with the highway department and talking about different ideas. He said it would be great if board members rode with the highway crew, but to also shadow other town employees for a day as well to learn what they actually do every day.

Ms. Murphy asked if the town is actually cutting checks for \$0.75 to WP Mason. Mr. Butler said he didn't know - that amount is for the water cooler rental.

Mrs. Esty announced that the VT Agency of Transportation, structure section, is developing a bridge replacement project for the bridge over Rt. 131 at exit 8 – the meeting is being held at 7 PM, Monday, November 21st at the regularly scheduled select board meeting.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

15. Future Meeting Agenda Items

Mr. Morris said the town-wide survey will be going out on election day.

16. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

Daniel E. Boyer, Chairperson

C. Peter Cole, Selector

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD

Kelly Murphy, Clerk

Lynn Esty, Vice-Chairperson

Amy Beth Main, Selector