

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board  
Martin Memorial Hall  
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT  
Monday, January 16, 2017  
7:00 PM  
REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

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

Select Board Members Absent: C. Peter Cole

Ed Morris, Town Manager

Note: There was no SAPA TV coverage of this meeting.

Others Present:

Wes Hazeltine                      Beverly Howe-Fluette  
Julia Lloyd Wright                Vic Hall

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 public hearings on the Town Plan at the Select Board meetings on February 6<sup>th</sup> and February 20<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Wright said there had been some last-minute changes and those dates may have to be changed.

3. Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda

There were no comments.

4. Review minutes from previous meetings – January 5, 2017 (Note: the date on the agenda was incorrect)

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. None

Motion: To accept the minutes of the January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017 meeting as written.

Made by: Mrs. Esty                      Second: Ms. Main

Vote: Unanimous in favor

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SELECT BOARD

**5. Aging in Place**

Ms. Kehew was not present.

**6. Weatherize Kick-Off Event/January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017/Weathersfield School**

Energy Coordinator, Julia Lloyd Wright and Vic Hall (from the Windsor energy committee) announced the kick-off of the "Weatherize the Upper Valley" program which is scheduled to take place on Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at the Weathersfield School from 10 AM to 11:30 AM. According to materials distributed by Ms. Wright, this is a pilot program that will provide guidance and assistance to homeowners in the upper valley in weatherizing their homes. They asked for assistance from the Board in getting the word out about the program and kick-off.

**7. Budget Review and Approval**

The board once again turned to reviewing and discussing the FY18 budget. Mr. Morris proposed reducing the employees' raises from 4% to 3% with the exceptions of Officer Muldoon and Mr. Butler, both of whom were due raises during the wage freeze. (Mr. Morris said he estimated that the amount they were each due is about 2%.) He stated that this across-the-board raise would be followed by a full compensation study and compensation plan to be put in place in the FY19 budget.

(Note: The Zoning Administrator will also receive a raise that is slightly above the 3% given to the other employees due to the terms of his employment.)

Mr. Morris then proposed using \$30,000 from the unspecified reserve fund to lower the tax rate by one penny. This would leave \$65,000 to put into the unspecified reserves. The Board members were not in favor of this proposal because it won't make a significant difference in the tax bill and because it philosophically goes against what they have been working toward, i.e. restoring the reserves.

If all of the articles on the warrant pass, the tax rate will be \$0.6952 (with the 3% raises). This translates to a \$134 increase on the tax bill for a \$200,000 home. It does not include the school tax.

There was a lengthy discussion of the long-term debt schedule and how the reserves can be used to help maintain a level tax rate over a long period of time.

Ms. Murphy asked Mr. Morris why he decided to reduce the employee raises. He said he based his decision on the board's discussions, testimony he had listened to, and additional research he had done through VLCT.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Ms. Main said that the board had “sliced and diced the budget to make it look pretty”, but that in the end, the taxpayers need to see the full reality of what it costs to run the town responsibly.

The board concluded that the budget was acceptable.

**Motion:** To approve the General Fund expenses for fiscal year 2018-2019 as amended this evening.

**Made by:** Mrs. Esty    **Second:** None

The motion was withdrawn.

**Motion:** To accept the General Fund budget as amended tonight (i.e. reducing the employee raises from 4% to 3% only; does not include using \$30,000 from the reserves).

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

**Motion:** To accept the FY18 Highway Fund budget with the amended changes to the staff salaries.

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

**Motion:** To accept FY18 Solid Waste budget with the amended 3% raise for the solid waste employees.

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

The board asked to have a discussion of the Swap Shop placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

**8. Approve Warning for Town Meeting**

Article 5: To vote on a public question by Australian ballot, the exact words of the question must be warned at one meeting and then voted on at the next meeting – they cannot be voted on at the same meeting as the original warning. This would mean either holding a special town meeting following the annual meeting or waiting until the next annual meeting to be able to have the question about the Fire District voted by Australian ballot.

The alternative is to call for ALL public questions to be voted on by Australian ballot, which would mean there would be no more floor votes. (This is the wording of Article 5.)

There followed a lengthy discussion about articles 4 and 5, which ended with the decision to remove both of them from the warning.

**TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT**  
**SELECT BOARD**

**Motion:** To remove articles 4 and 5 from the warning for Town Meeting.

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

**Motion:** To hold a public hearing before the start of the annual Town Meeting to discuss the John Woods report and the possibility of establishing a fire district.

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

The hearing will be held at 1:00 PM, with the Town Meeting to follow at 1:30 PM.

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Article 15: There was discussion on whether to borrow or appropriate the \$30,000. The consensus of the board was to leave it as a borrowing article.

**Motion:** To continue the meeting to 9:30 PM.

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Articles 16 - 27 were unchanged.

Article 28: Ms. Murphy said the board had already voted not to include the HCRS request and it should not be on the warning.

**Motion:** To accept the warning for the annual town meeting for March 4<sup>th</sup> as amended.

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

**9. Select Board Town Report Submission**

Ms. Main asked to add a sentence about the idea of a fire district. She also asked that more details be added about the surplus and how it was applied; and change "on the Highway side" be changed to "in the Highway Department".

**10. Zoning Board of Adjustment Resignation – Kevin Christie**

**Motion:** To accept the resignation with regrets.

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

**11. Appointments**

There were no appointments.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

12. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for January 16, 2017 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$13,351.96
	Payroll	\$13,216.94
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$29,883.71
	Payroll	\$12,289.75
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$6,504.60
	Payroll	\$1,220.66
Library	Operating Expenses	\$589.49
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$54.96
Reserves		\$0.00
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$50,384.72
	Payroll	\$26,727.35

Made by: Mrs. Esty      Second: Ms. Murphy

Vote: Unanimous in favor

13. Future Meeting Agenda Items

14. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Made by: Ms. Main      Second: Mrs. Esty

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
*deForest Bearse*

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Daniel E. Boyer, Chairperson

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C. Peter Cole, Selector

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Kelly Murphy, Clerk

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Lynn Esty, Vice-Chairperson

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Amy Beth Main, Selector

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