

# TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

## SELECT BOARD

Select Board  
Martin Memorial Hall  
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT  
Monday, December 18, 2017  
7:00 PM  
REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES  
APPROVED 1/3/2018

**Select Board Members Present:** Daniel Boyer  
C. Peter Cole  
Kelly Murphy

**Select Board Members Absent:** Amy Beth Main

**Ed Morris, Town Manager**

**Others Present:**

Edith Stillson	Westley Hazeltine	Nate Stearns
Ray Stapleton	Mark Girard	
Dave Fuller	Mike Todd	

**1. Call to Order**

Ms. Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:04PM.

**2. Comments from Select Board and Town Manager**

Mr. Boyer complimented the Town road crew for doing an excellent job taking care of the roads during the last couple of weather events. It is much appreciated.

Mr. Morris said anyone interested in serving on the Board in the vacant seat should submit a letter of interest to his office by Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. An appointment will probably be made on January 15<sup>th</sup>. The appointee will serve until Town Meeting. A petition to be placed on the ballot for election will be required should the appointee wish to continue serving on the Board. Three seats will be up for election in March.

**3. Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda**

Former Select Board member Dave Fuller said that a friend of his son's had just recently died of a drug overdose. He urged the Board to take the drug situation seriously and do what it can to assist law enforcement to address it as quickly as possible.

Mike Todd agreed, calling the drug situation an epidemic. He urged the Board to have a conversation with our local legislators and direct them to bring the Town's concerns back to Montpelier.

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#### **4. Review minutes from previous meetings – 12/04/2017**

**Additions/corrections/deletions:**

a. None

**Motion:** To accept the minutes of 12/4/2017

**Made by:** Mr. Boyer      **Second:** Mr. Cole

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

#### **5. Approve using Nathan Stearns as the new Town Attorney**

Chris Callahan is retiring so the Town needs a new attorney. Mr. Callahan recommends Nathan Stearns. Mr. Morris has met with Mr. Stearns and finds Mr. Stearns' perspective to be very similar to Mr. Callahan. It appears Mr. Stearns would be a good fit for the position.

Mr. Stearns spoke briefly, stating that he specializes in land use law, but does “a little bit of everything”. He would like to take on the position of Weathersfield's municipal attorney. He will be working for the Town of Windsor and for the Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission as well.

**Motion:** To start using Nathan Stearns as the Town Attorney effective immediately while using the remaining time with Chris (Callahan) to make a smooth transition.

**Made by:** Mr. Boyer      **Second:** Mr. Cole

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

#### **6. Approve acceptance of the Clean Water Block Grant**

Mr. Morris has budgeted \$20,000 of the \$44,800 match; he anticipates the rest will be in kind.

**Motion:** To approve acceptance of the Clean Water Block Grant in the amount of \$179,200 with a Town match of \$44,800.

**Made by:** Mr. Cole      **Second:** Mr. Boyer

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

#### **7. Town Plan Review – Chapter 6 Education**

The Planning Commission has completed the revisions to the Education chapter of the Town Plan as requested by the Select Board. The revisions were done in partnership with the school. The proposed chapter was before the Board for review and comment (pre-public hearing).

Mr. Cole pointed out the unfinished sentence at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph in section 6.2

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Ms. Murphy clarified the method of tuition payment for private schools versus public schools in the school choice program.

The consensus of the Board was that the revised chapter was very good.

### 8. Zoning Review

#### a. Home-Based Occupation and Home-Based Business

Comments:

Home Based Business Level 1: 4.5.3.1C (pg. 2) – Mr. Cole asked if an existing building could be used. Mr. Todd said it should be both new and existing.

#### b. Gasoline Stations/Convenience Store

Comments:

- Corporate logos are prohibited from the canopy – why? Mr. Todd said that some members of the Planning Commission think its too busy or an eyesore. The Board members did not agree with that.
- Section 4.4.1g – sounds vague; doesn't sound legal; the Board is committed to a review at the request of an abutter

#### c. Outdoor Lighting

No comments.

#### d. Signs

Comments:

3.8.4.1C – Non-reflective colors and surfaces – are these required? allowed? Prohibited? It needs a directive.

#### e. Waivers

No comments.

#### f. *(Accessory Dwelling Units – on agenda but not discussed)*

Mr. Todd will take the Board's comments back to the Planning Commission for consideration.

### 9. Review Opt-out vote from last meeting

Ms. Murphy said the Board had held an executive session at the last meeting regarding a particular employee.

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Mr. Cole said the opt-out was a separate issue from the executive session, which was directed toward a single employee in a specific situation. It was dealt with this year with a general discussion about the insurance opt-out option.

Mr. Morris said (with Ms. Dango's consent to discuss openly) Ms. Dango and her husband are Medicare-eligible, but they have not enrolled because it would be a lot more expensive for them to opt-in to the supplements. He said they talked about it for some time. The Select Board did not want to make an individual exception in the personnel policy under discussion (moving away from the \$1500, because it is not motivating anybody to opt-out and it is costing the Town more money than it did in the beginning). He said the motion was made after the Board came out of executive session to go ahead and make the change discussed in the personnel policy – to allow Ms. Dango to opt-out and to work on getting Medicare before the end of the month. This one change – moving Ms. Dango to a supplement and allowing her to opt out and use that money to pay for the supplement will save the Town a little bit over \$9000 in this budget cycle.

Mr. Cole said this is the whole point of having the opt-out. It has been in place for 20+ years. It was reduced to \$1500 4 or 5 years ago. Since then everybody who was opted out is back in. While the opt out may seem expensive, it is still far less than the cost of the insurance. Mr. Morris said the employees who opt out are receiving a lower compensation than their peers who receive the insurance for the same job. The world of medical benefits has changed since the opt-out was changed to \$1500. Opt out is possible only if the employee can show proof of insurance through another source.

Mr. Todd said there should be no opt-out payment when two employees (of the same family) both work for the Town. He acknowledged the uniqueness of Ms. Dango's situation.

Mr. Fuller took issue with:

- Mr. Cole voting on the opt-out
- that the opt-out policy was adopted without the customary three readings
- paying 50% of the premium for the opt-out (no other towns pay that much)
- how the Board arrived at the 50% with a cap of \$10,000. Mr. Cole said it was “guess” as to how much it would take to make it attractive enough for people to want to take it. Mr. Morris said it came from discussions about Ms. Dango's situation, although the Board did decide not to make an individual Medicare option; just to change the opt-out to be able to cover that, so Ms. Dango would have the same options as every other employee. Mr. Fuller said he would like it to be a mathematical formula rather than a single fixed amount.

Mr. Fuller said he thought this policy should go back to the Board. Mr. Todd suggested doing some research into what the residents of the Town are having to deal with.

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Mr. Fuller suggested not mixing health care in with personnel policy.

### 10. Personnel Policy (Second Reading)

Ms. Murphy asked that when the editing is complete, that the entire document be re-formatted.

Comments:

- Page 7 at the top, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, last sentence – typo
- Page 11 at the bottom, “Employee Discipline” - the statement regarding the Town's right to reduce hours or eliminate positions – how does that connect with discipline? Mr. Cole and Mr. Morris explained that there is no connection.
- Page 18, Opt-out Program, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph down – the sentence doesn't read quite right
- Page 18 – Alternative Coverage – change “will” to “may”
- Page 4 - “employees” should be “employee's”
- Remove the address on page 6

It was agreed to move the policy to a third reading.

### 11. Fire Services Discussion

#### a. Budget

Both departments provided budgets to the Board for review. Ms. Murphy said it is difficult to compare the two because they are presented so differently. Under Expenses, the line item names come directly from the information provided for the Town Report. Categories with zeros may not be zero because there is no expense, but because it may have been called something different.

Expenses relating to the new fire truck were pulled out to try and get a clearer day-to-day program.

Ms. Murphy continues to request a report of the total cost of fire services for the Town. Presently it appears to be \$335,588.

Ms. Murphy stated that this discussion is intended to be about how to provide the best fire services for the Town with the money we have in accordance with the fire contract.. It is not intended to be a critique of the departments.

Mr. Girard questioned:

- Gain of assets for the town -

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- West Weathersfield disposal of equipment -
- Town allocations to the fire (?) 45,000 – expense to the Town; income/expense to the fire departments
- General Liability Insurance/Fire Insurance under the Town may be double expensed
- Equipment reserves

### 12. Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Presentation

Mr. Morris had some technical difficulties creating the spreadsheets. \$45,478 appears on multiple lines for some unknown reason. Also some of the lines appeared to not be adding correctly. There were multiples lines that had been added and populated by the previous accountant. He cautioned against going by the totals shown on the sheets. The individual lines should be fairly accurate. All departments are represented in the budget sheets for discussion.

#### Fire Departments

Each department is requesting \$32,500, despite the fact that the Town is now covering all maintenance of the equipment. Ms. Murphy wanted to know how much is spent on that maintenance both through the Fire Commission and what each of the departments have spent. Because the departments report their expenses differently it is difficult to get a clear idea. Ms. Murphy asked what the allocation would be used for. Mr. Girard said it would pay for station expenses; small equipment, fire protection gear. (The annual allocation was increased last year to provide funds for turnout gear and hoses.)

Ms. Murphy asked that the two departments create a uniform budget reporting format. He also asked the departments to bring their call volume to the next meeting.

Mr. Girard said that the idea of offering stipends to firefighters to improve training turnout. Mr. Morris said that WWVFD asked for \$9000 to be in this year's budget for this stipend. He said it was put off to the side for discussion.

**Motion:** To extend meeting till done

**Made by:** Mr. Boyer Second: Mr. Cole

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

#### Highway

The Service to Solid Waste lines have been reduced due to the change to zero sort. Salaries and compensations shown in this budget are based as much as possible on the new matrix presented previously. The “ladder” for the highway department is still under construction.

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A 14% increase in overtime seemed a bit too high. It does depend in large part on the weather. Mr. Morris will take another look at it.

The budget reflects the appropriate pay for the new director; it also includes insurance for a family instead of a single person.

The computer line has been finalized yet it will reflect our new contract with CCI.

Equipment rental was increased to allow for work to be done under the new storm water program.

The guardrail line has been increased significantly to catch up.

### Solid waste

Ms. Murphy questioned the solid waste tokens and asked to bring it down to \$130,000. Mr. Morris believes that we are taking in more recycling and less solid waste. It was agreed to reduce it to \$140,000.

This budget shows a \$2000 deficit; Ms. Murphy suggested some places to reduce it.

### Treasurer

There were no changes made.

### Library

The trustees are looking to put the librarian on full time.

## 13. Appointments

There were no appointments.

## 14. Approve Warrants

**Motion:** To approve the warrants for December 18, 2017 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$39,421.06
	Payroll	\$11,938.87
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$29,041.39
	Payroll	\$8,890.33
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$6,616.76
	Payroll	\$1,384.09
Library	Operating Expenses	\$2,385.24

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	Payroll	\$1,557.97
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$100.00
Dry Hydrant Fund		\$191.77
Reserves		\$695.20
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$78,451.42
	Payroll	\$23,816.26

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

**15. Future Meeting Agenda Items**

police, revisit fire, planning/zoning, town clerk, residual admin

**16. Adjourn**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting

**Made by:** Mr. Boyer      **Second:** Mr. Cole

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
*deForest Bearse*

**WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel E. Boyer, Selector

\_\_\_\_\_  
C. Peter Cole, Vice-Chairperson

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Amy Beth Main, Clerk

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Kelly Murphy, Chairperson

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(VACANT)