

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board

Martin Memorial Hall  
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT  
Monday, November 5, 2018

7:00 PM

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

**Select Board Members Present:** N. John Arrison  
Daniel Boyer  
C. Peter Cole  
Tom Leach (by telephone)  
Kelly Murphy

**Select Board Members Absent:**

**Ed Morris, Town Manager**

**Others Present:**

Edith Stillson	Richard Watson	Denise Anderson	Dave Picknell
Travis Compo	Paul Tillman	Mark Girard	Ben Waters
NaToshya Spaulding	Josh Compo	Darrin Spaulding	Josh Dauphin
Ray Stapleton	Jordyn Bagalio	Sam Spaulding	Tracy Dauphin
Cheryl Watson	Mychael Spaulding	Nancy Nutile-McMenemy	Darlene Kelly

**1. Call to Order**

Ms. Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

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

Ms. Murphy announced the publication of the first Town Newsletter (posted on the Town's website and Facebook page), put together by Mr. Morris and (most of) the department heads. Mr. Morris is planning to publish the newsletter quarterly. Ms. Murphy asked the Selectboard to consider adding a piece to it to highlight the good things that are happening in Town. The next issue is planned for January

Mr. Morris said that the Planning Commission had held a public hearing on several zoning bylaw changes and asked the Selectboard to schedule their public hearing on the changes as soon as feasible. The Planning Commission would like to see these changes implemented as soon as possible. (There is a 21-day delay following adoption of bylaw changes by the Board.) The Board set the hearing date for their December 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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Ms. Murphy read a thank you letter from Meals on Wheels, thanking the Town for their appropriation.

Mr. Morris attended the Planning Commission meeting regarding the solar project on the Hodgdon property on Route 5. (No Selectboard members attended.) The Planning Commission asked that screening be provided for any solar panels that might be visible from Route 5 and that there be a security bond posted to cover the cost of dismantling the panels and restoring the site should the project be discontinued. They made it clear in their comments, however, that the Town remains in favor of the project.

The Board signed thank you notes addressed to Butler Bus Service for providing a bus in which to tour the historic site in Town on the day of the Town Festival.

There will be a financial report available at the next meeting. Ms. Murphy asked that these reports be provided to the Board on a quarterly basis.

Darrin Spaulding said that many of the telephones on the 674 exchange are still not functioning due to a downed tree on Saturday. (The Town Office phones are not working either.) People experiencing difficulties were invited to come to the Town Office so it could be reported to the phone company via cell phone.

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

Attorney Denise Anderson announced that she has been retained by the Ascutney Volunteer Fire Department to resolve a dispute over \$7000 in invoices that the Town has not paid. It was agreed to place the matter on the Board's next meeting agenda.

### **4. Review minutes from previous meetings – 10/15/2018**

#### **Additions/corrections/deletions:**

a. None

**Motion:** To accept the minutes of Monday, October 15, 2018.

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

#### **Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye

Daniel Boyer - Aye

C. Peter Cole - Aye

Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye

Kelly Murphy - Aye

### **5. Selectboard Work Request Discussion**

Ms. Murphy asked to have this topic on the agenda because Mr. Arrison had contacted Mr. Stapleton about problems with storm water ponding in the library's driveway. She said the Board had discussed this idea of Selectboard members communicating directly with

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department heads before and said this was just a reminder to Board members to refrain from doing it. If a board member has an issue to discuss, they are to bring it to the next board meeting and bring it up under the "Comments" section of the agenda. The manager can then work through it with the appropriate department head. She said she did not want to see department heads having to respond directly to individual board members.

Mr. Morris said he is working on resolving the drainage issue at the library, but the problem is bigger than it seems and will take time and money to fix it.

Mr. Arrison said that his email had been addressed to Mr. Morris and only cc'd to Mr. Stapleton. He said he had never directed a department head to do anything and that was not his intention with this communication. He disagreed with having to wait for a board meeting to bring things up.

Mr. Morris said that clearly if a matter is urgent, it should not have to wait until the next meeting (e.g. a downed tree in the road). However, if it's an ongoing issue or will require a long-term project (e.g. storm water drainage in the wrong place), it should come to the board.

### **6. Discussion Police Contracted Services**

Mr. Morris and Chief Daniels have proposed contracted police services to Reading, Baltimore and Cavendish as authorized by the board some time ago. Baltimore and Cavendish have expressed interest in the idea.

Weathersfield is proposing 20-25 hours a week of service to Cavendish and 5-8 hours a week to Baltimore, based on analyses of call volumes in both towns.

Cost analyses indicate that an hourly rate of \$65 would cover administrative costs plus allow for vehicle maintenance and adding some to the reserve account for future vehicles.

If Cavendish agrees to the proposal, the Town will be able to hire another officer. If Baltimore agrees, then additional help will be needed.

Mr. Morris believes there would be enough work and revenue if Cavendish signs on to offset the cost of a full time officer. He said this would help build the Weathersfield police force with little to no cost to the Town. There would be a slight increase in police coverage in Weathersfield (increase from 80 to 120 hours), but a lot more time on emergency calls. He felt this would be a benefit to all of the Towns and urged the board to take a look at it.

Mr. Arrison asked to see the math that generated the figures. He and Mr. Leach asked what would happen if we were to lose an officer when we're obligated to other towns.

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Mr. Fuller was concerned that Chief Daniels is already overworked and that administering this program will pull him away from being in the field. He didn't see how two cars will work. He also felt the board already had a great deal "on its plate this year", and urged caution moving forward.

There was additional discussion and questions. The board will revisit the topic at another meeting.

### **7. Municipal Fire Services Process Discussion**

#### **a. Town Meeting Preparation**

#### **b. Fire Commission**

#### **c. Chief**

Town Meeting Preparation -

At issue is whether the board should exercise its statutory authority to establish a municipal fire department on its own motion or whether the voters should decide.

Mr. Arrison and Ms. Murphy preferred to see the voters decide primarily because of the magnitude of the action being taken.

Mr. Cole, Mr. Boyer, and Mr. Leach preferred to have the board make the decision on its own on the grounds that the voters will make their preference known by voting the budget - which would contain the cost of the municipal department - up or down.

All expressed their support for a municipal department and the desire to move this along. Mr. Cole expressed his regret that the Ascutney Fire department does not support the plan. Ms. Murphy expressed deep concern for the misinformation being spread and the scare tactics being employed.

Ray Stapleton said it would be clearer for the voters to understand if the board agrees to establish the department and then comes to them (the voters) with a clear understanding of what the cost would be.

Nancy Nutile-McMenemy felt the process has been flawed from the start and that there wasn't enough information for the board to make a decision.

Josh Dauphin disagreed saying there was more than enough information based on multiple discussions over the past few years.

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Darrin Spaulding said he had yet “to see any paperwork on the cost”. He cited difficulties with a fire services in Norwich. He claimed he doesn't do more than 8 hours of paperwork a week. He asked if anyone had checked NFPA standards regarding municipal fire services. He said the new chief would be able to “get rid of the bad people” and asked who the bad people were that would be removed.

Mr. Arrison said he wanted to see the bottom line on the general fund budget before deciding.

Mr. Morris said the board needs to decide what type of chief it wants to create the numbers for the budget. He urged the board not to make the decision based solely on the dollars – the decision must be based on what is best for the Town. Once that's established, then everyone works to make it happen.

Mark Girard said the new chief would cost \$110,000 plus an additional \$50,000. He said there would be a morale problem with a paid chief and a volunteer force.

Mr. Cole urged the board to continue with the process; assume the Town would hire a full time chief and work together to make it work.

Ms. Murphy called for a motion on creating the department.

**Motion:** To enact the board's statutory authority pursuant to 24 VSA §1951 to create a municipal fire department.

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye  
Daniel Boyer - Aye  
C. Peter Cole - Aye  
Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye  
Kelly Murphy - Aye

**Motion:** To direct the town manager to present a budget for a full time fire chief and associated costs

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye  
Daniel Boyer - Aye  
C. Peter Cole - Aye  
Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye  
Kelly Murphy - Aye

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It was agreed that the board would set aside 1 hour of meeting time during a regular monthly meeting and 2 hours of time during a special meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month to discuss the transition to a municipal fire department. Members of the fire commission will be invited to participate in these discussions.

**Motion:** To suspend further meetings of the fire commission until further notice

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye  
Daniel Boyer - Aye  
C. Peter Cole - Aye  
Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye  
Kelly Murphy - Aye

The first special meeting will be on Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup> at 6-8 PM. In future, meetings will be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. The board will dedicate the 1<sup>st</sup> hour of their regular meeting time at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the month for additional discussion.

The board took a 5-minute recess at 8:47 PM. The meeting resumed at 8:52 PM.

**8. Budget Discussion**

**a. Benefits Discussion**

Through much research and discussion and with changes in health insurance laws, Mr. Morris and Ms. Kelly propose to join a new association administered medical group – BRS – and offer their plans. This proposal will save the Town \$22,704. There have been multiple discussions with town employees about this proposal and Mr. Morris will work with employees needing assistance until their HSAs are fully funded. The cost to join the association is \$250.

**Motion:** To we proceed with the BRS plan as laid out by the manager

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye  
Daniel Boyer - Aye  
C. Peter Cole - Aye  
Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye  
Kelly Murphy - Aye

At this time, it was after 9:00 PM.

**Motion:** To extend the meeting to get through the budget

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye

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Daniel Boyer - Aye  
C. Peter Cole - Aye  
Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye  
Kelly Murphy - Aye

### **b. Highway Budget – Center Road Paving discussion**

In response to the question of “Why did the wages jump so much in highway?”, Mr. Morris said, “We moved Ryan's wages in from the mechanic; we took our highest paid employee and forecasted their wages into the assistant highway superintendent position.”

\$80,000 was inserted for highway paving. Mr. Morris said Pike's estimation for paving Center Road is \$550,000; however Pike has since said their prices are going up by 3% (\$16,500). (This does not include the cost of shoulder work.) This is the cost of repaving from Rt. 131 to the Springfield line. Aiken Hill would be ground down completely and repaved (base and top coats).

We are expecting a \$200K grant from the state this year (\$175K plus a \$25K match from us). We have \$116K in reserves. (Mr. Morris recommends only using \$100K from the reserve.) If we budget for \$50K (not the \$80K in the draft budget in the packet), we would need a loan for \$216K. Mr. Morris recommended budgeting a bit more than \$50K to allow for paving repair.

Mr. Stapleton preferred to budget \$80K so he can start a paving budget. Mr. Morris recommended \$50-55K, but agreed with Mr. Stapleton. He would like to move toward \$135K worth of paving a year.

Mr. Morris said we could float ourselves a loan from reserves; we have the cash flow to cover it. A \$200K loan is a \$40K a year payment for 5 years. We would pay it back with interest. The finance director and the auditors feel we could do it. The auditors would mandate it be paid back with interest so future board members could not avoid it. He said it's an option for the board to consider.

Mr. Fuller stated he was opposed to this option.

If the board decides to borrow the money, the first payment would not be due until the next budget cycle.

There was brief discussion on the dire state of Kendricks Corner Road and Ascutney Store Road and the need to budget for and prioritize roads that need paving.

Mr. Arrison suggested creating a line item for paving that would automatically go into a reserve account for paving if not used in any given year.

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**c. Solid Waste Budget**

We are about \$5K in hole with no money going into reserves.

Mr. Morris recommended changing how we do things with West Windsor. Currently we give them stickers and give them a bill; they pat us checks from their people. Mr. Morris recommended selling them stickers for \$65 a piece, no \$5 2<sup>nd</sup> sticker, the town of West Windsor writes us a check. If there are any left over at the end of the year, we would refund their money. We would do the same with the punch cards.

Mr. Stapleton said we will need to replace the compactor soon.

**Motion:** That we sell bulk stickers and tickets to West Windsor

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye  
Daniel Boyer - Aye  
C. Peter Cole - Aye  
Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye  
Kelly Murphy - Aye

**d. Finance**

There were no questions.

**e. Listers**

There were no questions.

**f. Clerk**

There were no questions.

**9. Town Report Distribution**

This item was tabled.

**10. Boat Access Discussion**

This item was tabled.

**11. Appointments**

**Motion:** To appoint John Broker Campbell to the Zoning Board of Adjustment

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye

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Daniel Boyer - Aye  
C. Peter Cole - Aye  
Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye  
Kelly Murphy - Aye

12. Approve Warrants

**Motion:** To approve the warrants for 11/5/2018 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$112,433.31
	Payroll	\$21,954.34
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$120,982.72
	Payroll	\$12,729.27
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$21,197.78
	Payroll	\$2,342.51
Library	Operating Expenses	\$1,355.57
	Payroll	\$2,807.28
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$6,624.51
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$50.00
Reserves		\$0.00
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$262,643.89
	Payroll	\$39,833.40

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye  
Daniel Boyer - Aye  
C. Peter Cole - Aye  
Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye  
Kelly Murphy - Aye

**Motion:** To approve the warrant for library operating expenses for 11/5/2018 for \$411.54.

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye  
Daniel Boyer - Aye  
C. Peter Cole - Aye

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Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye

Kelly Murphy - Aye

**Motion:** To approve the warrant for highway operating expenses for 11/5/2018 for \$2,300.

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye

Daniel Boyer - Aye

C. Peter Cole - Aye

Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye

Kelly Murphy – Aye

**13. Future Meeting Agenda Items**

Thursday – 6-8 PM; first work meeting for municipal fire dept

Cady Hill hearing on November 19<sup>th</sup> – site visit at 6:16

Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> – ordinance meeting

**14. Adjourn**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting

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

**Roll Call Vote:**

N. John Arrison - Aye

Daniel Boyer - Aye

C. Peter Cole - Aye

Tom Leach (by telephone) - Aye

Kelly Murphy - Aye

The meeting adjourned at 9:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*deForest Bearse*

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

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N. John Arrison, Selector

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Daniel E. Boyer, Selector

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C. Peter Cole, Vice-Chairperson

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Tom Leach, Clerk

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Kelly Murphy, Chairperson