

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board

Martin Memorial Hall

5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT

Monday, September 17, 2018

7:00 PM

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

APPROVED WITH CORRECTION 10/1/2018

Select Board Members Present: N. John Arrison
Daniel Boyer
C. Peter Cole
Tom Leach
Kelly Murphy

Select Board Members Absent:

Ed Morris, Town Manager

Others Present:

Otis Munroe	Josh Dauphin	David Fuller	John Broker-Campbell
NaToshya Spaulding	Ray Stapleton	Patrick O'Grady	Ernest Shand
Nicholas Koloski	Mychael Spaulding	David Picknell	Robert Knight

1. Call to Order

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

2. Comments from Select Board and Town Manager

There were no comments.

3. Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda

Dave Fuller said he had been given a gift certificate to the Inn at Weathersfield from the Select Board two years ago that he had not used. He is going to raffle it off with the proceeds to go to the music program at the Weathersfield School. The raffle will coincide with the Town Festival.

4. Review minutes from previous meetings – 9/4/2018

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. None

Motion: To accept the minutes of 9/4/2018

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

5. Discuss FEMA Buyout of Amsden Store Building

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John Broker-Campbell, Regional Floodplain manager presented a slideshow about flooding and the FEMA buyout process. He cautioned that the buyout process is slow (6-18 months). He recommends submitting a complete application the first time (instead of partial “place-holder”). Once the building is torn down the land remains as open space in perpetuity. There should be no out of pocket money from town other than the 25% which in this case may be absorbed by the owner. The Town can apply to the state for cost over-runs if there's an open pot of money available at the time of submission.

Next step – Mr. Morris will contact the family and get back to the board with the decision. The deadline to apply is mid-end October.

6. Award Gird Lot Road RFP

Six companies bid on the Gird Lot ditching project. Jarvis and Sons was the lowest bidder at \$25,313.50. Funding for the work will come from a Better Back Roads grant and our Grant in Aid money. Because the bid was less than the funds available for the project, Mr. Morris asked the board to authorize using the extra funds to continue ditching on Gird Lot as far as possible. The board agreed.

Motion: To award Jarvis and Sons the Gird Lot Road ditching job to complete the four section bids as well as completing ditching on Gird Lot Road to a distance where the cost does not exceed \$42,606 as awarded in the FY2019 Grant in Aid and Better Back Roads grants.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

7. Reword Fire Department Reserve Warning from 9-4-2018

The board made a motion at the previous meeting to move \$20,212 from the general fund surplus to the fire equipment reserve fund. However, the actual amount to move may ultimately be different, so Mr. Morris asked the board to revise the motion to allow for unknowns. The board agreed. A motion to rescind the original motion was required before the new motion could be made.

Motion: To rescind the original motion

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Motion: To move the entire fire department surplus in an amount up to \$20,000 from the general fund surplus to the fire equipment reserve fund.

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

Ms. Murphy asked how it was possible to move an unspecified amount of money. Mr. Morris said it won't actually be unknown as the auditors will assist in the final figures.

Vote: Mr. Arrison voted no, all others voted in favor. Motion carried.

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8. Fire Department Appropriation Letter

Ms. Murphy had asked Mr. Morris to draft a letter defining the annual fire department appropriation as budgeted (\$27,500 with \$5,000 allocated for PPE and the remaining \$22,500 for approved operational expenses). The letter would be signed by both department chiefs and the board. The board had previously agreed to sign it. Mr. Morris created the letter and all of the board members signed it.

9. Municipal Fire Service Presentation

Mr. Morris presented a comprehensive municipal fire service study in which he analyzed the transition from two private non-profit volunteer departments to a single municipal fire department.

The report begins with a brief history of events leading to this report, including the hiring of a consultant – John Wood - to examine fire services in the town and the recommendations resulting from the consultant's review. Mr. Morris reviewed the list of Mr. Wood's recommendations for improving fire services in the Town.

Mr. Morris cited the criteria he analyzed in his study and explained how the analysis was conducted. He cited a long list of people, towns and organizations he consulted in his analysis. He also included comments from the joint fire commission/select board meeting on August 13th.

Recommendations Mr. Morris made included:

- To make the transition with volunteer firefighters and then change to paid on-call personnel afterwards
- To move to a full-time salaried fire chief (as opposed to volunteer or part-time) at a cost of \$111,221 – a cost which would be lowered as a result of multiple increased efficiencies and some budget changes
- To get rid of two engines and one small response vehicle
- To purchase a 2000+gallon tanker with a 750 gpm pump

All of John Wood's recommendations would be covered by this model according to Mr. Morris's study with multiple other benefits realized by the Town as well.

Mr. Morris acknowledged that there are some disadvantages in this model, but felt most of them would be offset by other advantages. He also said that the town must recognize the long history, countless hours and immense devotion of the two non-profits in their provision of fire services to the Town for 60+ years. He further acknowledged that there are still many more questions to address.

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Now the board must weigh the advantages against the increased costs and decide what is best for the Town.

The board was deeply appreciative of the depth and breadth of Mr. Morris's report.

It was agreed that there would be no discussion of this at this meeting. Everyone was urged to take a copy of the report (printed copies were available) and take the time to study it, digest it, and be prepared to discuss it at the next meeting.

Ms. Murphy asked if there were any items that needed additional research. Mr. Koloski said more research was needed to determine what a reduced code 3 response would look like.

Any additional questions should be emailed to Mr. Morris who will tabulate them and bring them to the next meeting so they can be answered in public in front of the camera. This will keep the process as transparent as possible. Mr. Morris will post his report on the Town's website. Ms. Murphy urged the public to view the SAPA TV coverage of the August 13th joint meeting.

10. Cady Hill Road Discussion

The estimated cost of making this intersection safe and compliant with the Act 64 Stormwater permit is \$413,000, not including the cost of tree removals and additional right-of-way width. Alternatives include discontinuing the road or reclassifying it to a Class IV or a trail.

Mr. Stapleton recommended not throwing up the road, but rather make it a trail – people like to walk and bike it. Both Mr. Morris and the Polic Chief agree with this option. The fire departments have no issues with not being able to use the road.

There was discussion of possibly not maintaining it in the winter.

There are definitely problems with GPS and Google that will have to be addressed, perhaps with signage that would redirect large vehicles to continue on Perkins Hill Road to get to Center Road.

Mr. Morris will do the necessary research regarding closing the road for the winter and scheduling hearings to reclassify it.

11. Budget Discussion

a. Capital Improvement Plan

The board reviewed the draft CIP. Mr Morris said he has been working with department heads to complete it. He is now looking for feedback from the board.

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Mr. Leach said he liked the way the highway department information was presented. An implementation plan for moving forward is needed.

Ms. Murphy asked for a summary spreadsheet.

Mr. Arrison remains concerned about tax increases.

Mr. Morris said he is asking department heads to keep budget increases below 4%. He said he is planning to present the highway budget at the next meeting and to have the budget nailed down in full by the Christmas break.

Mr. Cole said he doesn't want the board to be short-sighted and cut the budget for the sake of a lower tax rate in a single year.

Ms. Murphy urged increased efficiencies on all department heads, because the town government needs to be accountable to the taxpayers. She would like to see how requested increases are being offset by increased efficiencies as part of the budget report.

To be continued.

b. Other budget considerations

12. Appointments

Ms. Murphy read the list of openings.

a. Conservation Commission (Two Openings) – Nathalie Belleau

The board received a letter from Nathalie Belleau asking to be appointed to the Commission. She said she had been nominated and approved by the Commission on 8/24.

Motion: To appoint Nathalie Belleau to the Conservation Commission

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

13. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 9/17/2018 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$40,522.41
	Payroll	\$14,218.70
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$34,458.91

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	Payroll	\$8,608.93
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$9,347.70
	Payroll	\$1,437.71
Library		
	Operating Expenses	\$3,258.12
	Payroll	\$1,782.69
Grants		
	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Agency Monies		
	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Reserves		
		\$0.00
Long Term Debt		
		\$0.00
Grand Totals		
	Operating Expenses	\$87,587.14
	Payroll	\$26,048.03

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

14. Future Meeting Agenda Items

15. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

N. John Arrison, Selector

Daniel E. Boyer, Selector

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C. Peter Cole, Vice-Chairperson

Tom Leach, Clerk

Kelly Murphy, Chairperson