

**TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT**

**SELECT BOARD**

**Select Board**

**Weathersfield School**

**135 Schoolhouse Road**

**Monday May 20, 2019**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING TOWN MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**APPROVED WITH CORRECTIONS 6/3/2019**

**Select Board Members Present:** N. John Arrison  
Daniel Boyer  
David Fuller  
Kelly Murphy  
Michael Todd

**Select Board Members Absent:**

**Ed Morris, Town Manager**

**1. Call to Order**

Ms. Murphy called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM.

Ms. Murphy read the current list of vacancies on the Town's boards and committees. (It was noted that there are no open seats on the Planning Commission.)

**2. Agenda Review**

No changes were requested.

**3. Fire Discussion – Public Input**

Ms. Murphy opened the floor to discuss fire services.

Lisa Slade asked if the Board would reconsider its vote to create a municipal fire department. There was no response from the Board.

Ms. Murphy again urged people to watch the SAPA TV videos, to read the John Wood report and Mr. Morris's report. The videos show the firefighters themselves talking about what actually goes on in their everyday operations; issues that the public does not see; the issues that exist behind the scenes.

She said there are no easy solutions to these issues.

Tim Austin said the Town carries 100% of the liability (of fire services) with no control. He felt the Town should have control over operations if it has to carry the liability.

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Darrin Spaulding said his department has its own insurance on their fundraising activities. Ms. Murphy said if the issue is big enough, the Town would get hauled into it anyway.

Patti Arrison said that perhaps it is time to reframe the questions and focus on what's best for the Town and all involved. She suggested that we put an unfair burden on the volunteers in asking them to keep up with ever increasing hazards. She said it was unfair to burden the chiefs with having to keep up with ever more regulations. She felt that a paid professional chief might be better able to keep up with the demands we currently put on the volunteers.

Joseph Renaud said the firefighters volunteer to do what they do. He said they train and keep up with the hazmat issues and regulations as best they can.

Tyler Harwell suggested that perhaps the Board should have asked the voters to create the municipal department.

Mr. Arrison said a municipal department would eliminate the liability that nonprofits carry on their own now.

The discussion ended there.

#### **4. Town Solar Project Discussion**

The Town has signed a nonbinding letter of agreement with Norwich Solar for installing a 500KW solar array at the transfer station and another at the highway garage. Each would be about 5 acres in size. The Town would receive \$11,000 annually in lease payments from each site and realize a 12% discount on its power if the arrays are built. The Board has met with the Planning Commission on the matter and is continuing to seek public input.

Norwich Solar representative Steve Snyder described the regulatory process that must be completed for the project. The letter of intent gives the company some measure of assurance before they embark on the expensive and lengthy process.

Charles Horton asked how the Town can lease town-owned land to a private company. He then said that this is a money issue and must be decided by the voters.

Abutting property owners Nikita Lenahan and Frank Kowalik expressed strong objections to the array destined for the transfer station property. They are building a house on property above the station and believed that their lot would remain private and secluded. They are already experiencing what they described as serious water issues arising from a solar project going in on one side of them and fear that this solar project, which would be on their other side, will cause additional water issues from extensive tree-cutting, in addition to having to see the array from their property once the trees are cleared. They felt they had not been given

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notice in a timely way and were only finding out about it by accident. They expressed a deep distrust of the process and those involved in it.

Mr. Snyder assured them that the State of Vermont is rigorous in its permitting process; that the projects are insured and bonded to address issues should they arise and offered to walk the property with them to discuss it further. He assured them that if their issues could not be resolved, the project wouldn't happen.

Mr. Fuller said this is a good project – that the land on top of the old landfill can't be used for anything else. He said the Town's project would not be tied into the private project that Ms. Lenahan had referred to.

Ms. Murphy said the Board had already nixed a proposed site in the Bow in support of a farmer who wanted to continue using the ground for growing hay. She wants that same sense of support here and doesn't want this to be an "us vs them" situation. She also wants the issues with the private owner kept separate from the Town's project.

Mr. Todd said the State is limiting what the Towns can do to regulate siting of these projects and that the Planning Commission is working on countering that. He urged people to voice their opinions to the Commission to help shape the Commission's plans.

At 9:00 PM, Ms. Murphy called for a motion to extend the meeting to 9:30 PM.

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

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

The Board acknowledged that they may have appeared to have rushed things a bit, but it is because they are trying to beat the cap in July. However, notice to abutters had been prompt once the letter of intent was signed. Ms. Murphy said that the Board can pull out of the arrangement at any time if circumstances so dictate.

Mr. Horton asked what will happen in 10 years when hazardous material starts leaching out of the landfill – can the panels be removed to facilitate clean up. Mr. Snyder said they won't build on a site with that potential, but the panels could easily be removed.

### 5. Review minutes from previous meetings – 05/06/2019

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

- a. Corrections for clarification on page 4

**Motion:** To accept the minutes of 5/6/3029 as corrected

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

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**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

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

Mr. Todd asked to discuss swearing in for planning commission members (and maybe all appointed board members) at the next meeting. Ms. Murphy suggested adding qualifications for appointments as well.

**7. Comments from citizens on topics not on the agenda**

There were no comments.

**8. FY2019 Budget Update**

Ms. Murphy called for questions on Ms. Kelly's summary.

Mr. Morris said the Town projects ending the year at 93% of budget, even with having to cover the missed Perkinsville School loan payment.

Mr. Fuller asked for clarification of the statement that we had a significant decrease in the amount of money we needed to send to the school district. Mr. Morris explained that it is a case of the State having taken too much from us and now is giving it back – sort of like a tax refund. This is common practice and an adjustment is made every year. Ms. Murphy said it is not a case of the Town having done anything wrong and read an email from the State to confirm her statement. Ms. Kelly said it reflects the fact that more people have filed their homestead exemption and claimed their adjustment.

At 9:30 PM. Ms. Murphy called for a motion to extend the meeting an additional ten minutes.

**Motion:** To extend the meeting for ten more minutes

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

Ms. Murphy asked to see a spread sheet of the budget summary showing the actual numbers next time.

**9. Discuss Mechanic's Position**

(Mr. Morris and Mr. Stapleton propose a 1-year pilot program of not replacing the mechanic position, using outside mechanics as needed instead.)

Mr. Fuller said he preferred to see a lesser time frame than a year, perhaps three months instead. He was concerned that there would be thousands of dollars' worth of tools that will go to waste. He said he was not opposed to part time and not opposed to contracting out for things like landscaping.

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Mr. Morris and Mr. Stapleton said a year is best to really see how well it will work and what it will save or cost. With the new trucks and equipment we are acquiring, there is much less work we can do in-house on them. Mr. Stapleton said he wants to do what's best for the Town economically and what's best for the equipment.

Ms. Murphy complimented Mr. Stapleton and his department for thinking outside the box. She said that only good things will come out of this pilot program – we will either confirm what we already know or learn something new and better.

Mr. Todd asked how the outside hiring process would fit with the Town's purchasing policy. Mr. Morris said they are looking into it.

**10. Appointments**

No appointments were requested or made.

**11. Approve Warrants**

**Motion:** To approve the warrants for 5/20/2019 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$20,471.98
	Payroll	\$12,965.17
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$15,702.50
	Payroll	\$7,941.05
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$2,867.74
	Payroll	\$1,599.22
Library	Operating Expenses	\$1,543.42
	Payroll	\$1,933.92
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$860.00
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Reserves		\$0.00
Long Term Debt		\$0.00
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$40,585.64
	Payroll	\$24,439.36

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

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12. Future Meeting Agenda Items

13. Adjourn

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting

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

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*deForest Bearse*

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

\_\_\_\_\_  
N. John Arrison, Selector

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Daniel E. Boyer, Selector

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Fuller, Vice-Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kelly Murphy, Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Todd, Clerk