

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board

Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT

Monday, May 6, 2019

7:00 PM

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

APPROVED WITH CORRECTIONS 5/20/2019

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

Select Board Members Absent:

Ed Morris, Town Manager

Others Present:

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Edith Stillson | Paul Tillman | Ray Stapleton | Susanne Terrill |
| J. Compo | Julia Lloyd Wright | Scott Pipe | Steve Hier |
| Colby Hodgdon | Fred Duplessis | Sven Fedorow | Darlene Kelly |
| Ernie Shand | Cookie Shand | Gregg Freeman | Dusty Hodgdon |
| Mychael Spaulding | Josh Dauphin | Tracey Dauphin | Ben Waters |
| Steve Snyder | | | |

1. The Board entered executive session as per 1 V.S.A. §313(3)(E), Doug Reed Litigation Update, at 6:30 PM on a motion by Mr. Arrison, seconded by Mr. Boyer and unanimously approved. The Board came out of executive session at 6:56 PM. No action was taken.

2. Call to Order

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

3. Agenda Review

No changes were made to the agenda.

4. Review Minutes from previous meeting – 4/15/2019

Motion: To approve the minutes of April 15, 2019

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

5. Comments from Select Board and Town Manager

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Mr. Arrison stated that Jeff Epstein had left the Eagle Times and would no longer be covering the Select Board meetings. Mr. Epstein had written a letter to the editor of the Eagle, excerpts from which were read by Mr. Arrison. Mr. Epstein expressed his admiration for local government officials and urged the public to attend meetings in person to see for themselves what local government is about. Mr. Epstein was especially complimentary of Mr. Morris and Ms. Murphy.

Mr. Morris informed the Board that the grader has transmission issues. Mr. Stapleton said the repairs will take about a month. He will rent another grader while ours is being repaired as this is a time of year when the grader is greatly needed. The rent will cost \$6,000. The grader repairs are covered by warranty, but the shipping costs are not. Both the rental and shipping expenses are outside the current budget.

6. Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda

Energy Coordinator Julia Lloyd Wright announced there will be a heat pump workshop at the Library this Saturday at 9:30 AM. All are invited to attend.

7. Employee Recognition

- a. Scott Pipe – completion of probationary period**
- b. Susanne Terrill - completion of probationary period**
- c. Sven Fedorow - completion of probationary period**

Ms. Murphy read a letter of recognition for each of the employees. Handshakes were made all around.

8. Audit Discussion – Presentation of audit by Sullivan, Powers and Co.

Fred Duplessis of Sullivan, Powers and Co. gave a brief overview of the audit. He said the auditors have issued a clean, unmodified opinion, which is a reversal of the adverse opinion that had originally been given. The change was brought about by making some of the recommended changes, primarily in where various funds were being kept, and was driven by Mr. Hier and Ms. Kelly not wanting townspeople to worry over what an adverse opinion might actually mean. It was stressed that at no time was there a deficiency of funds – it was more a matter of funds being kept in separate places, a practice put in place several years ago, and one which some of the Board members preferred to remain.

Mr. Duplessis said the Town can choose for itself how it wishes to account for its funds – the accounting is for the people – not the accountants.

A new timeline/calendar has been devised to ensure that the audit is completed in time for next year's budget season so long as both parties do their parts. A timeline for implementation of the audit recommendations has also been created.

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9. Award Center Road Project to Pike Inc.

Mr. Morris said four bids had been received. He and Mr. Stapleton recommended awarding the bid to Pike Industries as the lowest bidder at \$398,932.55 and because Pike had previously done a good job paving Reservoir Road.

The Pike bid was substantially lower than what had been budgeted, so Mr. Morris asked Pike if they could pave the remaining portion of Reservoir Road, which is in dire need of repair. Pike returned an estimate of \$85,000.

Mr. Morris recommended using a combination of grant, borrowed, and reserve funds to cover the total combined cost of \$483,932.55. Mr. Morris further recommended that the Town borrow the money from itself rather than go through the bank. The finance department and the auditors are ok with it, the Town would reinvest the interest into the Highway Reserve Fund and we would save money by leaving what would be interest payments in the bank and earning money from it. We have sufficient cash on hand to cover cash flow with \$800,000 in reserves, even in the event of an unplanned catastrophe. There would be a formal contract in place and the finance team and the auditors would ensure that the payments would be made annually.

Discussion then turned to the process by which the \$85,000 estimate had been procured. Paving Reservoir Road was not part of the Center Road bid and was seen by some of the Board members as being an entirely different project. Under the Town's purchasing policy, this project should be put out to bid on its own.

Mr. Fuller favored borrowing from the bank.

Mr. Morris said the Board can waive the purchasing policy and recommended doing so in this case as it was unlikely to yield a lower bid and the delay could prevent the project getting done as soon as it is needed (the Town Office has been receiving multiple phone calls about the condition of Reservoir Road.) However, there was reluctance to do that because it could be seen by townspeople as inconsistent and less transparent.

The Board agreed to take things piecemeal.

Motion: To award The Weathersfield Center Road bid to Pike Industries in the amount of \$398,932.55

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Motion: To approve taking a \$190,000 loan against our own funds for the purposes of paving Weathersfield Center Road

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

Vote: 4 in favor, 1 opposed. Motion carries.

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Motion: To approve and add on award to Pike Industries for the paving of Reservoir Road in the amount of \$85,000 waiving the bidding requirement of the purchasing policy.

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

Vote: 3 in favor, 2 opposed. Motion carries.

10. Fire Discussion (8:00) – Special Town Meeting Discussion

The discussion was to be limited to preparation for the special town meeting. The Board discussed how the articles would be presented and by whom. Mr. Fuller asked that it be made clear to the voters that the budget passed at town meeting had no money in it for fire services.

Mr. Arrison will present article 2; Ms. Murphy will present article 1; Mr. Boyer will present article 3.

Discussion turned to why the original article to fund a full-time fire chief failed and how to address it. Mr. Todd said many voters still don't know why the Board is looking to create a municipal department. He wanted to have discussion about it at the Town Meeting. It was ultimately agreed that the Town Meeting would address only the articles on the warning, but the meeting would be followed by a regular select board meeting where the discussion could legally take place.

The question was raised as to what will happen if this article fails. There was no definitive answer, though the Board wanted townspeople to know that if anyone dialed 911 in an emergency, they would not be abandoned.

11. Town Solar Project

After working with three solar providers, Mr. Morris recommended signing a letter of intent with Norwich Solar for placement of 500 KW arrays at the transfer station and the highway garage. Steve Snyder and Troy McBride from Norwich Solar were at the meeting to participate in the discussion.

Benefits to the Town from the project would be reduced power costs (by 12%), receipt of annual lease payments (\$11,000 per array) and annual tax revenues of approximately \$4,000 per array. The school and supervisory union and other area schools could also be recipients of the power generated by the arrays.

Mr. Fuller felt rushed and Mr. Todd had reservations about committing to anything before the Planning Commission has finished their conversations about renewable energy in the Town and also wondered if the land dedicated to the array at the highway garage might be put to a more profitable commercial use.

The letter of intent is nonbinding and the Town could withdraw if circumstances warrant it. Abutters to the proposed sites would be notified during the 45-day notice period. There is a

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limited window of opportunity – if the letter of intent were not signed at this meeting, a July 1st deadline will not be met and the cost savings will reduce by 7%.

(It was 9:00 PM at this point.)

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

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Motion: To approve the Town Manager signing a nonbinding letter of intent with Norwich Solar to place a 500 KW solar panel project on the Transfer Station and Highway Department properties.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

12. Adopt Federal Municipal Policies and Codes

Mr. Morris said the Board had signed this before, but he had learned that changes had been made to it after November and must be signed again to meet the award conditions for the grant for the ramp at the 1879 Schoolhouse.

Motion: To adopt the federal municipal policies and codes

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

13. Approve Acceptance of Structures Grant for Lottery Lane

Motion: To authorize the Town Manager to accept the FY2020 Structures Grant for a box culvert to be designed and placed in Lottery Lane

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

14. Discuss Mechanics Position

Due to the lateness of the hour, this article was tabled on a motion by Mr. Todd, seconded by Mr. Fuller and unanimously approved.

15. Approve Copier Lease

Motion: To authorize the Town Manager to enter into a 48-month copier lease agreement with Office Systems of Vermont in the amount of \$287.73.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

16. Appointments

No appointments were requested or made.

17. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 5/6/2019 as follow:

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| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| General Funds | Operating Expenses | \$76,994.19 |
| | Payroll | \$20,459.47 |
| Highway Fund | Operating Expenses | \$9,994.26 |
| | Payroll | \$12,016.35 |
| Solid Waste Management Fund | | |
| | Operating Expenses | \$8,528.02 |
| | Payroll | \$2,178.83 |
| Library | Operating Expenses | \$0.00 |
| | Payroll | \$1,939.48 |
| Grants | Operating Expenses | \$0.00 |
| Agency Monies | Operating Expenses | \$0.00 |
| Reserves | | \$0.00 |
| Long Term Debt | | \$0.00 |
| Grand Totals | Operating Expenses | \$95,516.47 |
| | Payroll | \$36,594.13 |

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

18. Future Meeting Agenda Items

Mr. Arrison asked for an update on financials.

19. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

deForest Bearse

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WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

N. John Arrison, Selector

Daniel E. Boyer, Selector

David Fuller, Vice-Chairperson

Kelly Murphy, Chairperson

Michael Todd, Clerk