

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board
Weathersfield Center Meeting House
Monday, July 17th, 2017
7:00 PM
REGULAR MEETING
JOINT MEETING WITH WEATHERSFIELD PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES APPROVED 8/7/2017

Select Board Members Present: Daniel Boyer
C. Peter Cole
Lynn Esty
Amy Beth Main
Kelly Murphy

Select Board Members Absent:

Ed Morris, Town Manager

Others Present:

Julia Lloyd Wright	Nancy Heatley	Julia Schmitz	Tracy Dauphin
Wes Hazeltine	Hal Wilkins	Katie Cooper	Toshya Spaulding
Paul Tillman	Edith Stillson	Annmarie Christensen	Josh Dauphin

1. Call to Order

Ms. Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:01PM.

2. Comments from Select Board and Town Manager

Mrs. Esty said they are still accepting donations for the Directory. She said she would be at the transfer station on Saturday if anyone would like to sign up.

Mr. Morris said things are going well at the transfer station. The traffic pattern seems to be working a little better. In response to phone calls he had received, he said, yes, we are still taking recycling – the new compactor takes all of our single-sort recycling- cardboard, paper, 1-7 plastic, tin and aluminum cans – everything goes in there. He asked that glass and 5-cent redeemables not be placed in the compactor. There is no charge for recycling. Solid waste is accepted at the normal 1-punch rate. Metal and construction/demolition wastes are still being taken. Transfer station attendants are on hand to answer any questions.

3. Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda

There were no comments from citizens.

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4. Review minutes from previous meetings – 7/10/2017 and 6/29/2017 (previously tabled)

Motion: To accept the minutes of the June 29th special meeting.

Made by: Mrs. Esty **Second:** Mr. Boyer

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Motion: To accept the minutes of the July 11th special meeting.

Made by: Mrs. Esty **Second:** Mr. Cole

Vote: Mrs. Esty, Mr. Cole and Ms. Kelly voted in favor; Ms. Main and Mr. Boyer abstained as they had not attended the meeting

5. Strategic Planning/Jason Rasmussen, RPC Director of Planning

a. 2017 Municipal Planning Grant Presentation

Mr. Morris said the Town applied for and was awarded a 2017 Municipal Planning Grant for village revitalization. Jason Rasmussen was on hand to explain what the grant is about.

NOTE: Members of the Weathersfield Planning Commission were present to observe and participate in the presentation.

Mr. Rasmussen said that this kick-off meeting is an opportunity to talk about the focus of the grant and to take any suggestions offered from those in attendance. The purpose of the grant is to conduct a planning process to promote revitalization in both village centers. It is about a \$9,000 project.

A survey conducted in November indicated that respondents were in favor of village revitalization. A 2nd survey will attempt to discern what revitalization actually means to those who respond. The survey will be two-pronged – one for residents, one for visitors – what do people like, what do they think is missing, etc. Some of the outcomes will go into the Town Plan.

Tonight's meeting is the kick-off meeting for the grant. It will be followed by two workshops in Ascutney, two in Perkinsville and a final public meeting at the end. A written report will summarize the project and provide updates to parts of the Town Plan, such as the Land Use chapter and the Economic Development chapter. The report will include a summary of existing conditions, a vision for the revitalization of each village center, strategies to achieve the vision, and draft updates to the Town Plan.

Surveys will be at the library, the Weathersfield Inn, the Town Office, and one or two places in Perkinsville (Villagers, the campgrounds, and the Weathersfield Trail parking area were also suggested).

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Timeline

July 2017 Kick-off meeting; existing conditions summary; coordination with SRDC
July-August First workshop in each village center
Sept-Oct Surveys
Oct-Nov Second workshop in each village center
Dec Draft addendum to Town Plan
Jan-Feb 2018 Present findings at public meeting
March Draft updates to Town Plan
April Review and finalize with Planning Commission
May Complete grant activities

The public is encouraged to attend all of the workshops, not just the ones closest to one's residence. Revitalization of the village centers is a benefit to the whole community.

Nancy Heatley encouraged Jason to be creative in ways to get people to attend the public meetings – for example reaching out to the Historical Society with their extensive email list or approaching people at the Transfer Station.

Anmarie Christenson suggested placing news articles in the Message and the VT Journal.

Ms. Murphy asked that the survey be as specific as possible so as to get the most useful feedback possible.

Julie Schmitz cautioned against allowing this to become an “Ascutney vs Perkinsville” exercise by meeting in places other than the village centers.

Everyone thanked Mr. Rasmussen for the presentation.

b. Economic Development Presentation

Mr. Morris gave a presentation on his economic development vision for the Town. The development of his plan began with learning the town and what is important to the people. He learned that we value our land, nature, conservation and our history. He then formed an Economic Development Advisory Committee of local residents and business people to get feedback on his ideas.

Key features that Weathersfield has to offer are:

- Our location : we are 20-30 minutes from a wide variety of attractions and larger communities
- Interstate access;
- Substantial opportunities for outdoor recreation; and
- An abundance of historical and natural beauty.

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Mr. Morris feels we can use these assets to attract people to our town, which, in turn, can lead to more businesses developing, although this can be a “chicken and egg” sort of scenario.

Mr. Morris reviewed results of previous surveys that indicate the types of businesses townspeople would like to see in town. Taking those results, he developed a vision based on the values and assets of the community.

The three-step economic development plan includes:

- Plan: A town-wide trail system that would ideally link Ascutney and Perkinsville
- Embrace: the local history we have – bring it alive with signage
- Collaborate: with surrounding towns in marketing and development

We need to build a community philosophy – our core value – and develop a brand. This is followed by creating a marketing plan, and then the plan for strategic implementation.

Mr. Morris asked for ideas and contributions from everyone to add to the vision and plans.

The meeting was recessed for a few minutes to allow dismantling of equipment.

6. Accept Policy Review for:

a. Zoning Board of Adjustment Alternate Member Use Policy

Motion: To approve the review of the Zoning Board of Adjustment Alternate Member Use policy as written.

Made by: Mrs. Esty **Second:** Mr. Boyer

Vote: Unanimous in favor

7. Review Policy Change for Class IV Town Highways (First reading)

Mr. Morris said he had discussed the idea of allowing people to work directly with Mr. Hazeltine when they wanted to do some minor work on a Class IV road (such as removing fallen trees) rather than having to come to the Board. Mr. Morris added some language to the policy to reflect that idea. Major changes to a Class IV road would still require Select Board approval.

Ms. Main asked that verbal approvals for minor maintenance be corroborated with something in writing. Ms. Murphy agreed. She suggested creating a template for Mr. Hazeltine to use.

Ms. Murphy questioned the term “sufficient notice” and suggested providing a minimum amount of time.

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Ms. Murphy asked how minor maintenance can be approved by the highway superintendent, but snow removal requires select board approval. She also asked that the Town Manager be added to the definition of 'Regular Maintenance' at the end of the last sentence:

Examples of regular maintenance would be ... as determined by the Highway Superintendent and the Town Manager. Mr. Morris said he felt they should just trust Wes to make these decisions. If Wes has a question, he can take it to Mr. Morris.

Ms. Murphy asked the sentence in the 'Major Improvement' definition be changed to read: *'Widening road, improving road base ... that are determined to be upgrades by the highway Superintendent, in consultation with the Highway Committee, and the Town Manager ~~or Select Board.~~'* on the grounds that the Select Board would hear appeals of those determinations. Mr. Morris said the Highway Committee wouldn't be making any sort of decisions. The Highway Committee consists of the Manager, the Superintendent and a member of the Board and Mr. Morris would use the Committee to help make a determination of the proposed maintenance if it is difficult to decided on. Ms. Murphy accepted the explanation for not changing the language.

Each determination is on a case-by-case basis according to Mr. Hazeltine. There are no predetermined categories for maintenance activities.

Mr. Cole asked if there could be a provision made for really minor work, such as removing a downed tree branch, that would preclude the need to call Mr. Hazeltine. He cautioned against over-regulating. Mr. Morris said he would check some other towns' policies for ideas.

Ms. Murphy asked what happens if the policy isn't followed by someone. She asked that enforcement procedures be included.

There were no further comments or questions. The policy was moved to its second reading.

8. Fire Commission Monthly Report

Mrs. Esty said the Commission had met the previous Wednesday. She read the following letter for the record as it had been read for the record at the Commission meeting:

First, I would like to express my most sincere apologies to Mr. Boyer. Mr. Boyer is correct in that he should have been approached directly by either myself or by Mr. Spaulding prior to any action or discussion. I also take full responsibility in that I did not follow up in the fact finding process prior to the topic of "Fire Scene Safety" being placed on the June Fire Commission agenda.

If I had been informed that there was a police officer present on scene and there was no traffic control, my response to Mr. Spaulding's phone call would have been handled much differently. However, this does not

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excuse me from not following through and exploring the issue completely prior to it being discussed at a Fire Commission meeting.

There have been many comments and allegations over the years regarding actions and inactions of various Town employees. There should be no allegations or personal complaints discussed at Fire Commission meetings. Process and procedures should be addressed. If either Fire Department is having an issue with something not in line with their standards, it should be addressed by being brought to the attention of the Town Manager, Ed Morris, immediately.

Regardless of anything else, all information presented at the Fire Commission meetings, from now on, will be fact and evidence based.

We should and will use these Fire Commission meetings to advocate for Dry Hydrants, collection and sharing of fire service information and discussions of facts and details in relation to the Fire Departments in Weathersfield.

Second, my most sincere and heartfelt apologies, again, to Mr Boyer and to any and all employees of the Town of Weathersfield that may have been affected. While I cannot erase what was said in the past, I can assure you that I will do everything in my power to not repeat the same mistakes.

*Respectfully and humbly,
Lynn Esty,
Chairperson, Weathersfield Fire Commission
Select Board Representative*

Mrs. Esty then read a letter addressed to the Fire Commission as it had been read for the record at the Commission meeting:

I was asked to read the minutes and look into allegations that were made during the Fire Commission meetings on May 3rd and June 14th. I'd like to communicate to you that we have investigated and discussed many of the allegations previously made. I have found most of the problems are either communication or procedural issues between both the Fire Departments and Town staff. I do not feel any one person or organization carries the blame for these issues, but we equally share the responsibility for past issues and future resolutions.

I have a few requests as we move forward:

- Be patient. Everything we try may not work, but we can rework any process trying to find a solution that will work for all parties involved.*
- Come to me with any issues that are not easily resolved between parties. Together we can find a solution or process to follow to get the resolution needed.*

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- *Keep meeting discussions focused on projects, procedure and policy. Complaints should be handled behind the scenes unless a resolution or compromise has been thoroughly vetted and compromise cannot be reached.*
- *Let's leave the past behind us. As Kelly stated in the Selectboard meeting, let's not dwell on past issues, but use the lessons we learned from those issues to shape the future.*

Thank you for your time and willingness to help our community. I look forward to working with you to shape our working relationship in to a smoother, more professional operation.

Ed Morris, Town Manager

Mr. Boyer said he and Mrs. Boyer had read Mrs. Esty's letter and accepted the apology.

Mrs. Esty then completed reading her monthly report.

The majority of the dry hydrants around town have been tested. The Commission has a list of the hydrants with their 911 addresses as well as lat/long data. It will be shared with the Planning Commission.

The Commission approved the use of reserve funds for installation of a dry hydrant at 830 Pikes Peak Road. The landowners were present for the discussion.

The Commission approved seeking grant funding to install a new hydrant on South Mountain Road, with an alternate location on Stokes/Wellwood Orchard Road if the first location fails. The Commission has since learned that the South Mountain Road property is being sold, so they will be pursuing the alternate location.

The Commission approved seeking grant funding for the repair of the hydrant in Weathersfield Bow.

Mr. Spaulding said there are three businesses in Town that don't have Knox Boxes in what he believed to be a violation of the Town's Knox-Box policy. Mr. Morris said he was not aware of a Knox-Box policy. Mr. Dauphin said he remembered requesting Knox Boxes for businesses when they applied for a zoning permit from the town, but wasn't aware of a Town policy. Mr. Boyer said he was not aware of a town policy either. Mr. Cole said he remembered discussions about it with Ascutney Fire quite a while ago and perhaps that was what Mr. Spaulding was referring to. Mr. Morris said he has talked to Hal Wilkins about creating a process that would work best for him to solicit input from department heads for conditional use permits.

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Mrs. Esty said there was discussion about the ambulance contract. Questions were raised about call times, services, etc. It was recommended that the next time this comes up for review, the fire departments should be contacted for their input.

There was discussion about the fire agreement. WWVFD would like insurance and maintenance on all apparatus. AVFD wants a list of what the Town will and will not pay for in the event that the Town takes over the billing process. AVFD also has concerns about nonpayment of essentials (electricity and internet) and micromanaging (types of gear or foam). AVFD will hold a special meeting prior to the next select board meeting to continue the discussion. The Commission asked that the agreement be put on the agenda for the first August meeting.

The new fire truck was available for viewing after the meeting.

The Commission will not be meeting in August due to vacations. Next meeting will be September 13th at WWVFD at 7PM.

Mrs. Esty showed the board the updated dry hydrant map. Mr. Morris asked that the list of hydrants and data be sent to Katharine Otto at RPC. Ms. Murphy asked if the updated information would be going into the Town Plan to replace the outdated information in there currently.

Mrs. Esty said the updated information has been shared with dispatch and mutual aid.

Mr. Dauphin brought up the comments that had been made at a previous meeting about bills not being paid on time. Mrs. Esty said she had received copies of all of the bills for the departments and the commission and found no evidence of bills not being paid in a timely manner, with the one exception of the Sunoco bill. There was also one error noted and corrected before the end of the financial year. This was discussed and noted in the meeting minutes for the last Commission meeting.

There were no other comments or questions.

9. Fire Agreement Contract

Ms. Murphy noted that Mr. Morris had made some revisions to the agreement (outlined in his cover letter to the board).

A question has been raised about whether or not the town has budgeted for complete maintenance of all fire apparatus before we enter into an agreement to do that. There were also concerns about what might happen in the future. After much thought, Mr. Morris said he recommends moving toward providing maintenance and making it just that simple. He

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acknowledged that it is open to discussion with the Board. He said he had added some wording to the agreement regarding insurance and maintenance as well as some strong wording that any future purchases needed to be approved by the select board and/or the town.

He highlighted capital equipment because of previous misunderstandings about what capital equipment is there and what's available. He suggested removing it from the contract for now with the understanding that we will come back with a full list of what capital equipment each department has and what we're going to add. It was agreed to discuss the definition of capital equipment. Ms. Murphy suggested that they define what is on the existing "lists" that each department has compiled (as to what is/is not capital equipment) and then move on with that particular list.

Mr. Dauphin said that capital equipment refers to large equipment – hose, radios, airpaks – those are the biggest capital needs. Mr. Morris said hose is not a capital expense. He said there is a definition of a capital expense in a town policy. He said he would send it to the board members and the departments. It addresses monetary and lifespan thresholds. They are things that can be capitalized over a 15 or 20-year period.

Mr. Morris agreed with Mr. Dauphin that we need to get onto some sort of rotation – he said this is a reason he is pushing the finance portion of this contract so we can analyze some of this and budget properly and start making those rotations happen; so we can see where we're not putting the money that we need to. Both departments have said the annual stipend is insufficient to support the operational end of things. This analysis will help us identify these issues more quickly.

Mr. Dauphin said in the past five years they have relied heavily on outside grant and assistance funding that contain NFPA deadlines for replacement. They just replaced twelve airpaks (\$66,000) that will all have to be replaced in 15 years at once. The same applies to their hose (\$60,000), radios (\$80,000) and cascade system (\$40,000). What happens when the grants dry up? WWVFD doesn't have that kind of money in their fundraising accounts. They have paid for the 5% match out of their budget. He emphasized the need to get onto a rotation schedule as soon as possible.

Ms. Murphy said typically each nonprofit has its own definition of capital expense. She said, "If we eliminate that out of the maintenance piece, it buys a little time. If the Board's in agreement on the maintenance of the vehicles and apparatus, we can move forward with that. And then we can revisit the capital."

Ms. Murphy said, historically there seems to be a small amount of money earmarked for maintenance. She said it might be beneficial to look back 5-10 years to find the average

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maintenance budget. She said the fire departments shouldn't get chastised for spending on maintenance, particularly when the line item is inadequate. She also said the maintenance line should include ladder-testing and any other specific components of the apparatus that regularly need to be checked. As to procedure for out-of-house repairs (repairs that highway department cannot make), Ms. Murphy said she would like to see a quote on the cost of the repair before it moves forward. Mr. Dauphin said that getting a quote is not always possible. Sometimes a \$600 repair turns into a \$1600 repair once the repair begins.

Ms. Murphy asked Mr. Hazeltine for his thoughts about the Town taking on all maintenance. He said it has been working well for the most part already, but repairs that go out-of-house can get costly very quickly and the town will have to trust the chiefs to oversee that it doesn't get out of hand.

Mr. Morris cleared up some confusion about comments made regarding paying for internet and electricity bills. Normal operating expenses will continue to be paid. The only expenses not likely to be paid are those items that relate directly to each nonprofit organization (CPA, attorney, etc.). Ms. Murphy suggested having each department submit a list of their basic operating expenses to Mr. Morris so they know what will be paid. Mr. Morris said the Board will need to be quite liberal in the first few years of this transition and discuss items as we go along. Even with a list, unanticipated things will come up. He said it really comes down to the open communication he has been talking about.

The agreement will be discussed again following the AVFD special meeting. Mr. Morris said he had no set timeline for this – just as long as it was moving forward.

Mr. Dauphin asked the Board for the process to move the Pikes Peak dry hydrant forward. Mr. Morris advised him to get a cost estimate first.

10. Appointments

There were no appointments.

11. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for July 17, 2017 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$14,510.85
	Payroll	\$6,582.55
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$6,455.52
	Payroll	\$4,515.03

Solid Waste Management Fund

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	Operating Expenses	\$22,990.91
	Payroll	\$880.25
Library	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
	Payroll	\$0.00
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Reserves		\$0.00
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$43,957.28
	Payroll	\$11,977.83

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

12. Future Meeting Agenda Items

- a. **Policy Review**
 - a.i. **Social Service Agency Appropriations Policy**
- b. **Golden Cross Ambulance/Extend Service Contract**
- c. **Financials**
- d. **Fire Agreement**

13. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Made by: Mr. Boyer **Second:** Mrs. Esty

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
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Daniel E. Boyer, Selector

C. Peter Cole, Selector

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Kelly Murphy, Chairperson

Lynn Esty, Vice-Chairperson

Amy Beth Main, Clerk

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