

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Monday, June 5, 2023
6:30 PM
REGULAR MEETING

Select Board Members Present: Michael Todd, David Fuller, Kelly O'Brien, Wendy Smith

Select Board Members Absent: Paul Tillman

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Others Present:

Olivia Savage	Josh Dauphin	
Joseph Bublat (remote)	John Arrison	
John Keniston		
Flo-Ann Dango		
Otis Munroe		

1 Call to Order

Mr. Todd called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

2 Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Fuller led the pledge of allegiance.

3 Comments from Citizens, SB, and TM on topics not on the agenda

The Select Board discussed how gravel rocks are damaging tires, how the issue has been brought to the Highway Department, and how it should be a future agenda item because there is a lot to it. Ms. O'Brien reminded everyone about the local parade on June 24th.

Mr. Arrison and Mr. Todd had a quarrel about Mr. Arrison's representation to his constituents. Mr. Arrison left the meeting.

4 Review minutes from previous meeting(s): 05/15/23

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. None.

Motion: To approve.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Made by: Ms. O'Brien

Second: Ms. Smith

Vote: All in favor

5 Quarterly Report: West Weathersfield Fire Department

Chief Dauphin presented the West Weathersfield Fire Department's quarterly report, which will be available on the Town Website so anyone can access it. Chief Dauphin presented the apparatus hours for incidents, average number of responding personnel per incident type, average response times, breakdowns by major incident types, and events for personnel, incident details, incidents per personnel, personnel hours, and training hours.

Mr. Fuller inquired about the West Weathersfield Fire Department's need for ARPA funds, particularly for equipment, if there were any way to improve response times at the department, and if there was anything that could make the Fire Departments job easier. Chief Dauphin stated that recruitment and retention would help and that training, equipment, and keeping members does cost money. Chief Dauphin stated that a list was being made of the equipment on hand to better understand what might be needed in the future.

6 Warn Hearing to Discontinue Town Highway #95

Town Highway #95 is listed as a class 4 highway .25 miles in length and in the 2019 highway map and is labeled as impassable/untraveled. The highway Superintendent did a site visit and stated that it is unidentifiable from the surrounding fields, with no trace of a possible road, with the exception of a gap in a stone wall. The road spans from the intersection at Cooks Pond Road and proceeds east for .25 miles over parcel #705-224-10852 and does not connect to any neighboring parcel or appear to be right of way of any other parcel. As a class 4 highway, per act 64, it is to be inspected annually and any erosion repaired.

The Select Board discussed the discontinuance and that it is required for the "public good, necessity, and convenience of the inhabitants of the municipality" per section 710, meaning how it needs to be in the Town's interest to keep/maintain the road. The road could also be downgraded to a legal trail, which doesn't require any maintenance but may have other consequences.

Motion: To hold the site visit on Thursday, July 13, 2023, to examine the premises and to also approve and sign the Notice of Public Hearing for Monday, July 17 at 6:30pm.

Made by: Mr. Fuller

Second: Ms. Smith

Vote: All in favor

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

7 Warn Public Hearing: Bylaw Amendment – Use Tables & Definitions

On May 8, 2023, the Planning Commission voted to approve of and submit the proposed amendments to the Use Tables and Definitions of the Zoning Bylaw to the Select Board for a public hearing.

The proposal is to amend Article 2: Zoning Districts and District Standards. The purpose of making the proposed amendments is to re-organize, clarify, and correct problems that have been identified in the current language.

An amendment to Article 7: Definitions is also proposed which correlates with the changes in Article 2. All undefined uses listed in Article 2 have been given a definition. Definitions that correspond to specific sections within the bylaws have been given that section's reference number. In some cases, the language of the definition has been redacted and the reference number provided to resolve conflicts and redundancies. In cases where synonymous terms were listed with differing definitions, the term correlating to the amended Article 2 or the more recent language was retained and the other redacted.

Mr. Fuller inquired if this needed a hearing and Mr. Todd stated that the Planning Commission had the same discussion but decided to veer on the side of caution and proceed this way. Mr. Todd stated that the Zoning Board even assisted and that although this is an amendment to the Bylaws, that it is more housekeeping than anything.

Motion: To approve the Notice of Public Hearing for August 7, 2023 at 6:45pm.

Made by: Ms. Smith **Second:** Mr. Todd

Vote: 3 yay, 1 abstention

Persons wishing to be heard may do so in person, be represented by an agent, or may file written comments with the Planning Commission prior to the hearing. Information concerning this matter is available at the Town of Weathersfield office from 8am to 6pm Mondays, 8am-4:30pm Tuesdays-Thursdays, and 8am-12:30pm on Fridays or call 802-674-2626.

Participation in the local proceeding is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal. Remote attendance is available. To join public meetings via phone, dial 929-205-6099. When prompted, enter meeting ID 542-595-4364. You will not have a participant ID. Please press # when prompted to skip this section. The passcode for all meetings is 8021.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

8 Local Emergency Management Plan Adoption

Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) encourages municipalities to create and maintain optional LEMP annexes as required. Examples might include plans for specific incident types, shelters, evacuation, and volunteer management. The Town Manager went over updates on the emergency plan, which is done each year. This included key contacts, locations, emergency preparedness, websites and newspapers where the emergency is posted, shelters, and contact information.

Motion: To approve and sign the updated Local Emergency Management Plan as of June 5, 2023.

Made by: Mr. Fuller

Second: Ms. O'Brien

Vote: All in favor

9 Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Grant – Letter of Support

The letter of support stated: “The Town of Weathersfield is in full support of the grant application to fund scoping study for pedestrian improvements in the Village of Perkinsville. The need to plan for pedestrian accommodations in Perkinsville is laid out in the 2017 Town Plan. The Town Plan envisions either sidewalks or paved and marked bicycle and pedestrian shoulders along VT Route 106. It is anticipated that paved shoulders will be more feasible due to site constraints within the Village.”

“The Town intends to continue to invest in Perkinsville. This includes further work on the schoolhouse and a scoping study to entirely reconstruct Hoisington Field. The Town also encourages further use of the pedestrian trails in and around the Village. Pedestrian connections within the Village itself form an integral component of this vision for Perkinsville. The total cost of this project is anticipated to be \$40,000 and the Town is committed to pay twenty percent of this cost (\$8,000).”

The Select Board discussed if the grant funding would be able to be matched with in-kind. The Select Board discussed the necessity of the sidewalks or bicycle shoulders along that route. Mr. Fuller inquired about the section on the scoping study on Hoisington Field and stated that a decision on that was not made yet and that more conversation was needed on the topic. The Select Board inquired if the Veterans and the church knew any of the information presented and what their opinion on the issue might be.

The Select Board discussed whether or not there needed to be improvements made to Perkinsville. Mr. Todd pointed out that there had been requirements

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

for revitalization of that area via grant funding. Ms. Smith expressed concern over the future of Perkinsville or if Ascunty will become the hub for all the villages. Mr. Fuller expressed concern that it would take private funds to revitalize that area of town and that recreation alone will not solve the problem and pointed out that Weathersfield should be uniting with other towns as was done with the transfer station.

Ms. Smith stated that there is a lot of grant money that can be used and it is important to see what the people of the town want. The Select Board discussed the necessity of Hoisington Field being included in the language, if there were a way to rephrase it, and how this was only a grant application and not a letter of commitment.

Motion: To authorize the Select Board chair to sign the Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Grant application letter.

Made by: Ms. Smith **Second:** Mr. Todd

Vote: 2 nays, 2 yay- *Motion did not carry*

10 **Town Clerk: Dog Licensing Update**

The Town Clerk presented a listing of the delinquent dogs in Weathersfield and asked the Select Board to vote to levy a penalty of \$25.00 on all owners of dogs that have not been relicensed for the current year in accordance with the Town Dog Ordinance and Vermont State law.

Owners of previously licensed dogs were sent a post card in early January 2023 and follow up post cards were sent in April. The Select Board discussed the need for dog licensing, how it is a public health issue, and also how the ordinance hasn't been enforced. Mr. Fuller stated that the delinquent dog owners list should be put on the Town Website.

Motion: To authorize the Town Manager to post the owner delinquency list online, and to levy a penalty of \$25.00 on all owners of dogs that have not been re-licensed for the current year within 30 days, and that failure to adhere could result in further penalty.

Made by: Mr. Fuller **Second:** Ms. O'Brien

Vote: All in favor

The Select Board's penalty of \$25 must be paid in order to obtain a license. Licenses may be purchased at the Town Clerk's Office between the hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm on Monday and 9:00am to 4:00pm Tuesday through Thursday or through the mail with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. After April 3rd. the license fees are \$12.00 for neutered and/or spayed dogs and \$18.00 for

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

unneutered and/or unsprayed dogs in addition to the \$25.00 penalty if you license your dog after June 30th, per state law. If your dog is deceased, please notify the Town Clerk at (802) 674-2626.

11. Vote to approve and sign Clean Water Loan (Feasibility & Planning)

The Select Board voted to approve the State Revolving Loan application to the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to complete a Wastewater Feasibility Study in the villages of Perkinsville and Ascutney. Available funding for water and wastewater projects is granted in the form of forgivable loans called subsidies.

When the Town submitted the application last year, the project was contingent on receiving an approval on the subsidy prior to signing the loan agreement. The Town received the approval from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources in the amount of \$92,225. The next step included executing the Engineering Services Agreement. The Town advertised an RFQ as required by the State's program, and received four (4) responses. Otter Creek Engineering was selected, and the ESA has been executed.

Motion: To approve and sign the wastewater feasibility study loan/subsidy in the amount of \$92,225.

Made by: Mr. Fuller

Second: Ms. O'Brien

Vote: All in favor

12. Town Manager Update

a. Roofing Projects

The Town Garage roofing project is on hold until the nails are received. The contractor did an inventory of the materials he ordered, and the nails were missing, which will be received soon.

b. The Generator was installed at Martin Memorial Hall on May 31st.

An estimate is underway for the propane and should be prepared to discuss on June 19th, as well as the generator installations at the Town Garage and 1879 Schoolhouse. The Select Board inquired about digging, paving, and drainage, and just making sure that maintenance items are done in such a way that is cost effective and makes sense.

c. ARPA Update

A second ARPA working group meeting will take place at the 1879 Schoolhouse on Thursday, June 8th at 6:30pm. The Town's public input on the expenditure of ARPA funds will be presented on June 19th.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

d. Request for Bids

1. FY24 Paving – Sunset Blvd., Cherry Lane., Thrasher Road

- a.** RFB advertised: May 22, 2023
- b.** Pre-Bid Conference: June 14, 2023, at 10am
- c.** Bids Due: June 22, 2023, at 11:30am
- d.** Selectboard Review/Decision: July 3, 2023

2. Covered Bridge Repairs

- a.** RFB advertising: June 6, 2023
- b.** Pre-Bid Conference: June 14, 2023 at 11am
- c.** Bids Due: June 25, 2023, at 11am
- d.** Selectboard Review/Decision: July 3, 2023

e. Transfer Station Attendant Resignation

James Mericle has resigned from his position as the Transfer Station Attendant. His last day is Sunday, June 18th. Mr. Mericle resigned because he's moving to Florida on June 21st. The Town appreciates his 6.5 years of service and wish him the best of luck with his new journey. The Town will be advertising the position. Please feel free to share this great opportunity with your friends and family.

f. Late Homestead Penalty

The Listers have come forward and asked if the Select board intends to waive the penalties for filing homestead declarations late.

The Select Board stated that no, they do not intend to waive the penalties, but to take a look at what can be done with the rate.

g. Norwich Solar

Norwich is willing to amend the NMA to reduce the credits purchased by the Town provided that the Water District enters an agreement to purchase credits equal to the amount of the reduction. Going forward, this would mean that the Town is allocated 10.22% and the Water District is allocated 5.78% of the 16% allocation (of the total array) set forth in the original agreement.

Norwich will be presenting the NMA to the Water District on June 21st at 6pm. Norwich will separate out their charges per meter. The Town is waiting to receive an invoice for usage to date so it can take care of payment prior to year-end. Norwich will separate out their charges per meter.

h. Audit

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

The Town is currently preparing for Audit with our Auditors. RHR Smith & Company visited the town last week and spent a day in the office. The Town expects to have an audit in November for review.

i. Hick Nichols Grant Committee

The Hick Nichols Grant Committee is looking for another community member to participate. Meetings are held 4-6 times per year to review grant applications, vote, and review feedback from previously approved applications. The Schoolboard is charged with appointing members to this committee, and interested persons should contact Amy Beth Main at greenrootfarm@gmail.com.

j. Letter of Resignation

The Select Board received a Letter of Resignation from Lister Matthew Walasewicz. The Select Board stated that they regret this letter of resignation but they can understand the reasoning.

k. Letter from Representative Arrison

The Select Board read a response letter regarding the earlier quarrel between Representative Arrison and Select Board Chair Todd. Mr. Todd apologized for his part. Mr. Fuller read the letter out loud for the public. The Select Board invited Mr. Arrison to the 6/19/23 meeting for a legislative update.

l. Damaged Tires

The Town Manager had received a few complaints about damage to tires from the graveled roads, with rocks getting stuck in the tread of tires. The Town Manger encouraged citizens who may have had a similar issue to reach out to him.

13. Period 11 Finance Report – Period 12 Projections

a. General Fund

The General Fund estimated \$1,463,444 in revenues in FY23, including \$1,049,015 in property tax revenue and \$369,992 in other revenues throughout each department. At year-end, projections demonstrate revenues to be at \$1,419,007, and/or \$44,435 less than the Town estimated when it developed the budget in December 2021. The Town decreased its delinquent taxes by several hundred thousand dollars, and as a result, has collected less in interest and penalty. Town Clerk Land Record revenue also decreased. The Town projected \$25,600 in Land Record revenue, and are projecting a \$5,112 shortfall here, in addition to a \$2,390 shortfall in Vault Fees, and a \$1,459

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

shortfall in Computerization. Police Fines appear to be down and may end the year at \$3,799 less than anticipated.

There were adjustments made throughout the General Fund in anticipation of year-end revenue shortfalls, and budgetary freezes were implemented in the beginning of 2023. At this time, the Town is projecting the General Fund to end the year with \$1,414,704 in expenses, and/or \$48,089 less than anticipated spending. As of June 1, 2023, projections show the General Fund to end the year with a net Revenue/Expense of \$4,303, which includes Norwich Solar invoices from April 2022 to June 30, 2023.

b. Highway Fund

The Highway Department estimated \$1,213,468 in revenues in FY23, including \$963,341 in property tax revenue (to support the FY23 Highway Department Budget and the approved \$33,000 special appropriation), \$143,487 in State Aid, \$76,726 in Fund Balance Use, and \$29,914 in revenue from other sources. At year end, the anticipated revenues exceeding what the Town estimated in December 2022 by \$18,728.

Throughout FY23, the Town made decisions to utilize the anticipated year-end fund balance. For example, when the Selectboard voted to award the Lottery Lane Culvert Project and the Stoughton Pond Paving project. The Town paid for the grant matches with this anticipated fund balance. The total match for both of these projects was \$49,867. The Town overspent on Chloride this year by \$22,304, and paved Quarry Road. It is estimated that the Town will end the year with a Net Revenue/Expense of \$11,613, and a cumulative fund balance of \$126,725. This figure also includes Norwich invoices from April 2022 to June 30, 2023.

c. Solid Waste Fund

The Solid Waste Fund estimated \$298,643 in revenues in FY23, which includes \$120,775 in fixed revenue (permit sticker fees in Weathersfield, West Windsor, and Reading), and \$177,868 in variable revenues (punch tickets). At year-end, projections show that the Town will receive an estimated \$131,724 in fixed revenues (\$10,949 more than anticipated), and \$191,309 in variable revenues (\$13,441 more than anticipated). As of June 30, 2023, the Town anticipate total fixed & variable revenues to reach \$323,033, and/or \$24,390 more than estimated in December 2022.

Town expenses have also increased, with an anticipated \$120,775 in fixed expenses, and \$177,868 in variable expenses, and/or \$298,643 in total expenses. At year-end, projections demonstrate that the Town will spend

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

\$209,712 in variable expenses (\$31,844 more than anticipated), and \$133,625 in fixed expenses (\$12,850 more than anticipated).

The Town estimates that the end the year with a net Revenue/Expense of - \$20,304 in the Solid Waste Fund. The Punch Ticket increase was implemented on April 1st and prior to increasing the punch ticket cost, the Town projected a -\$22,757 net Revenue/Expense at year-end, so the punch ticket increase has decreased the negative dollar amount by \$2,453. The Town planned on chipping away at the shortfall over 18 months and will continue to monitor and provide additional information as it becomes available.

14. Town Reappraisal Bid Results

On May 2nd, the Town released an RFP for a Town-Wide Reappraisal. Bids were due on June 2nd at 11am. The Town received two qualified proposals for the Select Board to review for a future date.

15. Vote to approve Fire Works Permits

a. Mark Girard: 167 Thrasher Rd., Windsor, VT on 7/3/23 from 9pm-10pm.

Motion: To approve a Firework Permit to Mark Girard at 167 Thrasher Rd., Windsor, VT on 7/3/23 from 9pm-10pm.

Made by: Mr. Fuller **Second:** Ms. O'Brien

Vote: All in favor

16. Vote to approve Large Gathering Permit

a. Ethan McNaughton: Intersection of Plains Road & Reservoir Road on 6/24/23 from 8:30am-10:30am.

Motion: To approve a Large Gathering Permit to Ethan McNaughton at the Int. of Plains Rd & Reservoir Road on 6/24/23 from 8:30am-10:30am.

Made by: Mr. Fuller **Second:** Ms. O'Brien

Vote: All in favor

17. Appointments

There were no appointments but below are the available vacancies:

- a. Budget Committee (5 Vacancies)
- b. Conservation Commission (2 Vacancies)
- c. Energy Coordinator (1 Vacancy)
- d. Green Up Coordinator (1 Vacancy)
- e. Lister (1 Vacancy)
- f. Parks and Recreation (2 Vacancies)
- g. Veterans Memorial Committee (2 Vacancies)
- h. Zoning Board of Adjustment (2 Vacancies)

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

13. Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 6/5/2023 as followed:

General Funds

Operating Expenses: \$80,622.72

Payroll: \$22,943.28

Highway Fund

Operating Expenses: \$19,845.86

Payroll: \$13,184.74

Solid Waste Management Fund

Operating Expenses: \$16,828.10

Payroll: \$2,628.93

Library

Operating Expenses: \$0.00

Payroll: \$3,168.60

AVFD Tanker: \$29,111.30

Roof Replacements: \$1,302.92

Tenney Memorial: \$300.00

Grand Totals:

Operating Expenses: \$148,010.90

Payroll: \$41,925.55

Made by: Ms. O'Brien

Second: Ms. Smith

Vote: All in favor

14. Any Other Business

Ms. O'Brien inquired about security for Martin Memorial Hall and the Select Board concluded that was good item for the ARPA discussion.

15. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Made by: Mr. Fuller

Second: Ms. O'Brien

Vote: All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nichole Gagnon

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Michael Todd, Chairperson

Wendy Smith, Selector

Kelly O'Brien, Clerk

Paul Tillman, Vice-Chairperson

David Fuller, Selector