

Select Board
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Tuesday, January 2, 2024
6:30 PM
REGULAR MEETING

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

Select Board Members Absent:

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Others Present:

Olivia Savage		
Darrin Spaulding (remote)		
Ray Stapleton		

1 Call to Order

Mr. Todd called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

2 Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Smith led the pledge of allegiance.

3 Agenda Review

No changes.

4 Comments from SB, TM, and Citizens on Topics not on the Agenda

None.

5 Review Minutes from Previous Meeting(s): 12/18/23

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. Typo in Section 11

b. Section 16, "account" to "accountant."

Motion: To approve the 12/18/23 minutes.

Made by: Ms. O'Brien **Second:** Ms. Smith

Vote: All in favor

6 Police Cruiser Bids

The Chief of Police gave a summary on the [bids \(pgs. 10-19\)](#) that were received for a new police cruiser. There was one company that bid and that bid is good for 30 days.

The Select Board discussed the depreciation of value as the cruiser mileage goes up, as well as the cost of fixing older cars verses having a warranty/service plan. The Select Board agreed that the police having reliable vehicles is essential and discussed how much vehicle prices have gone up in recent years and how prices will likely go up even more in the future. The Select Board evaluated how to pay for the cruiser without burdening taxpayers, also pointing out that ARPA funds are not going to be available in the future.

The Chief of Police presented his plan if cruiser is purchased, how the police would every other year purchase a new car, and that a third car enables the department to rotate the cars so the mileage on them stays consistent. It was suggested to start looking for a new cruiser about ten-thousand miles before the warranty runs out. That way, the cars stay under warranty and there will be no surprises expenses like a blown engine, transmission, etc.

The Select Board stated that this purchase plan would work in a capital plan and that this plan seems to give a predictable buying schedule and enables the reserve account to be replenished in the time in between purchases. The Select Board discussed the funding for the cruiser and concluded that the Town Manager could find the best funding mechanism and bring it back to the Select Board to review.

Motion: To authorize up to \$60,000 for the purchase of a police cruiser and allow the Town Manager to determine the funding mechanism and then bring it back to the Select Board for the final authorization.

Made by: Dr. Murray **Second:** Ms. Smith

Vote: All in favor

The Town Manager stated that he would put together a capital plan as well.

7 Vote to authorize the Chair to bid during the January 15th Tax Sale

The Town Manager shared this memo:

Dear Selectors,

We are holding a Tax Sale on January 15, 2024, to recover delinquent taxes owed to the Town. There are two (2) properties remaining of the 3 properties advertised that have not paid their delinquent taxes as of today (12/29/23).

Property Address	Delinquent/Past Due
3055 Weathersfield Center Rd.	\$17,235.37
745 Gird Lot Rd.	\$1,429.12

Motion: To authorize the Chair to bid during the January 15, 2024 Tax Sale.

Made by: Mr. Fuller

Second: Ms. O'Brien

Vote: All in Favor

8 FY25 Town Meeting Articles

The Town Manager shared options for Article 11 (below). The Town Manager stated that the \$230,000 was changed to \$250,000 to allow some flexibility.

Article 11 Options

- 1) Shall the Voters of the Town of Weathersfield approve \$100,000 to be placed in the Highway Equipment Acquisition fund for future highway equipment purchases?
- 2) Shall the voters of the Town of Weathersfield authorize the Selectboard to borrow funds not to exceed \$100,000 for a period not to exceed 5-years for the purpose of purchasing an Excavator for the maintenance of Town Highways? The Excavator will replace a 2006 Backhoe. The cost of the Excavator will not exceed \$230,000. The balance of the funds needed to purchase the excavator will come from the sale of the 2006 Backhoe and Highway Department Equipment Reserves.
- 3) Shall the voters of the Town of Weathersfield authorize the Selectboard to borrow funds not to exceed \$100,000 for a period not to exceed 7-years for the purpose of purchasing an Excavator for the maintenance of Town Highways? The Excavator will replace a 2006 Backhoe. The cost of the Excavator will not exceed \$230,000. The balance of the funds needed to purchase the excavator will come from the sale of the 2006 Backhoe and Highway Department Equipment Reserves.

The Select Board discussed knowing the specs better, and the benefits of a backhoe compared to an excavator and the different tasks each machine is able to do. The Select Board discussed the cost of renting equipment and how there is a benefit to not having to worry about the repairs. It was stated that the Highway Department is competent and knows what equipment that they need.

The Select Board reviewed the finance package in the 12/4/23 [Select Board Packet](#), page 70 for the reserve fund and page 72 for the debt schedule. The Select Board discussed how the first Article 11 option would have the benefit of there being zero interest on a loan and enable the opportunity to put out an invitation for bid and discuss the kinds of equipment when the bids come back. The highway fund balance was discussed at length.

Much of the Select Board concluded that option 1 was the best choice and that "not in the budget" needs to be included in the Articles in parenthesis. It was noted that there may be a discrepancy in the numbers that effect the Articles. The Town Manager will research the policy as the tax rate would not change,

but another meeting would need to happen to make the appropriate corrections.

Motion: To approve Article 11 as presented and to include the words “not in the budget” in parenthesis.

Made by: Dr. Murray **Second:** Ms. Smith

Vote: 4 votes, 1 abstention-Mr. Fuller

Mr. Fuller stated that he was nervous about the future and needed more time to consider this topic.

9 Town Manager Update

a. Select Board Meeting

The next Select Board meeting will need to be on Tuesday, January 16th, 2024 because of the Martin Luther King Day holiday.

b. Annual Report

The Annual Report for the Select Board is due by next Select Board meeting to be entered into the Town’s Annual Report.

c. FEMA Projects

The Town continues to work on FEMA projects and the contract has been signed by Daniel’s Construction for the temporary bridge. Easements have been obtained and the project has been submitted to FEMA and the Town can request reimbursement once the work has been completed. The initial work that had been completed in July to bring the damaged roads back to pre-disaster conditions was submitted to FEMA and currently under review.

d. School and Town Meeting

The Town Manager, Select Board Representative, Select Board Chair, School Superintendent, SU School Board Chair, and Weathersfield School Board Chair had a meeting together.

10 Appointments

- a. Budget Committee (5 Vacancies)
- b. Conservation Commission (1 Vacancy)
- c. Energy Coordinator (1 Vacancy)
- d. Green Up Coordinator (1 Vacancy)
- e. Lister (2 Vacancies)
- f. Parks and Recreation (1 Vacancy)
- g. Veterans Memorial Committee (2 Vacancies)
- h. Village Wastewater Committee
 - i. Ann Marie Christensen
 - ii. John Arrison
 - iii. Mark Richardson
- i. Zoning Board of Adjustment (2 Vacancies)

The Select Board discussed having these commissions and committees give a quarterly report to the Select Board, which has been in progress and that it would be useful to have a roster of who is on them now and that the Town Meeting may be an opportunity to fill some of the vacancies.

11 Approve Warrant

To approve the warrants for 1/2//2024 as followed:

General Funds
Operating Expenses: \$51,462.72
Payroll: \$17,540.83

Library
Payroll: \$3,264.52
Operating Expenses: \$0

Highway Fund
Operating Expenses: \$20,453.59
Payroll: \$9,806.50

Regional Planning: \$1,949.49
PACIF Grant: \$1,649.98

Solid Waste Management Fund
Operating Expenses: \$4,294.36
Payroll: \$1,885.11

Grand Totals:
Operating Expenses: \$79,810.14
Payroll: \$32,496.96

Made by: Mr. Fuller
Vote: All in Favor

Second: Ms. O'Brien

12 Any Other Business

Motion: To move the next Select Board meeting from Monday, January 15, 2024 to Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 6:30pm, in honor of Martin Luther King Day.

Made by: Ms. Smith
Vote: All in favor

Second: Ms. O'Brien

13 Future Agenda Items

- Warnings

14 Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Made by: Mr. Fuller
Vote: All in favor

Second: Ms. Smith

The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nichole Gagnon

WEATHERSFIELD SELECT BOARD

Michael Todd, Chairperson

Wendy Smith, Selector

David Fuller, Vice-Chairperson

August Murray, Selector

Kelly O'Brien, Clerk

