

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

**Select Board
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Monday, July 20, 2020
7:00 PM
REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES
APPROVED 8/3/2020**

Select Board Members Present: N. John Arrison
David Fuller
Joseph Jarvis
Paul Tillman
Michael Todd

Select Board Members Absent:

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Others Present:

Ray Stapleton	Juergen Berthold		
Chris Whidden	Bette Jo Esty		
Richard Musbach			

1. Call to Order

Mr. Fuller called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

This meeting was closed to the public in accordance with the orders of the Governor and the CDC guidelines. Public participation was facilitated via the GoTo Meeting video-conferencing platform and conference calling. The number for people to join or call in to the meeting was published on the meeting agenda and on the Town's website. Mr. Gulnick monitored the calls and the video-platform while Mr. Fuller ran the meeting. The meeting was broadcast live on SAPA TV.

2. Comments from Select Board and Town Manager and Citizens on Topics not on the Agenda

There were no comments from the Board.

Mr. Gulnick said there were several grant opportunities that both he and Chris Whidden would be pursuing including a Local Government Expense Reimbursement Grant (approximately \$13 million from the State to reimburse towns for COVID-19 expenses); a Digitization of Land Records Grant (\$2 million available for digitization of land

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records); a waiver on loan payments through the DEC until May 1st, 2021 and several others.

Mr. Fuller asked for an executive session to be added to the end of this meeting's agenda for a 6-month review of Mr. Gulnick's performance.

Comments from Citizens: Lynn Esty said the listers had filed the Grand List on June 29th. She thanked the Board for the time extension.

3. Review minutes from previous meetings – July 6, 2020

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. None

Motion: To approve

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

Vote: 1 abstention, 4 in favor

4. Reminder – August 3, 2020 Public Hearing - 7:00 PM

Mr. Fuller stated there would be a public hearing on amendments to the zoning bylaws brought by petition.

5. Consider a Vote to Sign Transfer Station Report

Mr. Gulnick said he had made the changes as discussed at the previous meeting.

Motion: To accept and sign the transfer station report dated July 20, 2020 as written

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

A request was made to include the FY21 budget as an addendum to the report. Mr. Todd agreed to add this to his motion. Mr. Arrison agreed to second it.

Vote: All in favor

6. Discussion – letter sent on Town letterhead regarding Fire District #2

A notice of meter inspection had been sent to the customers of the Fire District on Town letterhead. The notice also informed customers that the administrative tasks of the district were being merged with the Town. This led to some confusion about the Town absorbing the Fire District, which was not the intended message. Mr. Gulnick made it clear that the Town and the Fire District are two separate identities. He has since created a letterhead for the District.

The Prudential committee voted to change the name to Ascutney Water District. Separate water district email addresses have been created to keep water district business separate from Town business.

Mr. Arrison clarified that the Town was taking over management only – not debt service.

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The Town will be reimbursed from the water district for management expenses.

7. Set a public hearing time/date for the VCDP Grant

A public hearing is needed to close out the grant for the 1879 Perkinsville Schoolhouse ramp project.

Motion: To set the date of August 17th at 7PM at Martin Memorial Hall for the hearing to close out the VCDP grant

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

Vote: All in favor

8. Discussion – Proposed FY21 Tax Rate

Due to COVID-19 related delays in setting the tax rate, the Board was asked to adopt the following schedule:

- August 3, 2020 – Set FY21 tax rate
- August 6, 2020 – mail tax bills
- September 16, 2020 – first quarterly installment

The total tax amount would still be divided into four payments.

9. Consider a vote to approve the amended COVID-19 Phased Reopening Plan

Motion: To accept the amended COVID-19 phased reopening plan

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

Mr. Gulnick said that the Town Office employees voted to make mask-wearing mandatory for anyone in the Town Office. Several letters from Town Office employees calling for the mask mandate were shared with the Board. Mr. Gulnick asked the Board to include the mandate in the motion to accept the amended plan.

Mr. Fuller said he endorsed the mandate as emergency management coordinator. After discussion, the motion was not changed.

Vote: All in favor

10. Discussion – Noise Ordinance and Enforcement

Land Use Administrator asked the Board to authorize the purchase of a decibel meter with which to administer and enforce the noise standards in the zoning bylaws. The Town used to own one, but no one can find it.

Richard Musbach, resident on Route 131, recounted his ongoing challenge with his noisy neighbor.

The pros and cons of using a meter, the need to ensure its accuracy and the competence of its operator were discussed at length.

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The Town has noise standards in its zoning bylaws and a stand-alone noise ordinance as well.

Motion: To allow \$800 to purchase a sound meter preferably with digital recording ability in the event that the Town Manager is unable to locate the one we allegedly have

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

Vote: 2 in favor; 3 opposed - motion fails

Mr. Gulnick was asked to provide the Board with a copy of the noise ordinance and to continue searching for the elusive sound meter. The discussion is to be continued at the next meeting.

11. Discussion – Employment of a Town Assessor

Former Town Manager Ed Morris had first broached the idea of replacing elected listers with an appointed assessor position. The idea was raised once again. Mr. Fuller polled the Board as to whether they felt Mr. Gulnick should continue to research this position or not.

Mr. Todd – yes, continue researching;

Mr. Jarvis – how will the town benefit from this change? don't fix what isn't broken; we have bigger fish to fry;

Mr. Fuller – wants Mr. Gulnick to find out what the listers want to do; what's their current work schedule;

Mr. Arrison – not a priority; don't spend a lot of time on it.

12. Discussion – Bylaw Definitions

There was confusion about whether a hearing is required to change definitions in the zoning bylaws. There was also confusion about what definitions were to be changed. The matter was sent back to the Planning Commission for clarification.

13. Update – Tandem Axle Dump Truck Bid Opening

The Board reviewed and discussed the bids that had been received.

Motion: To approve the purchase of the truck from Reed for \$198,020 complete which includes the \$8500 for the trade-in

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

Mr. Arrison asked that the 7-year warranty be provided in writing.

Vote: All in favor

14. Consider a vote to approve the amended motor grader RFB as written

A list of changes to the RFB package were provided to the Board for review. The amended RFB calls for a pre-bid conference at which minutes are taken and are posted as an addendum to the bid package. It was agreed to strike the penalty for late delivery under the general specifications section.

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Motion: To let the amended RFB go out for the road grader with the changes noted on 7/20/2020 plus striking of the penalty for late delivery

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

Vote: All in favor

15. Third reading:

a. **Conflict of Interest & Ethical Conduct Policy (Draft)**

b. **Fraud Prevention Policy (Draft)**

c. **Investment & Banking Policy (Draft)**

d. **Capitalization of Assets Policy (Draft)**

No changes were made to any of these policies. This is the third and final reading.

Motion: To accept the Conflict of Interest and Ethical Conduct Policy, the Fraud Prevention Policy, the Investment and Banking Policy, and the Capitalization of Assets Policy

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

Vote: All in favor

16. Appointments

a. **Parks and Recreation Commission – Chris Whidden**

Motion: To appoint Chris Whidden to the Parks and Recreation Commission

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

Vote: All in favor

Lynn Esty challenged the appointment on the grounds that Mr. Whidden is not a town resident.

Motion: To rescind the motion to appoint Mr. Whidden

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

Vote: All in favor

The residency requirement will be researched.

17. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 7/20/2020 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$26,734.71
	Payroll	\$15,375.20
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$6,410.96
	Payroll	\$9,118.90

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Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$4,272.94
	Payroll	\$1,704.48
Library		
	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
	Payroll	\$1,907.60
Grants		
	Operating Expenses	\$8,118.51
Special Revenue		
	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Reserves		
		\$0.00
Long Term Debt		
		\$0.00
Grand Totals		
	Operating Expenses	\$45,537.12
	Payroll	\$28,106.18

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

Vote: All in favor

18. Any Other Business

Mr. Stapleton said DPW will be replacing culverts on Cady Hill and Perkins Hill Roads.
The roads will be closed at times.

19. Executive session for personnel

Motion: To enter executive session for personnel to conduct a 6-month review of Mr. Gulnick's performance as Town Manager

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

Vote: All in favor

The Board went into executive session at 8:47 PM.

The Board exited executive session and motioned to adjourn at 9:23p.m.

Motion: John Arrison

Second: Mike Todd

Vote: Unanimous.

20. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Made by: **Second:**

Vote:

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The meeting adjourned at

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

N. John Arrison, Selector

David Fuller, Chairperson

Joseph Jarvis, Clerk

Paul Tillman

Michael Todd, Vice- Chairperson