

Select Board Meeting
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 US Rte 5, Ascutney VT
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Monday October, 17, 2022 6:30 PM

Select Board Members Present:

Paul Tillman
Kelly O'Brien
Michael Todd
David Fuller
Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Selectboard Members Absent:

Wendy Smith

Attendees: Flo Ann Dango,

Online Attendees: Tim from Norwich Solar, Joseph Bublat, Atanas Krastev

1.) Call to Order by Michael Todd, Chair 6:32 pm

2.) Pledge of Allegiance was led by Paul Tillman.

3.) Agenda Review

No changes

4.) Comments from Citizens not on the agenda

Ray Stapleton gave a Parks and Rec update. He wanted to make everyone aware that there is a Parks & Rec meeting Wednesday October 19th at 6:00 pm and encouraged all to attend.

David Fuller asked if the Selectboard was going to be meeting upstairs again as he has been asked regarding renting the downstairs of Martin Memorial Hall.

Brandon let the Board know that the downstairs is rented and they just collapse the tables when people are using the space.

Paul Tillman noted that the cameras have been wired in downstairs and wanted to know what the costs would be to move all of that upstairs.

5.) Review Minutes from Previous Meetings: 10-3-22

Paul Tillman made a motion to approve the minutes from 10-3-22.

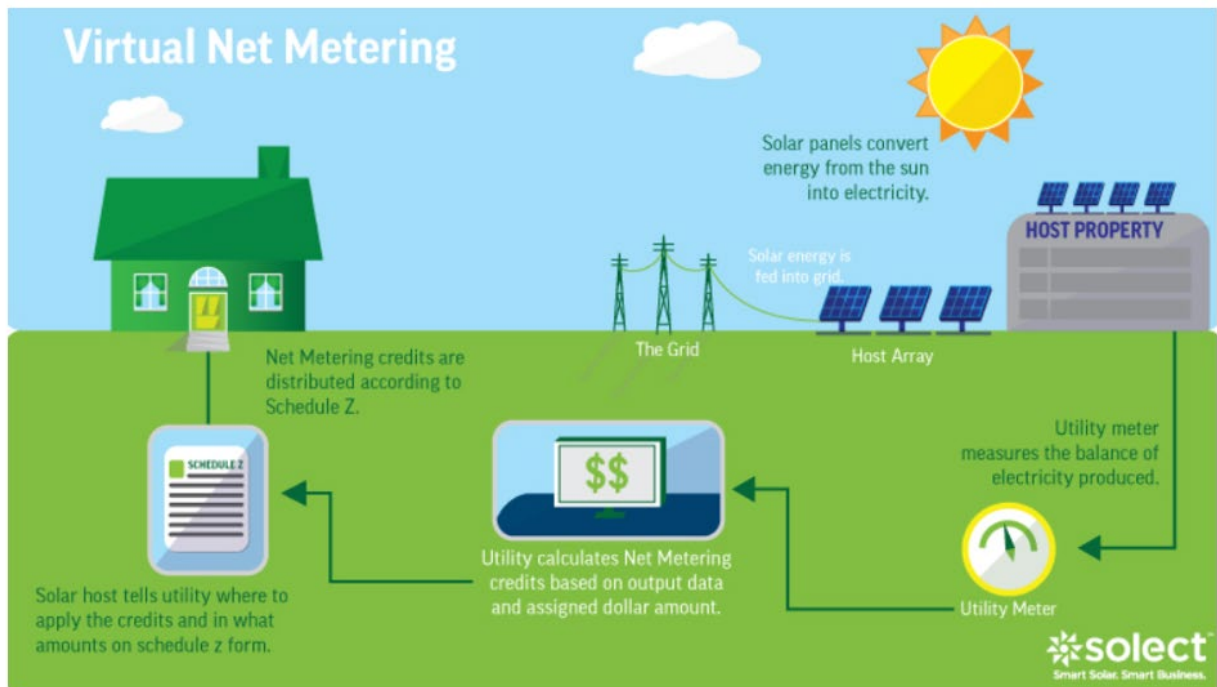
Kelly O'Brien – 2nd

Discussion – Michael Todd asked that for future minutes when there is a vote, instead of putting “No Discussion” in the minutes if it could read “No Further Discussion” for situations where appropriate.

No further discussion
Vote - unanimous

6.) Norwich Solar Invoice Discussion

Tim from Norwich Solar was online and gave a presentation to the Selectboard regarding the Net Metering Agreement.



Weathersfield Town Garage Solar

- Host Array - 836.4 DC kW system located at 483 Stoughton Pond Rd on land owned by the town. Independent of the Net Metering Agreement (NMA), the town receives an annual lease payment for use of the land by the system owner to host the array.
- System Owner – Party that owns the physical array. Weathersfield Town Garage Solar, LLC which is a subsidiary of Barrington Power, LLC.
- Net Metering Credits (NMC) – The state NM program dictates the rates at which credits are issued. This particular array currently receives a credit of \$0.17141 per kWh exported to the grid.

*Note rates will change periodically

- Offtakers – The parties that receive credits on their bills. The system owner communicates the allocation to the utility company. The Town of Weathersfield is receiving 16% of the production from this project. This is allocated to the following accounts:

ACCOUNT	ACCOUNT HOLDER	NMA ALLOCATION ▲	SERVICE ADDRESS
58757200009	CUS-1207 Town of Weathersfield	1.5%	Fire Pump, Intersection Route 106 and Upper Falls Road, Perkinsville VT 05151
31348200002	CUS-1207 Town of Weathersfield	3.5%	Perkinsville School House, 1862 Route 106, Perkinsville VT 05151
70547200009	CUS-1207 Town of Weathersfield	6.1%	Solid Waste, 5024 Route 106, Perkinsville VT 05151
80547200008	CUS-1207 Town of Weathersfield	6.9%	WWVFD, 7259 Route 131, Perkinsville VT 05151
71268200004	CUS-1207 Town of Weathersfield	7.5%	Proctor Library, 5181 Route 5, Ascutney VT 05030
18968200008	CUS-1207 Town of Weathersfield	9.1%	Ascutney Fire Dept. 540 Route 131, Weathersfield VT 05156
79327200006	CUS-1207 Town of Weathersfield	10.9%	483 Stoughton Pond Road, Perkinsville, VT 05151
36698200007	CUS-1207 Town of Weathersfield	16.1%	Route 5 Pump, Country Estate Park Rt 5, Ascutney VT 05030
31168200009	CUS-1207 Town of Weathersfield	18.4%	Town Hall/Martin, 5259 Route 5, Ascutney, VT 05030
71271527476	CUS-1207 Town of Weathersfield	20.0%	258 Sunset Blvd. Ascutney, VT 05030

Monthly Credits

On each of the accounts noted on the prior slide, GMP will issue monetary credits for the share of the allocation each account has been given each billing cycle. The credits will appear as three line items on the GMP bills:

- 1) Excess credit – Credited at the statewide blended rate (currently \$0.17141/kWh....adjusted roughly every two years)
- 2) Siting Adder – Credited at *negative* \$0.02/kWh per the project CPG
- 3) REC Adder – Credited at positive \$0.02/kWh per the project CPG (goes away after year 10)

Monthly Invoicing

- The NMA the town signed calls for a 10% discount on NMC assigned to the town's accounts.
- Each month an invoice will be issued from the system owner for 90% of the credits received.
- The monetary savings to the town is the difference between what GMP credits them and what they pay the system owner.
- Let's walk through an example...

Follow Up Items

- Monitor your Net Meter Bank (shown on each GMP bill) as we approach the spring. Solar is seasonal so we want to ensure coming out of the winter you are not carrying a large credit balance with the summer and high production season right around the corner. If an adjustment to your allocation is needed, we can work with you to determine what changes should be made.
- Contact Info:
 - Tim Harrison – Controller at Norwich Technologies – Harrison@norwichsolar.com
 - Jack Bingham – Manager at Barrington Power LLC - jack@barringtonpower.com

The presentation left the Selectboard with questions and due to time constraints and difficulty communicating online with the presenter, it was decided that the Selectboard would send their

questions to the Town Manager and he would work with Tim at Norwich Solar to hopefully answer some of those questions for the next Selectboard meeting.

7.) Town Manager Report

Perkinsville Center Speed Enforcement

There have been requests to install a digital speed sign on 106 in Perkinsville Center to address speed concerns. Since this is State Highway, research was required prior to installation. We found that a radar speed feedback sign would be allowable if we can secure a Section 1111 permit from the state. Chief Daniels, Otis Munroe, and I filled out the permit and submitted it. If the permit is approved, we will install it. The Police Department recently received grant funding to purchase the sign, which cost \$3,000 per unit. As new information becomes available, we will update the Town accordingly.

Roof Replacement Site Visit Reminder

This is a reminder that we're holding site visits for the three (3) roof replacement projects on Wednesday, October 19th. The Town Garage site visit is at 9:30am, Martin Memorial Hall is at 11am, and West Weathersfield Fire Station is at 11:45am.

Bids are due on November 3rd by 2pm. They must be sealed bids marked "Roof Replacement Project". A public bid opening will take place at 3pm on this same date. We anticipate discussion and review with the Selectboard on November 7th.

Compactor Replacement Project

The compactor and concrete pad have been installed. The project is considered complete.

Lottery Lane Project

The project is on schedule. The next step is adding the outlet wingwalls and building the roadbed up. Following

Due to the time and the fact that Mr. Krastev was there in person to discuss his Licenses, the Selectboard moved items #9, 10 and 11 up ahead of the Permit Sticker Policy.

8.) First Class License

A.) Silna IW LLC formerly Inn at Weathersfield

Paul Tillman made a motion to award Silna IW LLC, formerly The Inn at Weathersfield the First-Class License, Application # 00593.

David Fuller – 2nd

Discussion:

Kelly O'Brien noted that applications each have their own unique application number. Paul Tillman revised the motion to include the Application # 00593.

Michael Todd and David Fuller noted that the Selectboard has always been given some sort of paperwork that says the Chief of Police has signed off on the applications. Flo Ann Dango, Town Clerk said this was not the case and she had spoken with Chief Daniels and he had no issues with these licenses.

Vote - unanimous

9.) Third Class License

A.) Silna IW LLC formerly Inn at Weathersfield

Paul Tillman made a motion to award Silna IW LLC, formerly The Inn at Weathersfield the Third-Class License, Application # 00573.

David Fuller – 2nd

Discussion:

Michael Todd wanted to clarify what the Third-Class license is for. Flo Ann Dango said it was for beer and wine.

Vote - unanimous

10.) Outside Consumption Permit

A.) Silna IW LLC formerly Inn at Weathersfield

Paul Tillman made a motion to award Silna IW LLC, formerly The Inn at Weathersfield the Third-Class License, Application # 00595.

David Fuller – 2nd

No Discussion

Vote - unanimous

11.) Permit Sticker Policy

A.) Vote to amend the Permit Sticker Policy to include Temporary Permits

As we roll out our plans & policy at the Transfer Station we will run into the need for revision. Each year we allot time between residents receiving the new fiscal years permit sticker and enforcement. We set our enforcement date on October 1st each year, which gives ample time for residents to affix their permit stickers on their windshield. This year we ran into a need for a temporary permit. There were residents in rental cars and residents that wish to rent a truck (generally residents that only have cars) to dump larger items at the transfer station. To remedy this, we revised our Permit Sticker policy to include a "temporary permit" section. Please review this change, which is highlighted in yellow under section IV (6). The process is simple. We will provide a temporary permit with a permitted use date range.

From the Town of Weathersfield, Vermont
Transfer Station Permit Sticker Policy

Temporary Permit Stickers

These permits are available at the Town Offices in Weathersfield, Reading, and West Windsor during normal business hours. The property owner may come in to obtain a temporary permit for the Transfer Station. Temporary permits can be used on rental vehicles or the like. The permit will contain the residents name and address and the dates of permitted use. Temporary permits will only be granted to residents that have already purchased a sticker for the current year.

Paul Tillman made a motion to table this discussion until the November 7 Selectboard Meeting so that he and the Town Manager can have their meeting on November 1st with the other Towns to discuss changes.

David Fuller – 2nd

Discussion –

Michael Todd stated that he did not support this motion because it was this motion makes it so they can't discuss the changes they want to make.

It was decided that Brandon would initiate this temporary sticker permit and would discuss it with the other Towns.

12.) Late Homestead Penalty Discussion

We have had several residents who filed their Homestead declarations late. When a homestead is filed late the resident is billed a penalty. The penalty is set at 8%. In 2017 the board waived this fee. In 2018 (only) it was set to 3%. In 2019 & 2020 it did not apply because the homestead was not higher than the non-residential rate. Last year the board voted to change it from 8% to 3% after the tax bills were mailed and we sent revised tax bills.

In the case the board votes to move the penalty from 8% to 3%, we will need to mail revised tax bills to all who received a penalty for filing their homestead declarations late.

Recommendation: Vote to reduce the 8% penalty to 3% for FY23 & mail revised tax bills to all that are affected (which is currently over 40 residents).

Paul Tillman made a motion to reduce the 8% penalty to 0 for FY12 & mail revised tax bills to all that are affected.

Kelly O'Brien – 2nd

Discussion-

Paul Tillman asked how the Town was going to be affected by this. Michael Todd said that he has spoken with the Town Manager and they will use COVID funds.

Kelly O'Brien asked for clarification of who receives these. It is for all property owners. After discussion, Paul Tillman amended his motion to reduce the penalty to 0 for FY23 and to anyone who has already paid this penalty, to be issued a refund. This relates only to the Homestead Late Fee.

Kelly O'Brien – amended her 2nd.

Vote – Aye (3)
Abstain (1)

13.) FY24 Proposed Highway Budget

The Highway Superintendent and I held several meetings to discuss the FY24 Highway Department Budget. Based on these meetings, the following changes are being proposed:

1.) REVENUES

- a. The bottom line for expenditures is the same as compared to FY23. Expenditures will not change.
 - i. TAX NEED: The tax need for this department will increase from \$930,341 to \$959,170. This is due to using fund balance in FY23 to reduce the property tax need. The Selectboard approved the use of \$76,726 in fund balance in FY23, and we're proposing to use only \$38,363 in Fund Balance this year, and the remainder of fund balance next year to prevent significant tax need spikes.
 - ii. STATE AID TO HIGHWAY: State Aid to Highway has been increasing. We budgeted \$143,487 in FY23. The State increased Highway Aid in FY23 to \$152,768. We are unsure of the FY24 State Aid to Highway, so we're adjusting this from \$143,487 to the \$152,768 that we're receiving this year.
 - iii. SERVICE TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS: Service to Solid Waste & Service to Town SWD Admin have increased to correlate with COLA requests. Fuel to WWVFD has been eliminated as WWVFD purchases their diesel at Downers following a new arrangement entered into during FY23.
 - iv. USE OF FUND BALANCE: Rather than using all of our fund balance again to aggressively offset the tax rate, we are proposing to decrease this use by 50%, which leads to the property tax need increasing.

2.) EXPENDITURES

- a. PERSONNEL
 - i. Cost of Living Adjustments
 - 1. The Highway Department currently has seven (7) full time positions, including the Highway Superintendent. The proposal here is to eliminate 1 position & increase existing employee wages by 10%.
 - 2. Alternative practices would include a wage adjustment in FY23, and a lower COLA in FY24.

3. Following several attempts to advertise highway positions, we received no interest, which indicates our starting wages of \$18.25/HR may not be attractive as compared to other comparable available positions.

- ii. Benefits

1. The Highway Department is seeking to maintain the existing coverage with MVP with the existing HSA option. We currently offer both the Platinum Plan without an HSA and Gold 3 Plan with an HSA. The request is to keep these options the same.

- b. OVERALL

- i. Personnel is decreasing by 1% OR \$5,093.

- 3.) OFFICE EXPENSES

- a. IT Services: Our Contract with CCI contains a 1% inflationary increase for 5 years.
- b. Training & Conferences: The cost of training and conferences has increased. We're adjusting this by \$175 annually.
- c. All other accounts are level funded.

- 4.) UTILITIES

- a. Electricity: Additional research required. Placeholder entered from FY23.
- b. All other accounts are level funded.

- 5.) HIGHWAY GARAGE & TRUCK EXPENSES

- a. Diesel Fuel: Increasing by 9%, however, this is an estimate based on current pricing trends.
- b. Gasoline: Increasing by 17% based on pricing trends.
- c. All other accounts are level funded.

- 6.) ROAD MATERIAL AND REPAIRS

- a. Salt: Decreased salt expenses based on four (4) years of pricing and use analysis.
- b. Paving Repairs: Increased paving repairs by \$2,500 to repair more roads in Weathersfield.
- c. All other accounts are level funded.

- 7.) FEES & PERMITS

- a. Level funded.

- 8.) DEBT SERVICE

- a. 2018 Plow Truck was paid off and new truck payment is \$17,304 less annually.
- b. Debt Service Grader Lease: Level funded to pay 2 years of Grader

payments. 2 Years have also been in FY23. We're on track with this arrangement to pay for the grader in five (5) years, rather than the seven (7) year schedule we have. This will increase the trade in value of the grader exponentially.

- c. Interest: As principal payments are made annual interest decreases.

9.) FUND BALANCE & RESERVES

- a. Transfer to Highway Equipment: We propose to transfer \$15,000 of the annual savings from the 2018 plow truck to Highway Equipment reserves.

14.) FY24 Proposed Solid Waste Budget

The Highway Superintendent and I held several meetings to discuss the FY24 Solid Waste budget. We are still waiting on additional information to finalize this budget; however, this is a draft:

1.) REVENUES

- a. The revenue need at the Transfer Station has increased and Town Assessments have increased as a result. Variable revenues have been set to a 3% increase, which is an estimate that requires additional research and analysis. This will be done over the coming weeks. Fixed revenues are set at a 19% increase, which will be discussed under expenditures.

2.) EXPENDITURES

- a. Personnel
 - i. Cost of Living Adjustments: The Solid Waste Department is seeking 10% Cost of Living Adjustments for FY24, similar to the Highway Department.
 - ii. Alternative practices would include a wage adjustment in FY23, and a lower COLA in FY24.
- b. Office Expenses
 - i. Insurance information is still pending, so this item is level funded until that information is received. IT services was not entered in FY23, so this adjustment is being made in FY24. The account will be overspent in FY23. Highway Service & Support is adjusted based on Highway Personnel COLA request of 10%. Town Office Support is adjusted at 7%.
- c. Tipping & Recycling
 - i. Additional research and analysis is pending, similar to variable revenues we're entering a placeholder of 3% under variable expenses.
- d. Debt Service
 - i. The Trash Compactor loan has been added under debt

service. The payment is considered a fixed expense, which adds to the reasoning for a higher fixed revenue need. Principal is set at \$10,130 annually, while interest is set at \$2,127 in FY24, however interest will decrease as the principal decreases each year. For example, in FY25 interest will be \$1,823, compared to \$304 in FY30.

15.) FY22 Reserve Transfers

TO: Selectboard
FR: Steve Hier
DA: 8/23/22
RE: End of FY22 Transfers To/From Reserves

There were some questions at the August 15th meeting about approving the usual end of year transfer of funds to and from various reserve accounts. I write this in the hopes that it may provide additional background about those transfers so that they might be approved at the September 6th meeting. At this point, I am not certain that I will be able to be present at that meeting.

Most of these transfers fall into the “must do” category. I fully understand the frustration of asking a board to approve something when they really have no choice in the matter. Why even ask for approval if it is a “must do”? It is a combination of the way we budget certain revenues and the fact that the auditors will look for Board approval on transfers that do not match specifically budgeted dollar amounts.

In many of these transfers, revenue that should go into the reserve fund is budgeted as general fund revenue which then requires a transfer to the various reserve funds. If, instead, those revenues were directly deposited into the reserve funds then there would be no need for Board approval as there would be no need for a transfer. That could be changed starting with the FY24 budget.

Let’s go down the attached list of transfers and address each of them:

Vault Fees, Computerization, and Preservation reserve funds have been established by the voters such that the fees charged for those purposes go into the reserve funds and expenses for those purposes would come out of the reserve fund. The way the Town has always handled these is for the revenue to be recorded into the General Fund budget and then transferred to the reserve funds. In two cases we have already transferred an estimated amount of revenue as included in the budget.

The article that established the Parks and Recreation reserve fund specifies that any unspent funds remaining in the Parks and Recreation budget will be transferred to the reserve. Technically, this does not really need to be on the list for your approval but has been historically.

The Property Reappraisal transfer represents the state grant for that purpose which is again budgeted as a revenue in the general fund and then transferred to the reserve fund. Each year we estimate the amount of the grant and transfer that budgeted estimate early in the year. Since the estimate is never exact we then have to adjust that transfer to reflect the actual amount of the grant.

Each year the general fund budget includes a line for Aid to Residents in Need (ARN). This year it was \$ 2,000. Additionally, this year town residents donated a total of \$ 350 for that purpose. At the end of each year any unspent funds for this purpose are transferred to the ARN reserve fund. If the Town has spent more than what was budgeted, funds would be transferred out of the reserve fund to cover the overage.

Dog license payments include a \$ 1 fee for rabies control and prevention. Again, that amount is budgeted as a revenue in the general fund and must then be transferred out to the Rabies Control reserve fund.

This year the Board authorized some of the repair work in the basement at Martin Memorial Hall to come from the Unspecified Reserve (aka the Rainy-Day Reserve). This transaction would move \$ 7,051.89 out of the reserve fund to reimburse the general fund for those expenses. This would increase the balance in the general fund unlike the other transfers.

The ARN transfer and the Unspecified Reserve transfer are really the only “discretionary” transfers. The others are “must do” based on how we currently account for reserve fund revenues by including them in the general fund budget. Again, we can change this starting in FY24 if we instead start booking those revenues directly into the reserve funds instead of passing them through the general fund first.

ITEM	Account Number	FY22 Revenue	FY22 Expense	Balance	Already Transferred	Balance to Transfer	Reserve Fund	DEBIT Account	CREDIT Account	FUND BALANCE (before transfer)
EXPENSE TRANSFER:										
Vault Fees	103-01.10	\$ 5,382.50	\$ -	\$ 5,382.50	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,382.50	Vault Usage	11-7-103-90.03	41-6-445-08.15	\$ 69,780.52
Computerization*	103-20.15	\$ 8,336.00	\$ 4,140.00	\$ 4,196.00		\$ 4,196.00	Municipal Records	11-7-103-90.00	41-6-440-08.15	\$ 13,553.41
Preservation	103-01.05	\$ 5,577.00	\$ -	\$ 5,577.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 2,077.00	Land & Vital Records	11-7-103-90.02	15-6-103-08.15	\$ 25,969.46
Voting Equipment		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	Voting Equipment	11-7-103-90.04	41-6-435-08.15	\$ 3,043.14
Parks & Recreation****	302-38.10	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,460.31	\$ 39.69		\$ 39.69	Parks & Recreation	11-7-302-38.10	41-6-425-08.15	\$ 24,125.54
Property Reappraisal	104-90.00	\$ 15,770.00	\$ -	\$ 15,770.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 770.00	Reappraisal	11-7-104-90.00	15-6-104-08.15	\$ 268,598.26
CASH TRANSFER ONLY:										
ARN**	106-09.18	\$ 2,350.00	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,050.00		\$ 1,050.00	ARN	11-1-010-02.00	11-1-010-03.00	\$ 4,587.52
Conservation	106-07.18	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		\$ -	Conservation	11-1-010-02.00	11-1-010-03.00	\$ 1,768.53
Rabies***	103-20.25		\$ -	\$ -		\$ 326.00	Rabies	11-1-010-02.00	11-1-010-03.00	\$ 4,845.63
Unspecified Reserve			\$ 7,051.89	\$ (7,051.89)		\$ (7,051.89)		11-1-010-02.00	11-1-010-03.00	\$ 120,640.06
NET TOTAL						\$ 3,789.30				

* Transfer equals revenue less expenses in line 11-7-103-24.00

** Transfer equals any donation revenue plus the unspent balance in 11-7-106-90.04

*** Transfer equals number of dog licenses issued during year x \$ 1.

**** Transfer equals unspent balance in 11-7-302-38.10

David Fuller made a motion to transfer a total of \$3, 789.30 from the General Fund to the appropriate reserve accounts as follows:

\$2, 382.50 from the Vault Fees
\$4,196.00 from the Municipal Computerization account
\$2, 077.00 from Land & Vital Records
\$39.69 from Parks & Recreation
\$770.00 from Property Reappraisal
\$1,050.0 from ARN (Aid to Residents in Need)
\$326.00 from Rabies
A debit of \$7,051,89 from Unspecified Reserves Rainy Day Fund.

Paul Tillman – 2nd

Discussion –

Michael Todd wanted to make sure that the they did not need to keep the Unspecified Reserves as a separate line item. Brandon Gulnick said it did not.

Vote - unanimous

16.) Vote to Transfer \$2,500 from SIU Grant to Police Cruiser Reserves

David Fuller made a motion to transfer \$2,500 from the SIU Grant to the Police Cruiser Reserves.

Paul Tillman – 2nd

Discussion-

Brandon Gulnick asked if the motion could be amended to say “Vote to transfer \$2,500 from the FY23 Police Department Budget to the Police Cruiser Reserves”. They spent the SIU Grant in the Police Department Budget so it’s an accounting issue that Steve Heir corrected the Town Manager on.

David Fuller amended his motion to Vote to transfer \$2,500 from the FY23 Police Department Budget to the Police Cruiser Reserves.

Paul Tillman – 2nd the amendment

No further discussion

Vote - unanimous

17.) Appointments

None

18.) Any other business

19.) Approve Warrant

Paul Tillman made a motion to approve the warrants of 10-17-22 as follows:

General Funds	Operating Expenses \$27,189.66 Payroll \$14,858.01
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Highway Fund	Operating Expenses \$29,288.81
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	Payroll \$8,616.80
Solid Waste Management Fund	Operating Expenses \$18,898.42 Payroll \$2,067.97
Library	Operating Expenses \$0.00 Payroll \$2,101.46
Roof RFPs	Operating Expense \$132.60
Parks & Recs Reserve	Operating Expense \$350.00
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses \$75,859.49 Payroll \$27,644.24

Kelly O'Brien – 2nd
No Discussion
Vote – unanimous

20.) Adjourn

Paul Tillman made a motion to adjourn at 8:48 pm
Kelly O'Brien– 2nd
No Discussion
Vote - Unanimous

Respectfully,
Chauncie Tillman
Recording Secretary

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

David Fuller, Vice-Chairperson

Kelly O'Brien, Clerk

Wendy Smith, Selector

Paul Tillman, Selector

Michael Todd, Chairperson