

**TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT**

**SELECT BOARD**

**Select Board**

**Ascutney Fire Department  
540 VT-131, Ascutney VT 05030**

**Monday, November 1, 2021**

**6:30 PM**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**Select Board Members Present:** David Fuller  
Joseph Jarvis  
Kelly O'Brien  
Paul Tillman  
Michael Todd (remotely)

**Select Board Members Absent:**

**Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager**

**Others Present:**

Rep. John Arrison	Martes Family	Alicia Jenks	Others...
Darrin Spaulding	Nathan Stoddard	Gerald Malloy	
Ray Stapleton	Ira Bruso	Wendy Allen	

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Fuller called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

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

Mr. Tillman thanked the Ascutney Volunteer Fire Department for hosting the meeting. He reminded everyone about open enrollment for insurance benefits. He and Mr. Gulnick will be meeting on Wednesday in West Windsor to continue discussions about the transfer station.

Mr. Todd said he was continuing to recover from Covid. He said he would like to have information on the cost of treating ash trees to protect them from the emerald ash borer.

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Mr. Fuller called for a moment of silence in recognition of former Town Clerk Carol Daniels' passing.

The Veterans Memorial Committee will be hosting the annual Veterans Day Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Park in Perkinsville at 11:00 AM on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Weathersfield School Principal Brian Martes will be this year's guest speaker.

Representative John Arrison will be the Master of Ceremonies.

Representative Arrison said he noticed that the discussion about ARPA funds had been dropped from the agenda. He asked to have it put back on. He is advocating for using some of the funds to update the ventilation system at Martin Hall. He also asked for an update on the Abbott tax sale.

Mr. Fuller said that Mr. Gulnick has been meeting with other town managers to learn what they are doing (with regard to ARPA funds). He and Mr. Gulnick have visited West Weathersfield fire house. They have also been asked to visit every town-owned building.

The Abbott tax sale is still underway. It will probably be ready for sale in the spring.

A citizen member of the audience said the trunk or treat event was really nice.

**4. Review minutes from previous meetings – October 18, 2021**

**Additions/corrections/deletions:** None.

**Motion:** Approve with corrections as needed

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

**Vote:** All in favor

**5. 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Nature Center Presentation**

Three teams of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students gave their presentations on creating a nature center. Each presentation contained a visual of what the center would look like, a site plan, a budget for its construction and operation; a cost/benefit analysis and pitch for why they thought their idea was the best.

Mr. Tillman and Mr. Fuller both thought the ideas had merit and could possibly be pursued in the future.

**6. NEMRC Assessor Introduction**

Nathan Stoddard, interim assessor from NEMRC (New England Municipal Resource Center) was introduced to the board. Mr. Stoddard provided a bit of his personal work history and described the work that NEMRC does. He told the board he will be getting

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caught up on property transfers and land use permit applications. He will provide training to listers Alexis Skalaban and Barb Thomas.

Mr. Fuller emphasized the need for continuity between land use permits and assessing. Mr. Stoddard said he will be looking at all active permits and conduct inspections to determine their degree of completion. He said he does this same type of work in other towns and so is familiar with the process.

Mr. Tillman asked for information that will help the board set the budget for the listers for FY23.

**7. Town Manager Report**

**FY21 Audit**

The FY21 audit starts tomorrow (November 2, 2021). It will be ongoing for the rest of week.

**FY23 Budget Discussions Timeline**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Budget Advisory</u>	<u>Selectboard</u>
October 13, 2021	Highway	
October 27, 2021	Highway, Solid Waste, AVFD, WWVFD, General Fire Services	
November 1, 2021		Solid Waste Budget
November 10, 2021	Highway, Police, WWVFD	
November 15, 2021		Highway Fund Budget
November 17, 2021	Admin, Land Use, Listers, Town Clerk, Library	
December 6, 2021		General Fund Budget

**Website**

Work continues on the website. Mr. Gulnick presented 4 versions of the town's name on the home page and asked the board to choose which version they liked best. The board was content to let Mr. Gulnick design what he thought was best. Ms. Savage is conducting a photo contest to select photos for the home page.

**Land Use Administrator Position**

The position has been re-advertised. Twenty-two applications have been received and reviewed by the Planning Commission. Eight applications were selected for interviews. Five interviews have been scheduled, but one candidate was offered employment elsewhere and withdrew.

**8. Highway Fuel Monitoring System**

Mr. Gulnick presented a proposal for a sophisticated fuel monitoring system that would track fuel usage and provide detailed data analysis. He said it would be a much more efficient system than the paper slips system we currently use. Because of the cost, it would have to go out to bid.

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Mr. Jarvis asked why do we need this and why now? Mr. Gulnick said this would give information on fuel usage for each piece of equipment; it would save accounting time; it would be a more secure system than what we have now; and it would give him ready data for use in budget discussions.

An informal poll of the board resulted in four members in favor of putting the proposal out to bid and one opposed to it.

**9. FY23 Solid Waste Fund Budget**

(From the Town Manager's report)

The FY23 proposed Transfer Station Budget achieves the following:

1. Decreases Weathersfield's contribution by 20%.
2. Increases West Windsor's contribution by 442.8%.
3. Increases Readings contribution by 7.93%
4. Divides Transfer Station Operations into Fixed & Variable costs (more detail below)
5. Increases personnel by 2% (raise).
6. Increases the overall budget by 2.21% OR \$6,395.

Mr. Gulnick noted the 3 sections at the bottom of the FY23 Solid Waste Budget - the net fixed costs at the Transfer Station have been in the red for 6 consecutive years because the fixed revenue is not covering the fixed expenses. The Variable Revenue/Expense Net has been offsetting the Fixed Net. In some cases, this has not been enough and in other cases there was a surplus.

One of the goals of the FY23 Solid Waste budget is to isolate fixed and variable expenses so that fixed revenues cover fixed expenses only and variable revenues cover variable expenses only. As you know, fixed revenue is generated from permit stickers and variable revenue is generated from punch ticket sales.

If this budget is approved, the Transfer Station Permit Sticker will be reduced to \$40 in FY23 (pending Final Grand List Information).

The Budget Advisory Committee has reviewed this budget. They are proposing to not add any funds to the reserves this year.

There was discussion about the proposed 2% raise for employees in light of the current cost of living increase of 5.9%.

This budget depends on the West Windsor budget passing in March, but there seems to be good support for it.

The Board chose not to act on this budget at this meeting.

**10. Parks and Recreation Policy 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading**

**Motion:** To accept the Parks and Recreation Policy after this 3<sup>rd</sup> reading, adopted November 1, 2021 as written

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**Made by:** Mr. Jarvis

**Second:** Ms. O'Brien

**Vote:** All in favor

**11. Conservation Commission Policy 1<sup>st</sup> Reading**

Mr. Gulnick said he is going through this for all of the town's committees so they each have a mission, a purpose, and guidelines on their organization.

No action was taken on this at this meeting.

**12. Proposed Future Agenda Items**

- Solid waste budget
- Raises based on merit instead of flat amount
- Examination of select board stipend

**13. Approve Warrant**

**Motion:** To approve the warrants for November 1, 2021 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$34,670.44
	Payroll	\$15,267.99
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$26,055.49
	Payroll	\$6,670.52
Solid Waste Management Fund	Operating Expenses	\$14,379.54
	Payroll	\$1,659.22
Library	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
	Payroll	\$1,985.00
Highway Grant	Operating Expenses	\$266.00
Library Memorial Expense	Operating Expenses	\$9.75
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$75,381.22
	Payroll	\$25,582.73

**Made by:** Mr. Tillman

**Second:** Ms. O'Brien

**Vote:** All in favor

**14. Any Other Business**

There was no other business for the board to discuss.

**15. Adjourn**

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**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting

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

**Vote:** All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*deForest Bearse*

**WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD**

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Fuller, Chairperson

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Joseph Jarvis, Selector

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kelly O'Brien, Clerk

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Paul Tillman, Selector

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Michael Todd, Vice-Chairperson