

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board

Ascutney Fire Department

540 VT-131, Ascutney VT

Monday, November 15, 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:

David Bearse	Tyler Waters		
Donnie Huntley	Ray & Linda Moore		
Ray Stapleton	Susanne Terrill		

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

Lisa Slade submitted a written request to be appointed to the Martin Memorial Hall Board of Trustees to fill a vacant seat.

Motion: To appoint Lisa Slade to the Martin Memorial Hall Board of Trustees

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

Vote: All in favor

Mr. Fuller said the walls in the basement of Martin Hall have been cleared of the carpeting, cleaned and sealed. However, they are just blank cement block which Mr. Fuller didn't feel looked appropriate. The board questioned the wisdom of recovering the walls when the water runoff from the roof hasn't been addressed. As there was no idea on how to resolve that matter and there was no opinion on what would be an

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD

appropriate covering, it was decided to let the board of trustees decide and have them bring their idea back to the board.

Helie's Carpet will install new flooring when it arrives (it has been ordered).

Highway Superintendent Ray Stapleton asked the board to sign a letter of intent to apply for a grant to purchase a 2nd jumping jack plate compactor for culvert installations. The department has one, but having a second would significantly speed up the installation process and provide a back-up in the event the first one fails. The cost of the compactor is \$4,000. The grant would pay \$3,200; the cost to the town would be \$800.

Motion: To approve applying for a 2022 grants in aid equipment fund grant at a cost not to exceed \$4000; with a cost to the town not to exceed \$800

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

Vote: All in favor

The \$800 could come from the equipment fund or from reserves.

4. Review minutes from previous meetings – 11/1/2021

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. None

Motion: To approve the minutes of November 1, 2021

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

Vote: All in favor

5. COLA Impact Study/Vote on FY23 COLA

Mr. Gulnick conducted a study on the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) as requested by the board at the previous meeting. Mr. Gulnick supplied the board with a chart showing the effects of increasing wages to cover the COLA (FY23 Personnel COLA Tax Impact Study). The chart showed that increased wages in turn cause increases in the FICA, retirement, and workers compensation lines. The study was done for COLAs ranging from 2% to 6%.

The board asked how the town's employee compensation compares with other towns. Mr. Gulnick said the office personnel are where they should be, but he could not speak to the other departments.

Mr. Fuller said the town provides matching retirement funds which other towns and our school do not.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD

When asked if there is money available to department heads to provide raises during the year, Mr. Gulnick said there isn't, but it is still possible to do it when budget projections are available and there are sufficient funds to do so.

The discussion indicated that there is a difference between cost-of-living adjustments versus pay raises based on other criteria. Mr. Gulnick said we could start doing that this year. He recommended going forward with a performance evaluation-style pay raise model and the board could set the baseline COLA.

Ray Moore said that Ed Morris had a program set up like that that "disappeared when he did". There was a large increase in insurance costs last year and the employees took a pay cut to cover it. He said there had been no raises in three years and asked the board to consider that in their deliberations.

Mr. Fuller disagreed that no one had received a raise in 3 years. Both he and Mr. Todd said the board's job is to balance the needs of the taxpayers and the employees.

Mr. Stapleton said no one had received a merit raise in 3 years. He said he lost \$28 a week last year to cover insurance cost increases.

The discussion concluded with the board agreeing to award a COLA of 3%.

Motion: To set the COLA for town employees for FY23 at 3%

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

Vote: 4 in favor, with Mr. Tillman opposing

Mr. Jarvis felt it was not fair to allocate the COLA as a percentage on salary as it would result in higher salaried positions getting more money lower paid workers. He asked that department heads be charged with creating a plan where all employees can receive an equivalent amount of money.

6. 2022 Town-wide Healthcare Discussion/Decision

It had been previously thought that MVP was only raising their rates by 0.1% this year. This turned out to be incorrect. Deductibles are increasing by \$200 for singles and \$400 for families. After much discussion on how best to contend with the situation, it was agreed to increase the HSA contributions to compensate for the increase in the deductibles.

Motion: To increase the town's contribution to the HSAs by \$200 for singles and \$400 for families to cover the increase in the deductibles

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

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD

During discussion on the motion, it was revealed that this will not fully compensate for the accumulated increases.

Amended motion: To increase the HSAs \$2,500 for singles and \$5,000 for families to cover the increase in the deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses

Mr. Todd and Mr. Jarvis agreed to the amendment

Vote: All in favor

7. FY23 Solid Waste Fund Budget / Adoption of FY23 SW Budget

Referring back to the COLA adjustment, it was indicated that the COLA will only affect the total budget amount by about \$600.

Motion: To approve the solid waste budget for FY 23 at \$298,643

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

Vote: All in favor

8. FY23 Highway Department Budget

Mr. Gulnick said he needed time to adjust the budget based on the COLA just agreed to earlier in the meeting.

The budget committee has not met to review and respond to the highway department budget.

There is a surplus of \$102,00 (\$74,775 from this year and \$27,000 from previous years). The surplus was not included in the budget.

Mr. Gulnick and Mr. Stapleton disagree on four lines in the budget, but they both come out with a level-funded budget. \$946,770 is to be raised by taxes, same as last year.

Mr. Stapleton would like to replace the 2012 FY150 plow truck with a newer model that can be driven by someone without a CDL. 2023 will be the last payment for the new truck. 2024 would be the first payment on this replacement. There are various ways it could be paid for.

To be continued ...

9. FY23 Appropriations

Ms. Terrill said three applications for appropriations had been received after the deadline – Meals on Wheels, Big Heavy World, and Vermont Rural Fire Protection Task Force. The board agreed to accept them. Ms. Terrill will arrange for all parties seeking funding to present to the board at the first meeting in January.

10. Conservation Commission Policy 2nd Reading

Ryan Gumbart said the Conservation Commission had voted to make some changes. The board agreed to continue the second reading to allow time to review them.

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD

Motion: To continue the 2nd reading of the Conservation Commission policy until the December 6, 2021 meeting

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

Vote: All in favor

11. Land Use Administrator Appointment

The Planning Commission nominated Ryan Gumbart for the position of Land Use Administrator. Mr. Fuller shared highlights of Mr. Gumbart's resume. Mr. Gulnick said he and Mr. Gumbart had agreed on a work schedule and pay. Alex Taft will continue to provide interim services to the end of November.

Motion: To appoint Ryan Gumbart as Land Use Administrator for the town of Weathersfield with a start date of November 17th.

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

Vote: All in favor

12. Proposed future agenda items

13. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 11/15/2021 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$16,457.15
	Payroll	\$14,632.21
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$9,152.26
	Payroll	\$6,631.43
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$457.69
	Payroll	\$1,608.42
Library	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
	Payroll	\$2,033.99
Highway Grant	Operating Expenses	\$437.50
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$26,504.60
	Payroll	\$24,906.05

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

Mr. Jarvis questioned gravel purchases by the highway department. He said he thought we had a lot already stockpiled. Mr. Gulnick said he would look into it. Mr. Jarvis also

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD

questioned \$1,448 for repairs to a new truck. Shouldn't it be under warranty? Mr. Gulnick said he would look into it.

Vote: all in favor

14. Any Other Business

15. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

David Fuller, Chairperson

Joseph Jarvis, Selector

Kelly O'Brien, Clerk

Paul Tillman, Selector

Michael Todd, Vice- Chairperson