

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Tuesday, January 3, 2023
6:15 PM
REGULAR MEETING

DRAFT MINUTES

Select Board Members Present: David Fuller, Kelly O'Brien, Wendy Smith (remote), Michael Todd

Select Board Members Absent: Paul Tillman

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Others Present:

Molly McSween (remote)	Darren Spaulding	
Joseph Bublat (remote)	Christine Borne (remote)	
Olivia Savage	Ed Williams	
John Arrison		
Ray Stapleton		

1 Call to Order

Mr. Todd called the meeting to order at 6:18pm.

2 Executive Session 1 V.S.A. § 313 (1)(A) – Contracts

Mr. Todd asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. Ms. O'Brien made a motion to go into Executive Session. Ms. Smith seconded. The Board went into Executive Session at 6:18pm. The Board came out of Executive Session at 6:31pm.

3 Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Todd led the pledge of allegiance.

4 Agenda Review

There were no changes to the agenda but Mr. Fuller requested that more time be spent on the budget.

5 Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda

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Mr. Fuller shared some updates after speaking with a TDS technician and confirmed that TDS is upgrading their services and their switchboards are backed up by generators, but they are also short staffed. Additionally, construction costs are up and that should be considered in regards to future costs.

Chief Spaulding discussed the tanker and truck accident and it being the fourth accident within two months at the lights intersecting route 5 and 131. Mr. Spaulding spoke with the State about fixing the lights and the State was discussing putting a rotary there as about 13,000 cars go through that intersection a day.

6 Review minutes from previous meeting(s): 12/19/2022

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. None.

Motion: To approve.

Made by: Ms. O'Brien

Second: Mr. Fuller

Vote: All in favor

7 Town Manager Report

The Town Annual Reports need to be in by January 20th and anyone who needs assistance with their report should contact the town office.

The Vermont 131 speed limit review. On June 20th, the Select Board discussed mailing a letter to AOT to conduct a traffic engineering study on 131 following the requests of residents that live on the road to change the speed limit from 50 mph to 40 mph.

The traffic study concluded that there was no need to change the speed limit. However, for the best interest of the town, the Highway Superintendent and Town Manager attended a VTrans committee meeting, and as a result, that committee voted to change the speed limit to 45 mph. At 45 mph, speeding tickets would now go to the town and not the state.

The 1879 Schoolhouse would like to put in a snow shed and canopy for the ADA pathway and ramp, which keeps the snow off the walkway. This would be at no cost to the town.

Nichole Gagnon is now recording secretary for the Select Board minutes. Chauncie Tillman will continue as a backup recording secretary and will continue to do the Planning Commission minutes.

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8 Fire Truck Loan – Mascoma Bank

a. Rescind Motion from 12/19/22

The Town began moving forward with the firetruck loan through M&T Bank, which the Select Board approved at the last meeting. However, Mascoma Bank is offering a 4% interest rate, which would save thousands. The Board will address this at a later date pending more information.

b. Validation Resolution

Motion: To approve and sign the Validation Resolution dealing with the finance package out together by the Town Treasurer with M&T Bank on Article 9 passed at the March 2022 meeting.

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

Vote: All in favor

9 Town Reappraisal Discussion

The Town received its 2022 equalization study results. The CLA has changed from 87.89% to 80.97%. The COD is 20.45%. The Education Grand List is \$329,333,700. The Equalized Education Grand List is \$407,984,414. When a towns CLA drops below 85% and the COD is greater than 20%, then a reappraisal will be conducted. This was study results and the Town has not received the official order as of yet. 65% of the cities and towns in the state are in a similar situation.

The Board and attendees discussed at length the implications of these results, whether there should a change in the formula used, cost comparisons between the schools within the SU, home values and out of state buyers, and better understanding of the calculations used by the school and SU.

Christine Borne, Interim Superintendent of the SU, stated that the SU budget has increased, particularly for special education. There was an increase also because of salary negotiations with staff, and a new curriculum that is going to be used.

10 Whipples Cabin Discussion

The cabin in the Town forest has been removed and disposed of. Vermont Land Trust stated that the cabin had been a safety hazard and a liability issue. The issue was the Conservation Commission went ahead with the cabin removal without notification of the Select Board.

There was a meeting on December 12, 2022 with chairs of the Select Board, Conservation Commission, Parks and Rec and the ZBA, where they discussed the communication chain that will be followed in future for any changes to town property.

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Mr. Fuller stated that the photos in the packet provided are not of the deterioration of cabin and only showed an outhouse and it needs to be investigated what infrastructure still remains and that the town has an obligation to ensure that there are no further hazards on the site.

11 AVFA ARPA Request

The Ascutney Fire Chief is requesting to purchase a Washing Machine Extractor with ARPA funds. Mr. Fuller wanted to know if the site and system would be able to support the machine. Mr. Todd stated that ARPA spending should start being tracked more efficiently and Mr. Fuller agreed.

Motion: To give Ascutney Fire Department \$5,929 for a washing machine from MES -the lowest estimate, with the extractor serving both fire departments, with the funds being taken out of ARPA funds.

Made by: Ms. O'Brien

Second: Mr. Fuller

Vote: All in favor

12 Town Meeting Timeline

Voting will take place on March 7th, 2023 from 10:00am to 7:00pm. The Town and the School District meeting will take place Saturday, March 4th at 12:30pm and will be held at Weathersfield School. The earliest date to post warnings is January 26th, 2023.

13 FY24 Budget

a. Budget Overview

The budget presented has the revisions requested at the last meeting. Projections indicate a .0692 tax rate change, with last years' at .6098 and this year at .6790.

A data summary was provided in the meeting packet.

FY24 Budget Overview						
Description	FY23 \$	FY23 Tax Rate	FY24 \$	FY24 Tax Rate	\$ CHANGE	Tax Rate CHANGE
County Tax	26,433	0.0080	26,284	0.0079	(149)	(0.0001)
Appropriations	18,033	0.0054	18,033	0.0054	-	-
General Fund	1,049,018	0.3161	1,263,361	0.3807	214,343	0.0646
Highway Fund	930,341	0.2803	945,983	0.2850	15,642	0.0047
Total	2,023,824	0.6098	2,253,661	0.6790	229,836	0.0692

b. General Fund 1:21

Changes in revenue and expenses are a result of inflationary increases, like wages. There are some increases in dispatching services, fuel, and

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insurance, and the general fire services budget reflects the new fire truck payment. Additionally, COLA is at 8% for FY2024 across the board.

In the interest of increasing revenue, Mr. Fuller inquired if the Town is charging enough compared to other towns for the services that are done, such as with permit costs and fees. Mr. Todd stated that the Planning Commission had sent up a proposed fee increase but it was rejected by the Select Board. Mr. Todd suggested the Planning Commission revisit this issue for the next budget.

Mr. Fuller pointed out that with the two special article requests, the tax rate will be 4% higher than the inflation rate. The Select Board concluded that a discussion is needed at the next meeting in regards to the General Fund Budget.

General Fund Budget Overview

All Funds Summary	FY23	FY24	FY23 - FY24	FY23-FY24
Revenues	Budget	Proposed	\$ CHANGE	% CHANGE
GF Tax Revenue	1,093,484	1,307,678	214,194	16%
Administration	262,072	219,863	(42,209)	-19%
Finance	22,943	11,000	(11,943)	
Library	1,500	-	(1,500)	0%
Town Clerk	46,695	46,265	(430)	-1%
Listers	15,000	15,000	-	0%
Land Use	5,750	6,122	372	6%
Police Department	16,000	16,000	-	0%
<i>Subtotal - Revenues</i>	<i>1,463,444</i>	<i>1,621,928</i>	<i>158,484</i>	<i>10%</i>

Expenses				
Administration	474,463	489,133	14,670	3%
Library	131,376	140,456	9,080	6%
Finance	114,009	115,387	1,378	1%
Town Clerk	131,191	142,052	10,861	8%
Listers	63,445	64,673	1,228	2%
Land Use	47,960	51,066	3,106	6%
Police Department	331,647	382,786	51,139	13%
General Fire Services	7,600	56,571	48,971	87%
WW Fire Department	81,977	91,361	9,384	10%
AV Fire Department	79,776	88,442	8,665	10%
<i>Subtotal - Expenses</i>	<i>1,463,444</i>	<i>1,621,928</i>	<i>158,484</i>	<i>10%</i>

There are two (2) special article requests from the Fire Departments. The requests will add 0.0151 to the tax rate.

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FY24 Special Article Requests		
Reserve Account	Current Balance	Special Article Request
Fire Apparatus Acquisition	81,954	40,000
Fire Protection Water Sup.	7,466	10,000
Total	89,420	50,000

c. Highway Fund

Mr. Fuller stated that the highway budget is pretty straight forward and remarkable, applauding the Highway Department's budget during an inflationary period.

Motion: To approve the FY23-24 Highway budget \$1,172,494, of which \$945,983 to be raised by taxes.

Made by: Mr. Fuller

Second: Ms. O'Brien

Vote: All in favor

Highway Fund Overview

Highway Fund Summary	FY23	FY24	FY23-FY24	FY23-FY24
Revenues	Budget	Proposed	\$ CHANGE	% CHANGE
Tax Need	930,341	945,983	15,642	2%
State Aid	143,487	152,768	9,281	6%
Permit	894	298	(596)	-67%
Service to other Departments	29,020	26,989	(2,031)	-7%
Use of Fund Balance	76,726	46,689	(30,037)	-39%
Totals	1,180,467	1,172,728	(7,740)	-1%

Highway Fund	FY23	FY24	FY23-FY24	FY23-FY24
Expenses	Budget	Proposed	\$ CHANGE	% CHANGE
Personnel	622,443	625,391	2,948	0.47%
Office/Insurance	30,403	32,789	2,386	7.85%
Utilities	10,127	10,056	(70)	-0.69%
Garage & Truck	143,310	148,936	5,626	3.93%
Material & Repairs	244,000	244,700	700	0.29%
Fees & Permits	1,350	1,350	-	0.00%
Debt Service	128,835	94,271	(34,564)	-26.83%
Transfer to Reserves	-	15,000	15,000	
Totals	1,180,467	1,172,494	(7,974)	-0.68%

d. Solid Waste Fund

Based on the FY24 Proposed Solid Waste Budget, the permit sticker would remain the same at \$50, however, the punch ticket would need to be increased by \$0.28.

In an effort to prevent raising punch ticket fees, Mr. Todd stated that instead of raising ticket prices, perhaps have more punches, with one punch for one bag, compared to one punch for two bags. Mr. Fuller stated that perhaps not accepting any more construction and demolition material.

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Mr. Todd stated he agreed although some people will dump on the side of the road still but people will also dump on the road if the ticket price is too high. Mr. Fuller emphasized that the burden of policing what is dumped has been placed on employees and it should not be.

The Select Board decided to wait until Mr. Tillman is present to make a decision on the Solid Waste Fund.

Solid Waste	FY23	FY24	FY23 - FY24	FY23 - FY24
FY24	Approved	Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
Revenues				
Weathersfield Assessment	66,301	78,321	12,020	18%
Reading Assessment	19,250	22,740	3,490	18%
West Windsor Assessment	35,224	41,610	6,386	18%
Solid Waste Tokens	155,000	168,995	13,995	9%
Solid Waste-Reading-(punch)	2,950	3,024	74	3%
Solid Waste-Wst Windsor-(punch)	6,418	6,578	160	3%
Recycling Income	13,500	13,500	-	0%
<i>Fixed Revenues</i>	120,775	142,671	21,896	18%
<i>Variable Revenues</i>	177,868	192,098	14,230	8%
<i>Combined</i>	298,643	334,769	36,126	12%

Solid Waste	FY23	FY24	FY23 - FY24	FY23 - FY24
FY24	Approved	Proposed	\$ Change	% Change
Expenses				
Personnel	64,539	69,327	4,788	7%
Office & Insurance	51,536	56,137	4,601	9%
Utilities	4,700	4,950	250	5%
Trash Tipping & Trucking	83,427	90,102	6,674	8%
C&D Tipping & Trucking	53,311	57,576	4,265	8%
Zero Sort Pick up & Tipping	30,639	33,090	2,451	8%
Recycle Exp (Glass/Compost/mix)	10,491	11,330	839	8%
Debt Service	-	12,257	12,257	0%
<i>Fixed Expenses</i>	120,775	142,671	21,896	18%
<i>Variable Expenses</i>	177,868	192,098	14,229	8%
<i>Combined</i>	298,643	334,769	36,125	12%

e. Appropriations – Not discussed.

14. Warrant

Motion: To approve the warrants for 1/3/2023 as followed:

General Funds Operating
Expenses \$42,250.51
Payroll \$16,238.79

Highway Fund Operating
Expenses \$17,407.38
Payroll \$10,511.18

Solid Waste Management Fund
Operating Expenses \$112.22

Payroll \$22,776.48

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Library Operating Expenses \$0.00

Highway Grant \$2,736.00

Payroll \$2,903.12

Grand Totals:

Operating Expenses \$62,506.11

Payroll \$52,429.57

Made by: Mr. Fuller **Second:** Ms. O'Brian

Vote: All in favor

15. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Made by: Ms. O'Brian

Second: Mr. Fuller

Vote: All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Nichole Gagnon

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

Michael Todd, Chairperson

Wendy Smith, Selector

Paul Tillman, Selector

Kelly O'Brien, Clerk

David Fuller, Vice- Chairperson