

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Monday, March 20, 2023
6:30 PM
REGULAR MEETING

Select Board Members Present: David Fuller, Kelly O'Brien, Wendy Smith, Michael Todd, Paul Tillman

Select Board Members Absent:

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Others Present:

deForest Bearse (remote)	William Daniels	
Joseph Bublat (remote)	Steve Hier	
Olivia Savage		
Rick Bates		
Ray Stapleton		

1 Call to Order

Mr. Todd called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

2 Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Fuller led the pledge of allegiance.

3 Comments from SB, TM, and Citizens on Topics not on the Agenda

Mr. Fuller presented a report he had written. This report has been attached to these meeting minutes.

Rick Bates spoke on behalf of the Library Trustees about how there are funds available to the library from state and federal grants for energy efficiency projects. If provided the opportunity, the Library would like to replace the furnace, AC, upgrade the lighting, restore the slate roof and supporting beams, and to put in a multipurpose room. The Library is looking for support in their effort and presented a letter to the Vermont Department of Libraries.

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The Select Board inquired about zoning, space available on the property, and had some language changes to the letter to the Vermont Department of Libraries. The Select Board supported the concept but agreed more information would be needed.

4 Review Minutes from Previous Minutes: 3/13/2023

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. On page 4, change “O’Brian to “O’Brien.”

Motion: To approve.

Made by: Mr. Fuller

Second: Ms. O’Brien

Vote: All in favor

5 Vote to Purchase Police Cruiser

An RFP was advertised, the pre-bid conference took place, and bids were opened and read aloud to the Public on March 2nd. The Chief of Police and the Town Manager discussed the bids and recommend moving forward with Ford of Claremont. The estimate to outfit the police cruiser was \$12,343. The Town currently has \$35,330 in the Police Cruiser Reserves. The proposed solution was to spend \$25,000 from Police Cruiser Reserves, which would leave \$10,000 in this account and use \$31,810 from ARPA to finance the net difference, which included the Police Cruiser and the outfitting of the cruiser.

Police Cruiser Bids					
Company Name	Make	Model	Year	Price	Delivery Date
Ford of Claremont	Ford	SUV	2023	\$44,467	30-45 days
Central Auto	Dodge	Durango	2023	\$41,352	October

The Select Board discussed the previous motion about awarding the bid of the police cruiser to Ford of Claremont \$44,467, with \$35,000 to come from the police cruiser reserves and \$9,467 to come from ARPA. This issue was tabled at the previous meeting. The Select Board agreed to remove the motion and start over.

The estimate to outfit the police cruiser for \$12,343 was not an RFP and the Select Board decided to focus on the car for the time being. The cruiser price alone was \$19,467, of which would come from the ARPA. Mr. Fuller stated that that there was supposed to be a time out in the ARPA funding and that ARPA funds can’t be transferred into reserve

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funds. Mr. Fuller also stated that he doesn't feel comfortable using reserve money in case there is an emergency.

Mr. Todd inquired what the lifespan of a cruiser and Chief Daniels stated that the car would last 3-4 years, at which point a new car may need to be bought using funds from reserves. Mr. Tillman suggested keeping a larger portion in the reserve fund. The Select Board also agreed that they didn't feel comfortable purchasing a car without a warranty and that will need to be addressed at another meeting.

Motion: To purchase the 2023 Police Cruiser for \$44,467, with \$15,000 coming from the Police Cruiser Reserve and \$29,467 from ARPA funds.

Made by: Mr. Tillman

Second: Mr. Fuller

Vote: All in favor

Steve Hier stated that he wanted to clarify that in the process of talking about last year's SUI grant and contracted control money, the term "misappropriation of funds" was used. That would imply illegal uses of funds and Mr. Hier wanted to make clear that there were no misappropriation of funds and that what occurred was a miscommunication among town officials and a misunderstanding on whether the Town needed to go to the Select Board for some of the funds to be transferred into the cruiser reserve fund but there was no misappropriation of funds. Moving forward, if there is to be use of contracted control money or any other funds, it needs to come before the Select Board to be moved into the reserve fund as that was piece missing last year.

6 Town Manager Update a. Norwich Technologies Update

Town Counsel and Town Manager are working with Norwich Technologies to remove the Ascutney Water District and Fire Departments from the Net Metering Agreement. Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

b. Roofing Projects

Connecticut River Roofing, the Building Inspector, and the Town Manger held a meeting last week and signed contracts for the Martin Memorial

Hall & Town Garage Roof Replacement Projects. The West Weathersfield Fire Department required additional discussion. All three (3) projects appear to be moving forward as planned. Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

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c. Capital Planning

The Treasurer and the Town Manager held 2 meetings with the Fire Departments to build out a Vehicle & Equipment/Gear Long-Term Capital Plan. Following the completion of this, they will be working with the Highway Department, Police Department, and other departments with capital assets, such as technology. Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

d. Hazard Mitigation Plan

Following the award of a grant from VEM, the Town advertised an RFP per the VEM agreement. Proposals are due to the office by March 30, 2023, at 4pm. The Town Manager will follow up with additional updates after the bid opening.

e. Other Projects

The generator project is scheduled to move forward in April. An RFP will be advertised for a reappraisal by the end of the month. The Martin Memorial Hall drainage project continues to be on our radar and will be discussed at the next MMH BOT meeting. The Wastewater Feasibility Study has been approved with a 100% subsidy. More information will be coming along on this shortly. A Municipal Energy Resilience Program has been released and being looked into.

f. Transfer Station Punch Ticket Increase

The Transfer Station Punch Ticket increase will go into effect on April 1, 2023. The Town worked with all of the businesses that sell punch tickets and coordinated the transition. Doolittle's has provided updated punch tickets to reflect the cost difference.

7 Board of Liquor Control Commissioners a. Second Class Liquor Licenses

- i. Global Montello Group, Corp. - d/b/a Jiffy Mart #466 (Ascutney)
- ii. Global Montello Group, Corp/ - d/b/a Jiffy Mart #437 (Downers)
- iii. Fireside beverage, LLC d/b/a Fireside Beverage, LLC
- iv. JW Sandri Inc. – d/b/a Sandri #204 (Sunoco Gas Station)
- v. Scott Rogers, LLC – d/b/a Ascutney Market

Motion: To approve the following Second Class Liquor Licenses:
Global Montello Group, Corp. - d/b/a Jiffy Mart #466 (Ascutney);
Global

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Montello Group, Corp/ - d/b/a Jiffy Mart #437 (Downers); Fireside beverage, LLC d/b/a Fireside Beverage, LLC; JW Sandri Inc. – d/b/a Sandri #204 (Sunoco Gas Station); Scott Rogers, LLC – d/b/a Ascutney Market.

Made by: Mr. Tillman

Second: Mr. Fuller

Vote: All in favor

b. Tobacco Licenses

- i. Global Montello Group, Corp. - d/b/a Jiffy Mart #466 (Ascutney)
- ii. Global Montello Group, Corp/ - d/b/a Jiffy Mart #437 (Downers)
- iii. Scott Rogers, LLC – d/b/a Ascutney Market
- iv. JW Sandri Inc. – d/b/a Sandri #204 (Sunoco Gas Station)

Motion: To approve the following Tobacco Licenses:

Global Montello Group, Corp. - d/b/a Jiffy Mart #466 (Ascutney);

Global

Montello Group, Corp/ - d/b/a Jiffy Mart #437 (Downers); Scott Rogers, LLC

– d/b/a Ascutney Market; JW Sandri Inc. – d/b/a Sandri #204 (Sunoco Gas Station).

Made by: Mr. Tillman

Second: Mr. Fuller

Vote: All in favor

8 Finance Report a. General Fund

The General Fund budget continues to be a concern. Monthly finance reports are being completed and new projections are made month-to-month. Period 8 Actuals are as follows:

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Period 8 Revenues

	FY23 Budget	Period 8 Actual	Remaining	%
Administration	474,463	301,005	(173,457)	63%
Finance	114,009	71,710	(42,298)	63%
Town Clerk	131,191	81,420	(49,771)	62%
Listers	63,445	32,297	(31,148)	51%
Land Use	47,960	31,858	(16,102)	66%
Police	331,647	231,437	(100,210)	70%
WWVFD	81,977	54,651	(27,326)	67%
AVFD	79,776	53,184	(26,592)	67%
Gen Fire	7,600	5,067	(2,533)	67%
Library	131,376	86,584	(44,792)	66%
Totals	1,463,444	949,213	(514,231)	65%

Period 8 Expenses

	FY23 Budget	Period 8 Actual	Remaining	%
Administration	474,463	337,952	136,510	71%
Finance	114,009	58,104	55,904	51%
Town Clerk	131,191	89,171	42,021	68%
Listers	63,445	44,364	19,082	70%
Land Use	47,960	28,576	19,384	60%
Police	331,647	203,650	127,997	61%
WWVFD	81,977	59,965	22,011	73%
AVFD	79,776	92,960	(13,183)	117%
Gen Fire	7,600	1,749	5,851	23%
Library	131,376	81,840	49,536	62%
Totals	1,463,444	998,331	465,113	68%

b. Projections in the General Fund

Projections in the General Fund have been made to year-end. The most concerning issue is the Ascutney Fire Department budget, which is projected to end the year with a deficit of (\$26,703). This deficit was established by overspending the supplies account by (\$20,858) and overspending the vehicle maintenance account by (\$4,553). The Town Clerk budget is also projected to end the year with a (\$4,889) shortfall due to revenue loss, and the WWVFD is projected to end the year with a (\$5,325) shortfall due to insurance, workers compensation, vehicle maintenance, and training over expenditures. Spending freezes have been issued throughout the General Fund in an effort to offset these shortfalls.

c. Highway Fund

Highway Department revenues are at 65% and are projected to be at 101% a year end or \$6,081 more than anticipated. Expenditures are currently at 65% and are projected to close the year at 96%. At year-end, there will be an anticipated fund balance of \$52,290. In addition, there is a cumulative fund balance of \$68,623. Although

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the annual audit states that the Town has \$115,112, \$46,689 was used to reduce the tax need in the FY24 Highway Department Budget. The anticipated combined cumulative fund balance of \$120,913 in the Highway Fund.

d. Solid Waste Fund

Solid Waste Fund fixed revenues are at 109% / \$131,724 or \$10,949 more than anticipated. Additional fixed revenues through year-end are not anticipated. Fixed expenses are currently at \$99,368 and are projected to end the year at \$126,847. Net Fixed Revenue/Expense is projected to close the year at \$4,877. Variable Revenues are currently at 62% and Variable expenses are currently at 72%. The Punch Ticket increase will go into effect on April 1, 2023, so the Town will have 3 months of additional punch ticket revenue. This will be monitored this closely month to month.

9 Quarry Road Paving

The Town advertised an RFB to pave Quarry Road on February 9, 2023. A pre-bid conference took place on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, at 10am. Bids were due on March 10, 2023, at 2pm. All bids were opened and read aloud in public at Martin Memorial Hall on March 13, 2023 at 3pm. The results are as follows:

<i>Company Name</i>	<i>Cost per Ton</i>	<i>Total Paving Cost Estimated (500 tons)</i>	<i>Shoulder Work Cost (Estimated 90 tons)</i>	<i>Total Project Cost</i>
<i>Springfield Paving</i>	108.40	\$54,200	\$9,964	\$64,164
<i>Bazin Brothers</i>	125	\$62,500	\$7,200	\$69,700
<i>Pike Industries</i>	94.4	\$47,200	\$4,050	\$51,250

Bids were reviewed with the Highway Superintendent. The Town received four (4) bids and 1 bid was disqualified. The recommendation is to move forward with Pike Industries for a total cost of \$51,250. The Town will use \$51,250 from the FY23 Highway Department Paving Budget.

Motion: To award the Quarry Road Paving project to Pike Industries for a total cost not to exceed \$51,250 to be completed before June 30, 2023.

Made by: Mr. Tillman

Second: Mr. Fuller

Vote: All in favor

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10 Appointments

- a. Accept resignations of Jeff Pelton & Roy Burton from the Conservation Commission.

Motion: To accept the resignations of Jeff Pelton & Roy Burton from the Conservation Commission.

Made by: Mr. Tillman

Second: Ms. O'Brien

Vote: All in favor

b. Appointments

- 1879 Schoolhouse Committee (0 Vacancies) Beverly Strobel, Karen McGee
- Budget Committee (5 Vacancies)
- Conservation Commission (3 Vacancies)
- Energy Coordinator (1 Vacancy)
- Green Up Coordinator (1 Vacancy)
- Lister (1 Vacancy)
- Parks and Recreation (2 Vacancies)
- SWC Regional Commission
Peter Daniels
- Veterans Memorial Committee (6 Vacancies) Dylan Brown
- Weigher of Coal John Arrison
- Zoning Board of Adjustment (4 Vacancies)
Grace Knight

Motion: To appoint Peter Daniels to the SWC Regional Commission, Dylan

Brown to the Veterans Memorial Committee, John Arrison as Weigher of Coal, Grace Knight to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Beverly Strobel and Karen McGee as alternates for the 1879 Schoolhouse Committee.

Made by: Mr. Tillman

Second: Mr. Fuller

Vote: All in favor

11. Any Other Business

The Select Board received the Certificate of Compliance for Town Roads and Bridge Standards. The following document was read aloud, confirmed, and signed by the Weathersfield Select Board with the date of 3/20/23:

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**Certification of Compliance
for
Town Road and Bridge Standards
and
Network Inventory**

We, the Legislative Body of the Municipality of _____ certify that we have reviewed, understand and comply with the Town Road and Bridge Standards / Public Works Specifications and Standards passed and adopted by the Selectboard / City Council / Village Board of Trustees on _____, 20 ____.

We further certify that our adopted standards ☐do ☐do not meet or exceed the minimum requirements included in the June 5, 2019 State-approved template.

We further certify that we ☐do ☐do not have an up-to-date highway network inventory which identifies location, size, deficiencies/condition of roads, bridges, causeways, culverts and highway-related retaining walls on class 1, 2, and 3 town highways, and estimated cost of repair.

Motion: To accept the Certificate of Compliance for Town Roads and Bridges

Made by: Mr. Tillman

Second: Ms. Smith

Vote: All in favor

Mr. Fuller stated that he would like to see RFPs before the meetings and they should be in the Select Board packet. The RFPs used to be in the Select Board packet but it made the packet very long. The Select Board agreed to include the key details of the RFPs in the Town Managers report.

The Select Board discussed the power outage from the storm and how people were impacted. Ray Stapleton stated that the Highway Department had no power and had received many calls that were unanswered because of this. Additionally, the Highway Department cannot to move trees where there is a wire involved. The Select Board discussed having an emergency energy supply.

12. Warrant

Motion: To approve the warrants for 3/20/2023 as followed:

General Funds

Operating Expenses: \$73,817.06

Payroll \$15,377.67

Highway Fund

Operating Expenses: \$26,953.34

Payroll \$9,638.91

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Solid Waste Management Fund
Operating Expenses \$87,801.04
Payroll \$1,706.85

Library Operating Expenses \$0.00
Payroll \$2,112.40

Library Grant: \$35.00
ARPA/Roof: \$200.00

Grand Totals:
Operating Expenses \$188,806.44
Payroll \$28,835.83

Made by: Mr. Tillman
Vote: All in favor

Second: Ms. O'Brien

Mr. Fuller stated that there was no Payroll details included in the packet. The Town Manager is working on issues surrounding the warrants.

15. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Made by: Mr. Fuller **Second:** Ms. Smith

Vote: All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nichole Gagnon

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

Michael Todd, Chairperson

Wendy Smith, Selector

Paul Tillman, Vice-Chairperson

Kelly O'Brien, Clerk

David Fuller, Selector

THE FULLER REPORT
TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD

March 20, 2023

This report has a variety of subject matter covering the past year or so involving my service to the Town as an elected member of the Selectboard.

The report was done solely by myself with no other Board member's knowledge or contribution. In fact , I encourage others to make their own.

I have asked for numerous times to have time set aside for evaluations.

It is not in any order of topics or calendar. Just a list of observations gained from meetings and listening to other elected Town officials .

Also Grading . The normal A-F scale will not be used. You may see some new letters with a description.

It is my opinion that each elected person who serves the Selectboard/ Town that by signing the warrants (the spending of monies) at each meeting ---you have agreed to and approve of the best use of those funds.

1. Let's start with me. Selectboard member Grade : D =disappointing followed by nearly an F .

No where in the budget process for 2023-2024 was an evaluation of any department. How would anyone know if the Town is doing the best they can? There was just a "inflation or cost of living" excuse. You might say well , given the low voter turnout and articles passing ---it's all good . That may be true , but the proof will be when residents actually get their tax bills.

2. Solar . Grade: AM = A mess ---but seems to be sorting itself out. Taken up too much time that was not necessary from the original proposal . It is very important , given the fact the project has been sold , to clearly define the exact terms (which has again gone to Town counsel) .

3. Town Counsel Grade: E excellent. But now costing at least 100% more money. It has changed and the Town must look carefully at options and use. Specifically in 2 cases --cost over anticipated/non budgeted legal actions have altered the General Fund (Land Use and BCA). The Town must use VLCT where possible.

4. Review of transition to "contracts" instead of employees. Grade: IDK (I don't know) In 2 cases , the Town has changed from employee to a contracted

service. However , in both cases the Town office is fully used . Heat-electric-furniture-phones-computers-office space/building. Contracted services (especially higher rate/hour require that those are furnished by the contractor. Otherwise it is viewed as an employee.

5. Regular Board meetings Grade C for confusion. I do not support throwing motions on the table for action immediately. This has led to questions –after the motion—and a hurry up schedule that has had to be cleaned up at later meetings. I do not understand and will continue to support the longer process of discussing agenda items (to even see if they need action at all) prior to motions for action.

Just look at the police car purchase recently. On the agenda for “vote to buy police cruiser” . Warned on an agenda for the first time to buy it. Questions all over the place.

6. Police car Grade VC : Very Confusing. I can’t figure out how/why the Board did not have a police capital purchase plan to look at during the FY 23-2024 budget process. A simple outline of model/make/mileage . The Town treasurer reported to the Board during the audit that indeed funds were not placed in the correct Police Department car reserve account. Further compounding that was the FY 22 year end had lapsed. No correction has been made to my knowledge (which requires a Board vote). I did not support the proposal of draining the entire reserve account and spending ARPA funds .

I am looking forward to the next cruiser (if these reserve funds were depleted). A correct approach may have been to consider loans and/ or special articles which would soften the cash outlay. Remember-these cruisers are 5 years. I do understand the need for up-to-date vehicles for police. I listen to the scanner from time to time. I cannot still support the leaving of only \$10,000 in the police reserve.

7. ARPA Grade G for Grateful . It is very important the Board stay with it’s thoughts about extending the funds to the most residents. I recall however the Board asking administration for a kind of “time-out” . Trying to assemble a list that we could measure. Also , it is possible that unforeseen expenses may occur with the projects that have been already been funded.

8. Finance Grade C for confusing. The absence of a finance person for the length of time has created more work for the Treasurer. The position has been filled . During the Treasurer's report from the auditor , it was noted that corrections and reconciliations were behind and needed attention. It is my opinion that administration has enough resources/money to attend this. I have read enough reports/warrants . It is also my strong opinion that friendships must be separated from the Town business.

9. Warrants Grade : SC Sometimes Confusing. The Norwich Solar appearing on several warrants was confusing. But that whole project was talked about above. There have been amended warrants done in a kind of hurry with confusing titles for me. I only hope they are attached to the correct funds. I do not want to hope any longer. When departments have been notified of spending freezes , they must have 100% accuracy with journal entries within their specific budgets.

10. Delinquent Tax Sale Grade NHTMK Not Happening To My Knowledge

This is so very important to add to the 2022-2023 revenue for the General Fund. I have constantly reminded administration. According to the printed Audit in the Town Report—there is \$290,000 outstanding in this line item. My last information received is that the Town has not yet contracted an attorney to provide this information. I think it takes at least 90 days (with certified letters/and public notice in paper of record) title searches, etc.. It is now March 20 2023. Our FY end is June 30 2023. In order for any tax sale to occur before year end is near impossible. The last tax sale was held at the end of February 2022. The Board has no report on the status of accounts that may be delinquent or even available for tax sale. Our policy states that when late tax accounts are noted---the landowner shall make 12 equal payments AND stay current. If you look at the Town report ---there are accounts still years in question.

The reason this is so important is that it offers money to the General Fund that has never been paid. Just take a look at our latest finance report from the administration. In it you will find that to date ---tax revenue is at 103%. How would that happen? Because delinquent tax payments of all kinds are made together with the 2022-2023 payments . This collecting of funds never paid offers the General Fund money other than the most current year taxes.

I believe the absence of a finance person ---filled now---and the subsequent work from other office personnel has not afforded time to clearly set aside for this important task. I am also hearing and reading enough to assert journal entries are a problem.

11. Fire Contracts NN Not Needed

I understand these contracts are up. I also know that the Town has not always had contracts. Both departments have released titles and ownership of their trucks/equipment/gear to my knowledge. They do own their buildings and the Town pays for annual costs. It is a complete waste of time to be meeting separately with each other.

At the core of this issue is a constant "What Did You Do That For?" series of questions before and after each event. Everyone has done this. The departments, Board, previous Boards-members....public.. All over each other.

The last Town vote on the subject---of a hired one Chief ---Town Department did not include any fix to that question either. It had him/her answer to the Town Manager. Politicians fixing something. Let me know when that happens.

The facts are clear. No one knows when an event requiring 911 happens. No one knows the seriousness of that event. There still are 24 hrs in a day and 7 days in a week (unless I'm missing something). Both Departments make the judgements about each call. The Town has no business/experience with this.

Again for me. The current contract has "lawyer" all over it . Even the departments had attorneys. WHY? And not for me.

12. RFP notices A for Absent. I can't figure out why the Board does not receive notice that these go out. In the past, The Board always has a motion to do so. In fact , that notice allows for any questions to materialize sooner creating less questions later in the process. (note above-police or 1879 or paving projects especially involving 2 FY worth of payments)

13. Town Meeting Grade A Although a winter storm was there also , presentations were very good. Worth noting that Department Heads /Administration/ Board Members have a friendship. The economy/costs/interest however that friendships separate from the Town business.

14. Summary Grade: NGE Not Good Enough Remember , I graded myself first. It is my view that there is more than enough money to run the Town ---in all funds. General/Highway/Solid Waste. The distribution of those funds ---for me --should always need to be looked at. Just like any other money item in any Weathersfield home. The idea that "inflation or cost of living" made me do it , does not reflect when indeed costs go down. And they do . Note: see number 1.

I encourage each member to make their own notes. I most likely missed a topic or maybe many. Thank you for reading these.

David T. Fuller

Dated March 20, 2023