

**TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD**

**Select Board
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Monday, December 17, 2018
7:00 PM
REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES
APPROVED 1/7/2019**

Select Board Members Present: N. John Arrison
C. Peter Cole
Tom Leach

Select Board Members Absent: Kelly Murphy
Daniel Boyer

Ed Morris, Town Manager

Others Present:

Edith Stillson	Michelle Grald	Jeff Pelton	Paul Tillman
Nancy Heatley	Ray Stapleton	Darlene Kelly	

1. Call to Order

Mr. Cole called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

2. Comments from Select Board and Town Manager

Cavendish has “back-burnered” the regional policing proposal. Baltimore coverage is in the budget. We can provide coverage to Baltimore with current personnel. The contracted services will bring in additional revenue.

3. Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda

There were no comments from citizens.

4. Review minutes from previous meetings – 12/3/2018

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. None

Motion: To approve the minutes of 12/3/2018

Made by: Mr. Arrison **Second:** Mr. Leach

Vote: Unanimous in favor

5. Town Forest Presentation

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Weathersfield participated in the program whose focus was to create a model process and toolkit for all Vermont communities to use in developing plans for town forests.

Mr. Morris spoke about the grant program and gave a summary of the process.

Jeff Pelton spoke about Weathersfield's town forest – the history of its acquisition in 2010; its setting in the region, and the work done by the Conservation Commission – the ecological inventory done in 2015 and the GPSing of the current logging road trails done in 2017. He said there was no point in doing a tree inventory or logging plan at this time.

There are thousands of acres of contiguous conserved land of which our town forest is a part with a great potential for recreational trails.

Michelle Grald spoke about the public process employed to learn what the town knew about the forest and how they wanted to use it. Priorities were developed from the input. People primarily want wildlife preserved and recreational uses(walking, biking). Accessibility was also a common theme.

The top priorities now are to develop the parking lot and the access trail from the Ascutney side. Mr. Morris said the VOREC grant was submitted Friday. If granted it will provide funds to address these priorities. The STAB group stands by ready to help with constructing the trails.

Other recreation projects in the area include the Ride Windsor county map which is due to be released soon. The 3-town initiative focuses on completion of a trail around the mountain; multi-use regional opportunities; connectivity (from trails to village centers); common signage, marketing, and and event site (calendar).

The Town attorney is working on the easement paperwork for the parking lot and the access trail.

The board thanked the members of the steering committee for their work on this project: Ed Morris, Michelle Grald, Dan Boyer, Jeff Pelton, Mark Richardson, and Judith Duhaime.

6. Approve Grand List Errors and Omissions

The question was raised why would assessed value change with homestead declaration? Mr. Morris said he would find out.

Motion: Approve the “Errors and Omissions to the Grand List” as requested by the Listers on December 13, 2018

Made by: Mr. Arrison **Second:** Mr. Leach

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Vote: Unanimous in favor

7. Personnel Policy Update

a. Medicare OPT-OUT

Mr. Morris asked the board to approve a change in the Opt-Out Program for employees that qualify for Medicare. The change would allow these employees to opt-out of the Town medical benefits with a \$5,000 (single)/\$10,000 (couple) stipend to offset the cost of Medicare supplemental insurance.

Mr. Leach asked how the policy would apply if both a husband and wife are employed by the town? Mr. Morris said he will look into it as he wasn't sure.

b. Transitional Return to Work Program

This program would assist employees who have been injured in returning to work as early as possible with recovery-appropriate duties. Early return to work aids in recovery and reduces workman's comp expenses. This policy was brought to us by VLCT.

c. Designated Provider Policy

This policy was also brought to us by VLCT. This designated provider would be the first provider the employee would see following an injury. The designated provider will know the job descriptions and necessary paperwork. The employee would need sign off from the provider before they come back to work (full duties) following a long medical absence. Charlestown Health center has agreed to take us on. Reimbursement for their services will be on a case-by-case basis.

Motion: To accept the *Medicare Opt-Out, Transitional Return to Work Policy, and Designated Provider* changes to the Personnel Policy as described in the Memo from Mr. Morris dated 12/13/2018.

Made by: Mr. Leach **Second:** Mr. Arrison

Vote: Unanimous in favor

8. New Phone System

Mr. Morris described the difficulties encountered repeatedly with the current phone system, the research he had conducted into finding a solution, and the advantages and efficiencies that would be realized by contracting with Comcast. The funds for this upgrade have been included in the budget for FY20.

Motion: Authorize the use of up to \$2,000 out of the Town Office Capital Reserve for the purposes of implementing the upgraded phone system during FY2019.

Made by: Mr. Arrison **Second:** Leach

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Ms. Kelly said we are currently paying \$560/month for phone services. We currently get multiple bills for those phone services. We pay \$45/month for internet at the transfer station.

Comcast will pay the \$16,000 to get internet to the highway garage if we agree to the contract.

Mr. Leach said he wanted to see actual savings in our monthly expenses from this upgrade.

Mr. Morris asking for \$779.20 in monthly charges with this upgrade and this amount is in the budget, but it didn't match the Comcast contract that was in the board's packet.

Vote on the motion: Unanimous in favor

Motion: Authorize the Town Manager to enter into a 5-year lease contract with Comcast Communications for phone and internet services not to exceed \$779.20 per month with \$509.15 activation fees.

Made by: Mr. Arrison **Second:** Mr. Leach

Vote: unanimous in favor

9. Budget Discussion – cover pages

a. Highway Budget – Center Road Paving Discussion

Mr. Morris recommended asking the voters for a loan of \$250,000 with the remainder of the funds coming from:

- Grant - \$175,000
- Grant Match - \$25,000
- Budget \$80,000
- Reserves - \$70,000

The type of loan can be determined after Town Meeting, although the board should be prepared to address the question should it be raised.

b. Fund Balance Discussion

Mr. Morris would like to use the \$35,000 surplus (from the fund balance) to install heat pumps in the Town Office.

c. Capital Discussion

Mr. Morris said that this year's budget will meet his long-awaited 10 pennies on the tax rate goal:

- Center Road - \$175,000 in expenditures
- Police Cruiser Payments - \$11,589
- Fire Truck - \$49,235
- Highway Truck Payments - \$72,748

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- MMH Heat Pumps - \$35,000

The end goal by spending 10 pennies on the tax rate on capital expenses is a level tax rate minus the peaks and valleys while keeping up with our capital needs.

d. Overview

Mr. Morris and Ms. Kelly continue with some additional fine-tuning of the budget. Actual insurance figures came in and were lower than expected, so appropriate reductions were made. Ms. Kelly made some formatting changes which she explained. Ms. Kelly also rearranged some of the lines in the Fire Commission and Municipal Fire Department budgets to facilitate easier line-by-line comparisons.

Mr. Leach asked for figures based on a single fire station. Mr. Morris recommended leaving the figures as they are to cover unforeseen expenses.

Cynthia Porter asked if AVFD doesn't participate, will we stop funding them?

Listers wages were increased a bit due to an error.

At 9:02 PM:

Motion: To extend the meeting to the end of the agenda

Made by: Mr. Arrison **Second:** Mr. Leach

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The need for updating tax maps annually was discussed. Mr. Morris said it should be done frequently to keep them up to date.

A question was raised about the town paying water company employees. Mr. Morris said they are paid by the town and then the town is reimbursed by the water company.

Police revenue has dropped precipitously. It was agreed that there needs to be a balance between ticket writing and crime investigation. Traffic control is important in keeping the town safer.

10. Appointments

No appointments were requested or made.

11. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 12/17/2018 as follow:

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General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$35,035.70
	Payroll	\$13,993.18
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$39,945.95
	Payroll	\$10,242.42
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$4,551.57
	Payroll	\$1,436.46
Library	Operating Expenses	\$834.03
	Payroll	\$1,771.60
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$9,665.00
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Reserves		\$0.00
Long Term Debt		\$0.00
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$90,032.25
	Payroll	\$27,443.66

Made by: Mr. Arrison **Second:** Mr. Leach

Vote: Unanimous in favor

- 12. Future Meeting Agenda Items** – The next meeting will start at 6:00PM. The fire department discussion will be first, followed by the social services presentations.

13. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting 9:18 PM.

Made by: Mr. Arrison **Second:** Mr. Leach

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

deForest Bearse

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WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

N. John Arrison, Selector

Daniel E. Boyer, Selector

C. Peter Cole, Vice-Chairperson

Tom Leach, Clerk

Kelly Murphy, Chairperson