

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

**Select Board
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Monday, November 16, 2020
7:00 PM
REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES
APPROVED 11/30/2020**

Select Board Members Present: N. John Arrison
David Fuller
Joseph Jarvis
Paul Tillman
Michael Todd

Select Board Members Absent:

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Others Present:

The Public was permitted to attend this meeting in person. Remote public participation was facilitated via the GoTo Meeting video-conferencing platform and conference calling. The number for people to join or call in to the meeting was published on the meeting agenda and on the Town's website. Mr. Gulnick monitored the calls and the video-platform while Mr. Fuller ran the meeting. The meeting was recorded as SAPA TV was unavailable.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Fuller called the meeting to order at 7:02PM.

Mr. Fuller acknowledged the recent spike in COVID-19 cases in Vermont. The second quarterly tax payment is also due this Wednesday (November 18th). He said provisions are being made to safely accommodate residents who feel the need to bring their tax payments to the Town Office, including using the ballot box that is outside in the parking lot.

2. Public Hearing: Zoning Bylaws Updates – 7:00 PM

Eleven updates to the Zoning Bylaws are proposed by the Planning Commission to better implement the goals and objectives of the Town Plan. They include:

1. Home Based Occupation and Home Base Business (Section 4.5)
2. Definitions – Article 7
3. Small Enterprise

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4. Formula Business
5. Off-Street Parking – Section 3.5
6. Groundwater Protection Ordinance
7. Removal of Contractor's Storage Use
8. Signs – Section 3.8
9. Outdoor Lighting – Section 3.6
10. Waivers – Section 6.9
11. Section 6.10.1 – Application

Mr. Fuller called for questions or comments from the public. There were none.

Land Use Administrator Chris Whidden said the Planning Commission had worked hard on these updates and urged the Board to adopt them.

Mr. Todd asked to have an inconsistency in section 4.5.3.1(C) corrected. He said this wording should match that of section 4.5.4.1(C) with regard to new and existing outbuildings. It was agreed that this was not a substantive change.

Motion: To amend section 4.5.3.1(C) to read “new or existing” outbuilding

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

Vote: All in favor

There were no other comments. Mr. Fuller closed the public hearing.

Motion: To adopt the 11 bylaw updates as listed in the agenda and public hearing notice and adopt them as permanent additions to the Weathersfield, VT Zoning Bylaws

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

Mr. Fuller reread the amendments. There were no comments or further discussion.

Vote: All in favor

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

There were no comments from the Board, the Manager or Citizens.

4. Review minutes from previous meetings – November 2, 2020

Additions/corrections/deletions:

- a. None.

Motion: To approve

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

Vote: All in favor

Mr. Gulnick introduced Rosalie McNamara, newly-hired executive assistant to the finance department. Ms. McNamara is scheduled to begin work next week. She will be working

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Monday – Thursday, 9AM – 4PM. Mr. Gulnick and Ms. Terrill are working on a plan for training Ms. McNamara.

5. Scheduled Appointment – 7:30PM – Patrick Chilcott – Zero Based Budgeting

Mr. Gulnick introduced Patrick Chilcott who will be working as a budget coach for the upcoming budget season. Mr. Chilcott gave a presentation on the various styles of budgeting and the pros and cons of each method. He encouraged the Town to consider Zero-Based Budgeting as the optimum method for a Town such as Weathersfield because it requires prioritization of funding and provides transparency to the taxpayers. The method should be hybridized to fit the Town and may take several budget cycles to fully implement.

6. Finance Report

Mr. Gulnick provided a snapshot of the Town's financial standing for the period 7/1/20 – 10/31/20 across every department. General Fund Revenue is at 33%. Mr. Gulnick was able to explain any outstanding anomalies.

7. Land Use Administrator Fees

Chris Whidden asked the Board to consider raising the Zoning Fees on the grounds that they have not been changed since 2011, they are low compared to other Towns he looked at, and because the fees don't cover the cost of administering zoning.

Motion: To adopt the Zoning Permit Fee Schedule dated 11/16/2020

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

Vote: 1 abstention, 1 in favor, 2 opposed

Motion failed.

8. 2021 Healthcare

The cost of health insurance is going up by \$16,000. Mr. Gulnick has been working on how to fairly share the cost with employees. He provided various options to the Board. Ms. Terrill said that employees are concerned about the future and cost of their insurance coverage.

Several employees joined the meeting to express concerns and ask questions.

The various options were discussed and debated by the Board and the employees in the meeting, but no decision was made regarding a specific plan. The Board unanimously favored staying with MVP.

The Board will make its final decision on a specific plan on November 30th.

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At 8:59 PM, Mr. Todd motioned to extend the meeting by 30 minutes. Mr. Jarvis seconded the motion and all were in favor.

9. 2014 Purchase and Sale Agreement

Mr. Gulnick provided a financial analysis/comparison of options 1 and 2 in report #7.

Willis Wood, representing the Weathersfield Land Preservation Association, joined the discussion. He said if the Abbott land is put up for tax sale, the Town will likely lose any opportunity of gaining access to the Town Forest from the Weathersfield side. He said the WLPA is willing to donate up to \$5,000 to bridge the shortfall on the taxes owed. He said the Town would be renegeing on its 2014 agreement and reminded the Board that Mrs. Abbott has kept up to date on her current taxes.

Mr. Fuller was dismayed that he did not know the Abbotts had other assets beyond the parcels directly on Thrasher Road. He said the Board of Abatement has the authority ask for full disclosure of all financial assets and he would require this be done. He said the Town has already paid out \$27,000 in various expenses with an additional \$10,000 likely (to remap the wetlands). He said the Board of Abatement should have weighed in on the transfer of land before it happened and that the path of the easement should be straightened.

Motion: To support option #2 and go forward with the tax sale.

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

Mr. Arrison said the Town has some responsibility for letting it get this bad; that Mrs. Abbott didn't know about current use or income sensitivity; and she's kept current on her taxes.

At 9:35 PM, Mr. Tillman motioned to extend the meeting another 15 minutes. Mr. Jarvis seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Vote on the motion: 2 in favor, 3 opposed

Motion fails.

To be continued.

10. Town Manager Report – Website Update, Reorganization Update

11. FY22 Budget Discussion

Mr. Gulnick asked the Board for answers to the following questions:

1. Transfer Station Attendants - Is the Select Board interested in employing any additional personnel at the Transfer Station? 1 yes; 1 wish to support the Town Manager; 3 no

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2. Land Use Administrator – full or part time? 3 yes, 2 no
3. Town Assessor – is the Select Board seeking to employ an Assessor in FY22? 3 yes; 2 undetermined
4. Fire Department Finance – it was agreed to move this discussion to the meeting on November 30th at 6:30PM.

12. Transfer Station Permit Sticker Policy – Second Reading

Motion: To authorize moving the policy to the third reading

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

Vote: All in favor

13. Appointments

No appointments were requested or made.

14. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 11/16/2020 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$25,347.45
	Payroll	\$12,737.58
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$4,416.52
	Payroll	\$7,319.36
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$14,962.32
	Payroll	\$1,526.55
Library	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
	Payroll	\$1,919.35
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$
Special Revenue	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Reserves		\$
Long Term Debt		\$
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$44,726.29
	Payroll	\$23,502.84

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

Vote: All in favor

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15. Any Other Business

Mr. Gulnick briefly updated the Board on his office staff reorganization. He highlighted that the changes are costing no additional money, yet the Town is receiving over 30 more staff work hours as a result the reorganization.

16. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

N. John Arrison, Selector

David Fuller, Chairperson

Joseph Jarvis, Clerk

Paul Tillman

Michael Todd, Vice- Chairperson