

**TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD**

**Select Board
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Monday, November 18, 2019
7:00 PM
REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES
APPROVED 12/4/2019**

Select Board Members Present: N. John Arrison
Daniel Boyer
David Fuller
Kelly Murphy
Michael Todd

Select Board Members Absent:

Sven Fedorow, Interim Town Manager

Others Present:

Tim Austin	Nikita Lenahan	Kyle Obenauer	Edith Stillson
Ray Stapleton	Fred Kowalik	Andrea Wright	Lisa Slade
Donnie Huntley	Paul Tillman	Patrick Adrian	Gerold Davis
Darlene Kelly	Colby Hodgdon	Darrin Spaulding	Howard Page
John Esty	Bette Jo Esty	Katy (?)	Jane Cleveland
Patti Arrison			

1. Call to Order

Ms. Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

2. Agenda Review

There were no changes to the agenda.

3. Comments from Select Board and Town Manager

There were no comments.

4. Comments from Citizens on Topics not on Agenda

Lisa Slade read a letter requesting the Select Board rescind the motion to form a municipal fire department. The letter was accompanied by 100 signatures in the form of a petition.

5. Discussion on Tenney Tree at Park and Ride

a. Guests: Andrea Wright & Kyle Obenauer, State of Vermont

The Board had sent a letter to the Governor asking for a stay of all action pertaining to the tree. On November 15th, a letter was received from Wayne Simonds, chief engineer, and from the Secretary of

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Transportation's office acknowledging the Board's letter and agreeing that suspension of all action would allow time for further investigation into the matter. They also support further investigation by a qualified arborist. Ms. Wright and Mr. Obenauer were present at the meeting to facilitate the discussion.

Ms. Wright explained that VTrans was planning to block off 7 parking spaces nearest the tree in the interest of safety. She requested collaboration on messaging the closure of the spaces.

The State is willing to pay for a 2nd arborist's opinion on the state of the tree. It was agreed that Mr. Fedorow would provide Ms. Wright with the names of certified arborists from which they could choose.

Ms. Wright explained that this tree had been identified as a hazard tree during a routine check. They have been keeping tabs on the tree since it was cabled ten years ago. Recently several large branches had fallen which drew additional attention to it. Now that the State is aware of the hazard, they are anxious to take action to prevent harm.

Mr. Obenauer said he is looking to collaborate with representatives of the Town and the Tenney family in crafting the text to be placed on a large brass historic marker. Mr. Arrison said he would like to see something more than the generic brass plaque that might be overlooked by the public. Mr. Obenauer said there could be more than just the plaque. He will start working on the text at any rate while additional ideas are explored. It was suggested that Mr. Obenauer contact the Historical Society for suggestions of others who might wish to work on the text.

Ms. Wright will talk to the arborist about creating offspring from this tree.

It was agreed to have Ginger Wimberg, president of the Historical Society, and Mr. Fedorow as the points of contact.

Mr. Fuller said he feels a close connection to Mr. Tenney as they were both farmers and suggested a light, like a perpetual flame, as an appropriate memorial to Mr. Tenney.

There was discussion about having hazard limbs removed from the tree now so that the parking spaces would not have to be blocked off. This will be looked into as VTrans doesn't want to block off the spaces if it can be avoided.

Discussion on this will continue as information becomes available.

6. Storm Debriefing

a. Comments from Emergency Management Coordinator, Tim Austin

Mr. Austin was appointed as Emergency Management Coordinator last spring, but the appointment was not widely communicated so very few people knew who to contact following the storm. Mr. Austin himself was not aware of the extent of the damage until John Arrison called him advising him of the situation. Mr. Austin was able to coordinate with the fire chiefs and Ray Stapleton and made the best of the situation. He admitted to having to get himself up to speed with the Emergency Management Plan, but said he didn't know who the Town Manager was at the time or how to get in contact with him. Mr. Fedorow was unable to communicate with the Town because he had no power or cell service at the time.

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It was learned that the contact information on the Town's website was not up to date and new emergency contact cards had not been distributed to pertinent personnel.

It was agreed that Mr. Austin should have a phone and a radio to use during emergency events. There had been money set aside for purchase of them, but the purchases were never made. Ms. Kelly said there is no money now for a radio and only \$300 in the budget for emergency management.

The need for a central command location and a Town emergency shelter was discussed. Mr. Austin said he also needed maps of the Town to coordinate activities. Someone needs to be manning the phones at all times during these emergency events. Mr. Austin felt the Town Office was the best place for a command center because everyone knows where it is.

Wherever the emergency shelter is ultimately located, the need for a generator still exists to keep phones working, cell phones charged, and water running. The cost of a generator remains too big for either the school or the town budget.

It was obvious that much work needs to be done to help the Town be better prepared for the next emergency. Ms. Murphy asked Mr. Fedorow and Ms. Kelly to work together to create a list of what's needed. She asked someone to touch base with the school principal as well.

The discussion is to continue at the next meeting.

7. Review minutes from previous meetings – 11/4/2019

Motion: To approve

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

Mr. Fuller asked for more time before approving the minutes so he could clarify his comments on the town forest discussion.

Vote: 4 no votes; 1 yes vote. Motion fails.

Motion: To table

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

8. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 11/18/2019 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$20,087.58
	Payroll	\$13,737.23
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$62,387.10
	Payroll	\$9,636.75

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Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$6,741.45
	Payroll	\$1,513.24
Library		
	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
	Payroll	\$1,969.52
Grants		
	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Special Revenue		
	Operating Expense	\$623.02
Reserves		
		\$0.00
Long Term Debt		
		\$0.00
Grand Totals		
	Operating Expenses	\$89,839.15
	Payroll	\$26,856.74

Made by: Mr. Arrison **Second:** Mr. Todd
Vote: all in favor

9. Employee Health Plan Renewal

Since the last meeting and discussion on this matter, employees were encouraged to ask questions about the plans offered before making their decision. Of the 11 employees, 9 have decided that they prefer the gold plan with a 9.5% contribution if the HSA is fully frontloaded. Two employees wish to have the platinum plan with no HSA and a 7.5% contribution. There is no restriction on the Town offering both plans. Donnie Hinckley asked if the Board would consider the gold plan with an 8.5% contribution and only 50% frontloading of the HSA.

There was again discussion about offering funding for the HSA to new employees when the risk is high that the employee won't stay. However, the focus shifted to why the Town would be offering full benefits to new employees as soon as they are hired.

Motion: To offer both the Gold plan with a 9.5% employee contribution and fully frontloading the HSA and the Platinum plan with a 7.5% employee contribution and no HSA.

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

10. Budget Update

It was agreed to review the smaller budgets first.

Listers: The Town parcel mapping needs to be done in FY21. Currently Carolyn Hier works 24 hours a week; Lynn Esty works 18 hours; and Lexi Skalaban works 4 hours. They have minimal benefits. Mrs. Hier wants to retire soon. She will run for re-election, but likely will not serve her full term. The Board needs to start planning for a town-wide re-appraisal. No decision was made on the Listers' budget.

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Land Use: There was discussion about the hourly rate for the Land Use Administrator. It was not clear if the \$23/hour rate was agreed to. All agreed for the need to see the minutes of the September 3rd meeting to clarify.

Not much else is changing in this budget. It was agreed not to pursue combining the Lister/Land Use positions until after Mrs. Hier retires. Ms. Murphy said she favors maintaining the status quo until a new manager is hired. The Board agreed.

Motion: To extend the meeting for 30 minutes

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

Vote: All in favor

a. Synopsis of reserves

Synopsis of reserves

Ms. Kelly explained that some items have been moved around because of the audit. She described the different types of reserves and their various sources of funds.

Mr. Fuller asked to know the fund balance at the end of FY19.

Ms. Murphy asked that the purpose of each reserve fund be provided to the Board.

This discussion will be continued at the next meeting.

11. Salt Shed update

Chris Yurek at the RPC informed Mr. Fedorow that the salt shed was going to cost an additional \$40,000, which would push the Town's match to \$69,000. At this time, it is a moot point, as the application has already been submitted and can't be amended. The Town will have the option of declining the grant should it be offered and the Town not able to meet the increased cost.

Discussion on this will continue when additional information is made available.

12. Appointments

There are now four openings on the budget committee.

13. Executive Session per 1 V.S.A. §313(3) (Personnel)

Motion: To enter executive session as per 1 V.S.A. §313(3) (Personnel) and to have Ms. Kelly and Mr. Fedorow present.

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

Vote: All in favor

The Board entered executive session at 9:25 PM.

14. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

Made by: **Second:**

Vote:

The meeting adjourned at

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Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

N. John Arrison, Selector

Daniel E. Boyer, Selector

David Fuller, Vice-Chairperson

Kelly Murphy, Chairperson

Michael Todd, Clerk