

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

**Select Board
Highway Garage
483 Stoughton Pond Road
Monday, August 19, 2019
6:00 PM
REGULAR MEETING**

**MINUTES
APPROVED 9/3/2019**

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

Select Board Members Absent:

Darlene Kelly, Acting Town Manager

Others Present:

Edith Stillson	Don Huntley	Roy Burton	Heather Shand
Bette Jo Esty	Ray Stapleton	Nikita Lenahan	
John Esty	Jeff Pelton	Fred Kowalik	

1. Executive Session as per 1 V.S.A. §313(3) Personnel – 6:00 PM

Motion: To enter executive session as per 1 V.S.A. §313(3) Personnel

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

The board came out of executive session at 6:13 PM. No action was taken.

2. Highway Garage Tour – 6:30 PM

At 6:20PM, Superintendent Ray Stapleton gave the Board a walking update of highway department activity, including:

- proposed solar site;
- salt shed roof deterioration due to rebar destabilization;
- concrete blocks around foundation of garage building are deteriorating from salt draining off trucks;
- new LED lights installed;
- exit signs and emergency lighting installed with PACIF grant funds;
- two-person hydro-seeder has improved efficiency;
- rebuilt the rear of the chloride distribution truck.

3. Call to Order

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

4. Agenda Review

No changes were made to the agenda.

5. Comments from Select Board and Town Manager

Mr. Fuller said he had three things to discuss:

1. A moment of silence for the Barton family;
2. An announcement over the dispatch that there was no select board meeting tonight. Apparently, the dispatch announcement was to let WWVFD personnel know that there would be no fire discussion at this meeting and thus no need to attend. Mr. Fuller objected to the use of the dispatch services for such an announcement. Ms. Murphy said it will be on the next agenda to discuss further.
3. A request to have the boundary of the transfer station solar array site flagged on the ground. Mr. Fuller said the shared boundary should be marked for clarity. Ms. Murphy said this, too, would be on the next agenda for further discussion.

The Board observed a moment of silence for the Barton family.

Motion: To authorize the chair to enter into discussions with VLCT for the town manager search and to (hopefully) have a contract set up for the next meeting.

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

Discussion: Mr. Fuller said he would object because the current manager has not yet served notice. Ms. Murphy asked Mr. Arrison to clarify in his motion what he would like the chair to do. Mr. Arrison said to contact Abby Friedman to let her know the town will be contracting with VLCT and “get the ball rolling”. Ms. Murphy said the motion authorizes the chair to move forward with something that the Board has yet to vote on doing. Ms. Murphy said she already touched base with Ms. Friedman and had given the information to the Board members. She was reluctant to make this call until the Board had made the commitment to go with VLCT.

Mr. Arrison withdrew his motion and Mr. Boyer his second.

Motion: That we agree to contract with VLCT for the town manager search, should one be needed, and authorize the chair to make contact.

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

Discussion: Mr. Todd agreed with Mr. Fuller that the resignation was not yet in hand. Ms. Murphy suggested changing the motion to, “Should the contract be signed prior to the next meeting, authorize the chair to reach out to VLCT.” Mr. Arrison then said the Board would have to vote on accepting the letter of resignation first, which the board didn’t have.

Vote on the motion: 3 in favor, 2 opposed.

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It was agreed to see how things develop over the next week and hold a special meeting if necessary.

Ms. Murphy asked everyone to review and request any changes in the documents provided previously by Mr. Morris so the final versions can be ready for the next meeting and VLCT won't have to create them.

Ms. Kelly said a new phone system has been installed at the town office. Staff is still working out the kinks and she asked everyone to be patient for a bit. The new system provides automation that relieves staff of the need to route calls to various parties in the office. A directory of staff extensions will be published soon.

6. Comments from Citizens on topics not on the agenda

Fred Kowalik said Annette Smith had asked him to have the select board issue a stay of the schedule for the solar array until all of the test results have been received. He felt Norwich Solar was pushing things through in order to get the lease agreement done without all of the test results. He said if the town signs the lease agreements, it becomes financially responsible for the cost of any mitigation that might be called for. He asked the Board to take this under review before the lease agreement goes through. He said there is a deadline of September 9th "as far as what we do with the PUC". He said changes become even more difficult after that date. He said he has done what he can on his end.

Ms. Murphy asked if Ms. Smith's email is something the town manager had seen. Mr. Kowalik said probably not. He said it was between he and Ms. Smith.

Ms. Murphy asked to clarify who Annette Smith is. Mr. Kowalik said she is a public advocate/private consultant in matters of solar energy.

Ms. Lenahan said if the town signs the lease and it "goes flip-flop", what happens to the \$40,000 that Norwich Solar has put into (the application). She said it was made very clear that the town would be responsible. She said she had spoken to someone from Fish and Game who claimed the wildlife report was "absurd".

Ms. Murphy said it was not a good idea to have a full-blown discussion on this matter because it was not on the agenda and because not all of the parties were present. She asked Mr. Kowalik – if it is appropriate – to share Ms. Smith's email with the town manager. She also suggested sharing it with the planning commission. This, too, will be on the next agenda.

Mr. Arrison said the Historical Society Frippery was a huge success and thanks to the diligence and creativity of the volunteers, less than \$30 of the \$500 offered to the Society was

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used for disposing of unsold goods. The remaining funds will be returned to the bottle fund.

Mr. Fuller told Mr. Kowalik and Ms. Lenahan that he had, earlier in the meeting, asked that the shared boundary between their property and the town's land be flagged for clarity.

Mr. Kowalik and Ms. Lenahan asked the record to show that they are not upset with the town – neither the select board nor the planning commission. They are only upset with Norwich Solar. They stated emphatically that the select board and the planning commission “are awesome” and they have no issues with them whatsoever.

7. Review minutes from previous meetings – 8/5/2019

Motion: To approve

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

Discussion: Mr. Todd asked about the reference to unsigned lease agreements on page 3. He said he thought the lease agreement for the highway garage had been signed. As no one was able to confirm or dispute, it was agreed to table the minutes until Mr. Morris can clarify. The motion and second were withdrawn.

8. Employee Recognition

The board recognized John Esty for completing 23 years of service in the highway department and congratulated him on his promotion to the position of assistant highway superintendent. Ms. Murphy read the letter of recognition and handshakes were had all around.

9. Ash Tree Discussion

The conservation commission has completed a comprehensive inventory of ash trees in own-owned rights-of-way. Much appreciation to Roy Burton for doing the lion's share of the work. The Emerald Ash Borer is a threat to all ash trees. So far it has not reached Weathersfield, but its arrival is imminent. The purpose of the inventory is to give the town a chance to develop a strategy for responding to the EAB and the destruction it will eventually cause. The commission recommends cutting the trees down before they begin to die, because once they begin to die, they will be much harder to cut down and they will have lost much of their value. The primary focus, however, is to protect the public safety.

The only ash trees that the town might consider replacing are the three on the Perkinsville Green.

Mr. Stapleton thanked the commission for this work as it now gives him a great place to start his right-of-way management plans.

The commission recommends meeting with the power company to share information and strategies.

10. Conservation Commission Update

Jeff Pelton said the commission is considering making an inventory of ponds and dams in town; they may also possibly inventory people with bats on their property.

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Mr. Pelton said he has been sampling the water of the North Branch of the Black River at the swimming hole for BRAT (Black River Action Team) for three years. He said last year there was an incidence of very high e coli readings and this year there have been several such incidences. He said they believe last year's readings were caused by a beaver dam break that released stored sediments. This year's source is unknown. They have been posting the test results from the Tolles dam, the rope swing swimming hole and Stoughton Pond at various locations around town. Ms. Murphy asked if they were being posted on the website. Mr. Stapleton suggested posting them at the test sites.

The commission is at full membership.

The commission has sponsored two walks this year and a Ferry Road clean-up. They are hoping to do an EAB public program and a bat workshop. They may also host a talk by Kim Royer.

The board thanked the commission for all of the work it has done.

11. Town Roads Update

Mr. Stapleton said that the paving work is almost done. They are trying to wrap up the culverts and ditching. He is testing different materials on the roads. The chloride is working well at the minimum application. They are trying to harden the road surfaces and have proper crowning to encourage sheet drainage of surface water. They continue to cut brush. They can't grade right now as it is too dry. He is pricing brush and tree removal by outside contractors. Mr. Arrison asked Mr. Stapleton if he was satisfied with the mowing work that had been done this summer. Mr. Stapleton said no. He didn't feel the work had been as thoroughly as it would have been if we had done it on our own. Mr. Arrison and Mr. Stapleton agreed that there should have been better signage during the work to prevent accidents.

Ms. Murphy described the tour of the town highway garage that Mr. Stapleton had given the board before the meeting.

12. FY 2018-2019 Budget Review

The board had received a line-by-line, department-by-department budget report from Ms. Kelly. There were no questions.

Ms. Kelly said the auditors are due next week.

13. Reserve Allocations Approval

There was much discussion regarding allocation of year-end excess funds. Mr. Morris recommended moving them into reserves or to fund one-time projects in his memo to the board. In the case of the Town Clerk, the move to reserves is mandated by state statute.

Motion: To allocate up to \$8,174 from the FY2019 General Fund to the Fire Motorized Equipment Reserve per the 2017 fire agreement

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Motion: For up to \$67,483 to be placed in the unspecified/undesignated reserve up to the 10% cap; remaining funds to be allocated to the Martin Memorial Hall capital reserve

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

Vote: all in favor

Motion: To allocate up to \$13,979 from the FY2019 Highway Fund to be placed in the Highway Capital Reserve Maintenance Reserve

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

There was much discussion about whether or not highway fund surpluses could be placed into a reserve.

Vote: 4 in favor, 1 opposed

14. Discuss 9/3/2019 Select Board Meeting Date

The board agreed to hold their September 2nd meeting on September 3rd.

Mr. Arrison asked that the September 16th meeting be held at the Weathersfield Center Meetinghouse in honor of tradition. He will make the necessary arrangements.

15. Appointments

a. Connecticut River Joint Commission – Howard Beach

Motion: To appoint Howard Beach to the Connecticut River Joint Commission

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

Vote: all in favor

16. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 8/19/2019 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$37,836.30
	Payroll	\$23,336.26
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$47,142.82
	Payroll	\$12,184.54
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$15,775.20
	Payroll	\$2,452.01
Library	Operating Expenses	\$225.40
	Payroll	\$3,063.45
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
Agency Monies	Operating Expenses	\$500.00
Reserves		\$0.00

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Long Term Debt		\$0.00
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$101,479.72
	Payroll	\$41,036.26

Made by: Mr. Arrison **Second:** Mr. Boyer
Vote: All in favor

17. Future Meeting Agenda Items

18. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting
Made by: Mr. Todd **Second:** Mr. Boyer
Vote: All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:39PM.

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

N. John Arrison, Selector

Daniel E. Boyer, Selector

David Fuller, Vice-Chairperson

Kelly Murphy, Chairperson

Michael Todd, Clerk