

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board

Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Monday, October 18, 2021
6:30 PM
REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

Select Board Members Present: David Fuller
Joseph Jarvis
Kelly O'Brien (remotely)
Paul Tillman
Michael Todd (remotely at 6:37 PM)

Select Board Members Absent:

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Others Present:

Table with 4 columns and 3 rows listing attendees: Darrin Spaulding, Shawn Brown, Nicole Gagnon, Ryan Gumbart.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Fuller called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Board: No comments from board members.

Town Manager: Mr. Gulnick said he would cover everything in his report.

Mr. Fuller: Mr. Fuller attended the most recent school board meeting where there was a 7th grade presentation about creation of a nature center. He urged everyone to watch it on SAPA TV. He found the quality of speaking to be impressive and the idea of the nature center fascinating. He is considering asking the Planning Commission to consider adopting the idea. Mr. Fuller also said the school board has started their budget process for the next fiscal year.

Public: Darrin Spaulding - Saturday from 8-11 AM at the Ascutney station, they will be assisting Jeff and Lisa Slade in the annual food drive for the Food Shelf. Mr. Spaulding also presented the Town with a check for \$4,000. The money was from the sale of the

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old ladder truck and was intended to go into the truck replacement fund. The board expressed their thanks.

Mike Todd joined meeting at this point. (6:37 PM)

**4. Review minutes from previous meetings – 10/4/2021**

**Additions/corrections/deletions:**

a. None

**Motion:** To approve

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

**Vote:** All in favor

**Review minutes from previous meetings – 9/20/2021**

**Additions/corrections/deletions:**

b. To correct the motion to read: **Motion:** ~~To transfer \$6696.72~~ *\$6966.72 from the general fund FY21 surplus to the Parks and Recreation reserve account*

**Motion:** To pass the minutes of 9/20/2021 with corrections as noted by the secretary

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

**Vote:** All in favor

**5. Town Manager Report**

- (a) Congratulations to Olivia Savage for her 1-year anniversary with Town's employ.
- (b) Website: Updates to the site continue. All board pages now have a consistent format. A "Things to do" tab has been added. Mr. Gulnick will be working on a business directory. Additional design changes are coming. Mr. Gulnick asked everyone to send along any suggestions.
- (c) Payroll: At the last meeting, Mr. Fuller raised an issue about the warrant. This issue has since been resolved. All payroll requests must be submitted weekly. There will be no retro-pay for work done over a long period that has not been submitted. Mr. Tillman asked if this resolution should be added to the personnel policy. Mr. Gulnick agreed, but Mr. Todd asked for more specific language and suggested, "We will not entertain retro-pay for work conducted over any extended period of time not reported in weekly payroll." Mr. Fuller added that the board could take this up if requested on appeal; and that Mr. Gulnick would be informing the staff.
- (d) FY21 Fund Balance: (taken directly from Mr. Gulnick's report) *I have been asked to provide an estimated FY21 Fund Balance in the General Fund. I estimate the fund balance in FY21 will be \$32,401 & the fund balance from prior years to be \$52,890, which equals a total estimated cumulative fund balance of \$85,291. Keep in mind the Selectboard voted to move forward with a Tax Sale and to void the 2014 Purchase & Sale Agreement. As you know, the previous auditors created an allowance for doubtful accounts, which currently has a balance of \$69,400. Considering the account will no longer be doubtful, the new auditors might recommend that we dissolve that account, which will result in an additional \$69,400 that will enter the cumulative fund*

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*balance, which will equal a total of \$154,691. These are all estimated figures that are dependent on the accountant's final review of the FY21 books/reconciliations & the FY21 audit. Mr. Gulnick has tasked the new accountant with going back through FY21 from the beginning of the year and reconciling the general ledger, the bank statements, and the trial balance sheet, "just to confirm before our audit on November 1<sup>st</sup>."*

- (e) LUA Position: Mr. Gulnick said he has readvertised the LUA position with a new job description and a new salary structure in VLCT, Indeed, local papers, and a few other job advertising sites. Previous applicants were contacted, but with no favorable results. There are difficulties filling these positions across the state.
- (f) Highway Operator: We are also looking for another highway operator. This position had been filled, but was vacated shortly thereafter.
- (g) 2022 Health Insurance Rates: The 2022 Vermont Group Plan Rates for healthcare for the town have been received. The Gold Plan rates will increase less than 1/10 of 1% (\$12 annually); the Platinum Plan will increase by 1.5% (\$144 annually).
- (h) Budget process for FY23: The budget advisory committee reviewed the highway budget at their meeting last week. They will review the police and fire department budgets on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Gulnick will have a report for the board at the next meeting.
- (i) Annual Town Manager Conference: Mr. Gulnick attended the annual Town Managers' conference in Stowe. He found it to be a great opportunity to compare notes with town managers all over the state. Topics discussed included diversity; policing; and ARPA. He said everyone has staff shortages. LUAs are especially difficult to find and keep.
- (j) Contract with Regional Planning Commission: The contract with RPC for zoning administration has been extended through October with December 1<sup>st</sup> being their absolute last date to provide services.

### **6. Emerald Ash Borer Tree Warden presentation**

Ryan Gumbart, town tree warden, gave a presentation on the Emerald Ash Borer and what it will mean to the town. He called it a 20-year project as it takes 5 years to see trees dying in large numbers; 15 years for the dead trees to start falling and 20 years until they are all gone. The borer is not in Weathersfield yet, but it is all around us. Trees in the town-owned rights-of-way are the primary concern as they represent a public safety hazard. Mr. Gumbart urged the board to consider creating a management plan that sets priorities and creates a budget.

The Conservation Commission completed a comprehensive inventory of 1005 ash trees in the town rights-of-way in 2019. Each tree over 8 inches in diameter was assigned a risk category. The Commission recommends pre-emptive removal of these trees and establishing a site for their processing. They also recommend sending a letter to landowners letting them know what's coming.

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The hazard will be gone in 20 years, but the borer will not be. It will persist and kill all young ash trees before the trees become big enough to become hazards.

Mr. Fuller asked for a copy of the inventory and asked the board members to think about how they think the town should proceed. There is currently nothing in the budget to address this issue.

**7. Extension – Rick Butler Lease Agreement**

The board agreed to renew the lease for another five years.

**Motion:** To renew the 2011 Lease Agreement between the Town and Richard and Bonnie Butler for an additional 5-years.

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

**Vote:** All in favor

**8. Parks and Recreation Policy – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading**

No additional changes were requested.

In accordance with the current policy, the Commission asked permission to spend \$100 on Halloween candy. Mr. Fuller said he had told Mr. Gulnick to allow it. The candy will be purchased with the town's credit card.

**9. AVFD Tanker Discussion**

The board again discussed the request from AVFD to purchase a tanker truck.

Mr. Gulnick was asked to prepare several different financing options for purchasing the new truck.

**10. Quarterly Town Finance Report**

From the Town Manager's report:

*INTRODUCTION*

*As you know, we made several changes in the Town over the past year, including the following:*

- 1. Transitioned all Finance from the Fire Departments to the Town per Contract.*
- 2. Moved from a Finance Director, to an Executive Assistant to Finance (due to the inability to find a qualified accountant), and now we have an Accountant that works 28 hours in Weathersfield and 12 hours in Windsor weekly.*
- 3. The Land Use Administrator resigned, resulting in contracting with Regional Planning to fill in as the Interim Land Use Administrator.*
- 4. Two of Three Listers resigned, resulting in the appointment of NEMRC for Assessor Services for FY22 & the appointment of a Lister to fill the seat until the next election.*
- 5. Negotiations occurred with Reading and West Windsor to create a fair and equal payment structure, which will go into effect in FY23.*
- 6. The Principal Clerk is a new position, which was created when we eliminated the Finance Director position and created the principal clerk and part-time accountant positions.*

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7. IT Services are now allocated to the various departments/offices that use IT services, rather than only 1 IT budget line-item in the admin budget. This change will allow us to accurately view the total cost to operate each department.
8. NEMRC Services are now allocated to the various departments/offices that use NEMRC Software modules. This change will allow us to accurately view the total cost to operate each department.
9. The Town Clerk did not have a Deputy Clerk since her previous Deputy Clerk resigned last year. Recently, a new Deputy Clerk was hired.
10. A new department was created for Ascutney Water District reimbursements/expenses, which will allow us to receive revenue more accurately and more efficiently from the water district.
11. Recycling expenses have been broken out into 7 categories, including glass, freon, tires, fluorescent bulbs, metal, compost, and electronics so that we can see how much we're spending in recycling per recyclable.

### GENERAL FUND

#### **Revenues**

Overall, Revenue in the General Fund is at 24%. Revenue is slightly low due to the Appropriation Revenue of \$43,600 that was not removed from the admin budget during budget season last year. The Selectboard approved an appropriation that was not entered on the ballot. After the Town Meeting articles were approved and printed, we did not remove this \$43,600 in revenue. This will create a revenue shortage that will need to be filled with the prior year's fund balance.

Revenues appear slightly low in the Land Use Office. During the first quarter the Land Use Office collected 15% of their budgeted revenue. Listers Office Revenues are received in the Spring.

Town Clerk revenues are at 35%, which is 10% more than anticipated for the first quarter. Police Department revenues are at 34%, which is 9% higher than anticipated for the first quarter. Overall, everything appears healthy on the revenue side of the General Fund with the exception of the \$43,600 appropriation revenue that will not come in this year.

#### **Expenses**

Personnel expenses in the Administration Budget are at 24%, Finance personnel is at 24%, Listers Personnel is at 13.43%, Land Use personnel is at 17%, Police personnel is 35.69% (which will level off now that our former FT officer has retired in September), Town Clerk personnel is at 24%, and Library personnel is at 23%. The target for personnel after the first quarter is 25%.

Overall, in the Administration budget, expenses are at 31%, the Weathersfield Proctor Library is at 22%, Finance is at 23%, Town Clerk is at 20%, Listers is at 10%, Land Use is at 14%, Police is at 34%, and Fire Services are at 15%. Overall, in the General Fund expenses are at 25%, which is where expenses should be in the first quarter of the fiscal year.

### HIGHWAY FUND

#### **Revenues**

Overall, revenue in the Highway Fund is at 20%. This will change in the 2nd quarter as the first State Aid to Highway payment will be received.

#### **Expenses**

Overall, expenses in the Highway Fund are at 16.83%. Personnel is at 18%, which is 7% lower than anticipated for the first quarter. This is the result of the Highway Department not being fully staffed. Office expenses are at 44%, Utilities are at 24%, Highway Garage & Truck expenses are at 15%, Road Materials & Repairs is at 22%, Debt Service is at 0% (which will change when the payments for our loans are received/paid).

### SOLID WASTE FUND

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***Revenues***

*Overall, revenues in the Solid Waste Fund are at 33%. The Solid Waste Assessment revenue has not been posted to this account. These changes will be reflected in the next financial report.*

***Expenses***

*Expenses in the Solid Waste Fund are at 26%. Personnel is at 29% (4% more than anticipated for the first quarter), office expenses are at 5% (which will change significantly once Highway and Admin services is booked), utility expenses are at 11%, Tipping & Recycling expenses are at 31%, and insurance expenses are at 50%*

**11. MMH Repairs Financing**

Kingdom Cleaners submitted an estimate of \$4975 to clean the walls (but not finish them); Helie's Carpet submitted two estimates - \$2450 to repair the floor or \$11,790 to replace the flooring.

Mr. Gulnick and Mr. Fuller recommend paying \$7425 to repair the walls and the floor and to take the funds from the rainy-day fund as an emergency expense. The funds would be returned to the rainy-day fund after the audit confirms the fund balance.

There was some discussion about spending this money for repairs, but not resolving the source of the problem.

No motion was needed from the board for Mr. Gulnick to authorize the expense. The wall repair work starts tomorrow.

**12. Proposed Future Agenda Items**

- Long-term debt schedule
- Schedule for budget discussions

**13. Approve Warrants**

**Motion:** To approve the warrants for 10/18/2021 as follow:

|                             |                    |             |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| General Funds               | Operating Expenses | \$22,039.51 |
|                             | Payroll            | \$17,106.74 |
| Highway Fund                | Operating Expenses | \$39,487.74 |
|                             | Payroll            | \$6,670.75  |
| Solid Waste Management Fund |                    |             |
|                             | Operating Expenses | \$1,014.45  |
|                             | Payroll            | \$1,716.50  |
| Library                     | Operating Expenses | \$0.00      |
|                             | Payroll            | \$1,985.00  |
| Highway Grant               | Operating Expenses | \$2,128.00  |

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|              |                    |             |
|--------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Grand Totals | Operating Expenses | \$64,669.70 |
|              | Payroll            | \$27,478.99 |

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

It was noted that the Richard Marsh expense needed to be moved from the general fund to highway

**Vote:** All in favor

**14. Any Other Business**

There was no other business for the board to discuss.

**15. Adjourn**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting

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

**Vote:** All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
*deForest Bearse*

**WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD**

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Fuller, Chairperson

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Joseph Jarvis, Selector

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Kelly O'Brien, Clerk

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Paul Tillman, Selector

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Michael Todd, Vice- Chairperson