

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board

Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Tuesday, January 19, 2021
6:30 PM

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

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: (Unless otherwise noted, attendees joined the meeting online)

Annemarie Redmond	Lynn Esty (in person)	Carolyn Hier	Josh Dauphin
Josh Compo	Darrin Spaulding	Rosalie McNamara	Barbara Thomas
Benjamin Waters			

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.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Fuller called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

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

Mr. Fuller announced that January 26th will be Mr. Gulnick's one-year anniversary in the Town's employ. He said he appreciated Mr. Gulnick's hard work in a difficult year and was glad Mr. Gulnick had come to Weathersfield.

Mr. Gulnick thanked Mr. Fuller for the recognition. He said the meeting room will be set up for Town Meeting by the time of the February 2nd Select Board meeting. Each table will have an iPad on it with a camera set up to them, but no audio. There will be

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two projectors set up in the middle of the room and the tables will be in a big circle. We will be switching to the ZOOM platform for the next meeting.

Discussion turned to Town Meeting. The warning for the March meeting must be ready by January 31st. The Board may have to have another special meeting to give administration time to finalize everything. The Board decided to have the Town Meeting in March after all.

Motion: To hold the informational meeting (virtually) on Saturday, February 27th with all articles voted by Australian ballot on March 2nd.

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

The school meeting will be at 10:00 AM; the Town meeting will be at 12:30 PM. Every effort will be made to inform the voters about the virtual Town Meeting.

Vote: All in favor

There were no comments from citizens.

3. Review minutes from previous meetings – January 12, 2021

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. None

Motion: To approve

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

Vote: All in favor

4. Town Manager Report

The school is unable to nominate anyone for the Service Award this year because of COVID. (It is the school's turn to do it this year, so the Town would be doing it two years in a row.) Annmarie Christenson and John Arrison have provided Mr. Gulnick with a recommendation. The Board agreed to discuss it in executive session at the end of this meeting.

The new Town website is set to go live on January 20th. There will be fine-tuning over the course of the next few weeks.

There are a couple of other ongoing issues: the fire department contracts; 2014 purchase and sale agreement; training and refinement of the administration; draft policy proposals that have been put forward; transfer station negotiations; grant applications; the Tenney tree project; an rfp for the town (?).

5. FY22 Budget Proposals (24:29)

a. General Fund Overview

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The budget overview will be finalized once the budget is finalized. It will be available online for the Town residents to serve as a summary of the budget in narrative form.

The General Fund consists of the administration, listers, land use, police department, fire/emergency services, Town Clerk, finance, and the library. It doesn't not include the transfer station or the highway department.

The administration budget accounts for 94% of the revenue in the General Fund. The remaining departments account for the other 6%. Administration expenses account for 33% of the General Fund budget, whereas the library accounts for 8%; finance for 5%, Town Clerk for 7.5%; listers for 5%; land use for 4%; police for 21%; and fire/emergency services for 14%.

The overview provided charts to reflect the statistics above.

The general fund tax revenue has remained stable, increasing on average \$4,534 between FY18 to FY22.

Between FY18 and FY22 total revenue in the general fund has fluctuated on average \$281,078.

No changes are proposed for the FY22 total revenue.

There is an increase of \$2,046 in general fund total expenses over FY21.

The cost of IT services has been spread across all departments in the general fund to give a better indication of the cost of running each department and the services they use. NEMRC services have been broken out for each department as well. This accounts for a \$4,000-\$6,000 increase across all departments.

b. Fund Balance – General Fund

The fund balance as of June 30th is \$170,890. The Board had previously decided to use \$17,000 from the fund balance for a cruiser and \$17,486 to balance the FY21 budget. This leaves a balance of \$136,044 to be allocated.

Mr. Gulnick suggested the following:

- \$2,973 toward the FY22 budget
- \$50,000 for a contingency
- \$25,000 for police reserves
- \$8,071 for Martin Hall
- \$40,000 for fire apparatus acquisition
- \$10,000 for firefighting equipment
- \$136,044

Consensus of the Board – to put \$25,000 in police reserves.

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Fire apparatus acquisition reserves currently are at \$59,000. AVFD needs a new truck for \$225,000. The existing payment is at \$48,000. With \$100,000 down, the payment for the next truck would be \$16,000-\$17,000. At 2.5% interest we would save \$30,000.

There is \$20,000 in firefighting equipment and gear. Each department has spent \$15,000 on gear.

The Board discussed various options for allocating the surplus funds and ultimately agreed to take \$33,000 for tax relief and to decide on the rest at a later meeting. Mr. Gulnick asked if the Board agreed to \$25,000 for police reserves, \$33,000 for fire apparatus acquisition and \$10,000 for firefighting equipment. Mr. Fuller said he was.

c. General Fund Budget Reviews

5.c.i. FY22 Admin Budget

The administration budget accounts for 34% of expenditures in the general fund. Personnel reorganization in FY21 resulted in \$6,461 savings while allowing a 2% Admin/Finance wage increase.

The office expense budget has been reduced.

Administration Revenues for FY18-FY22 were presented and reviewed. The charts showed projected revenues and variances from previous years. The total revenue variance is \$7,430.

Administrative Expenses were similarly presented. The total expense variance is \$8,815.

Mr. Fuller pointed out that the tax revenue will decrease by the \$33,000 agreed upon in the discussion on the general fund surplus (above).

Motion: That we approve the administrative expense line at \$509,357.

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

Vote: All in favor

5.c.ii. FY22 Finance Budget

Finance accounts for 5% of the general fund budget.

The total finance revenue is \$74,901 with a variance of (\$37,611). Total finance expense is \$74,902 with a variance of (\$12,802).

Motion: To accept the finance FY21-22 for \$74,902 for expenses and taxes required.

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

Vote: All in favor

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5.c.iii. FY22 Listers Budget – 3rd Pass

An increase of \$1,615 is proposed for personnel expenses. Office expenses for this department have also increased in part due to sharing IT and NEMRC expenses, but also due to an increase in the Town parcel mapping.

Motion: To approve the listers expenses of \$61,096 with \$42,235 to be raised by taxes

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

Mr. Todd asked what it would cost to have NEMRC perform the duties. Mr. Gulnick said \$20,000 as a ballpark figure. However, there is no confirmation that NEMRC can meet all of the legal requirements of the listers office.

Town parcel mapping wasn't done last year because the funding for it had been removed from the budget (unbeknownst to the listers). It is a function that must be paid every year. Since it wasn't paid last year, we will have to pay twice the amount this year (\$6,000).

There was again much discussion about how the hours are divided amongst the three listers. Ms. Esty said it takes 45 hours of work a week to complete what must be done. This is amicably divided amongst the three listers.

The listers were asking for a small wage increase and had provided a spread sheet showing wages of various other similar towns to show where Weathersfield lister wages stand (as of FY19/20, the most recent data VLCT had to offer).

Mr. Arrison withdrew his motion; Mr. Todd withdrew his second.

Mr. Gulnick said \$73,877 would include NEMRC, IT and \$6,000 for mapping. The specific amount to be raised by taxes is \$42,285 plus \$12,642 which equals \$54,877 (which equals \$54,927...). This would include a 2.8% increase in wages. The wage increase was reduced to 2%, the numbers recalculated and moved.

Motion: To accept the listers budget of \$74,596 with \$55,596 to be raised by taxes

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

Vote: All in favor

5.c.iv. FY22 WWVFD Budget

In previous years there was a consolidated budget for both departments. Within that budget were expenses that were budgeted by the Town and there was an allocation for each department. Each department budgeted their allocation independently.

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Under the new contract, fire services have been broken into two budgets, and line items within each allocation have been accounted for.

WWVFD is proposing a \$2,905 increase in revenue.

FY22 contains the last payment on the truck.

Mr. Todd asked for an explanation of the \$7,059 increase in personnel expenses. Mr. Dauphin said it includes stipends for line officers for the yearly work that they do. The board expressed concern over the idea of paying line officers. Mr. Dauphin said previously this has been paid with hazmat money or through fundraising.

It was noted that the two fire department budgets differ in detail and the question was raised did the board intend to make the two the same.

At 9:00, Mr. Tillman motioned to extend the meeting for 30 minutes. Mr. Todd seconded the motion and all were in favor.

It was agreed to reduce the WWVFD personnel to a \$1,400 stipend for officers and \$750 for office administration; with AVFD having \$1,400 for the Chief and \$600 for the President.

Motion: To approve the fire services budget for both departments for \$211,581 with \$194,939 to be raised by taxes.

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

Mr. Fuller noted \$33,000 would be allocated from the general fund surplus to the wheel fund and \$10,000 for fire gear. There will be no need for special articles.

5.c.v. FY22 AVFD Budget

5.c.vi. FY22 Library Budget

Motion: To approve the library budget of \$125,614 with \$124,063 to be raised by taxes.

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

Vote: All in favor

5.c.vii. FY22 Transfer Station Budget

At 9:33 PM, Mr. Fuller motioned to extend the meeting 5 minutes. Mr. Jarvis seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Motion: To approve the transfer station enterprise operating budget of \$289,049

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

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Vote: All in favor

6. Weathersfield Website Review

7. Appointments

8. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 1/19/2021 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$19,653.56
	Payroll	\$21,666.44
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$17,377.11
	Payroll	\$30,258.04
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$10,650.98
	Payroll	\$3,485.16
Library	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
	Payroll	\$2,666.20
Grants	Operating Expenses	\$
Special Revenue	Operating Expenses	\$
MVP Healthcare January from 1/4/21 warrant		\$11,965.89
MES Open invoice from 1/4/21 warrant		\$2,120.00
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$61,767.54
	Payroll	\$58,075.84

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

The Twin Line towing bill was raised again. It was agreed to pay it.

Vote: All in favor

9. Any Other Business

10. Executive Session

The Board went into executive session for personnel at 9:40 PM. Action taken during executive session: A motion was made by Mike, seconded by John. The town manager has been employed with the town now for a full year, and has far exceeded our expectations on

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nearly every project taken on over the course of the year. For his hard work, dedication to the town, and our appreciation of the job he is doing, the board unanimously agreed on granting a onetime stipend of \$5,000 to the town manager. Due to the length of time until our next meeting, the board authorizes the chairman to sign off on the check (instead of waiting for the entire board). The vote was unanimously in favor. Dave brought the board out of executive session at 9:45.

11. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 9:46PM

Made by: John Arrison **Second:** Michael Todd

Vote: Unanimous

The meeting adjourned at

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

N. John Arrison, Selector

David Fuller, Chairperson

Joseph Jarvis, Clerk

Paul Tillman

Michael Todd, Vice- Chairperson