

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD

Select Board
Martin Memorial Hall
5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT
Monday, June 21, 2021
6:30 PM
REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

Select Board Members Present: David Fuller
Joseph Jarvis
Kelly O'Brien
Paul Tillman

Select Board Members Absent: Michael Todd

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Others Present:

Susan Boyer	Rhonda Batchelder		
Steve Hier	Nicole Gagnon		
Ray Stapleton	Joseph Bublat		

1. Call to Order

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

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

Citizen Comments

Rhonda Batchelder, ride manager for an upcoming (horse) ride, in August said she wanted to use the Crown Point Road from Wellwood Orchard to Reservoir Road. Beth Hunton claims she owns the trail and claims that she can grant or deny use of it. Ms. Batchelder asked for clarification of the status of the trail.

Susan Boyer said she thought it is a Class 4 road. According to her research, the Select Board accepted the entire Crown Point Road (where it goes through the Town) as a town road in April of 1782. In 2010, the Select Board retained ownership of it as a Class 4 town road. The road is on the current Town Highway Map. Dr. Boyer asked what is the appropriate response when they are being denied the use of the road.

Mr. Fuller agreed that the Crown Point Road is a town road. He said the board would take the inquiry under advisement and would not act on it at this meeting as it was not

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on the agenda. He asked the Town Manager and Highway Department Director to look into it.

There were no other comments from citizens.

Comments from Board Members

Mr. Jarvis had a suggestion from “Lisa” that citizen applications to volunteer board positions not be included in the board packet so as not to make private, personal information available to the public.

Mr. Jarvis gave a shout-out to the Police and K-9 unit for their recent activity. He said it has proven to be worthwhile.

Mr. Tillman repeated Mr. Jarvis’s shout-out to the Police Department for everything they have done in the past few weeks and their support to other towns.

Mr. Tillman asked that item 23 be moved up on the agenda as the applicants were present at the meeting.

Mr. Fuller said he had received some comments about the grounds at the Center Meetinghouse. He said he is also concerned about the grounds at the Grout Cemetery. He asked the board to consider \$2500 for each site “to tend the ground better, including soil testing and to have a little bit stronger plan” for the grounds. It is to be discussed on another agenda.

Town Manager

The manager had no comments.

3. Review minutes from previous meetings – 6/7/2021

Additions/corrections/deletions:

a. None

Motion: To approve the minutes of June 7, 2021

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

Vote: All in favor

4. Emergency Management Director Announcement

Mr. Fuller stated that the Governor has lifted the state of emergency. He urged everyone to be considerate of each other in the Town Office.

Mr. Fuller moved item #23 to this point on the agenda.

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(#23) Appointments

Applicants Nicole Gagnon and Joseph Bublat were present at the meeting.

Motion: To appoint Nicole Gagnon to the Budget Committee

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Motion: To appoint Nicole Gagnon to the Parks and Recreation Commission

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Motion: To appoint Joseph Bublat to the Parks and Recreation Commission

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Motion: To appoint Joseph Bublat to the Planning Committee

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

Vote: Unanimous in favor

Mr. Jarvis thanked the appointees for volunteering.

5. Town Manager Report

Walter Morancy has resigned from the Police Department and is retiring from law enforcement.

Mr. Gulnick welcomed Officer Ryan Prince and K-9 AJ to the Police Department. Mr. Fuller said he recognized the value of a K-9 unit, but worries that it will constantly be called out of town and is concerned about budget stress. Mr. Tillman asked what his recommendation might be. Mr. Fuller said he didn't have one. Mr. Fuller said the car would have to be retrofitted for an animal. Mr. Gulnick said the state police donated the cage and our officers installed it so there was no cost to retrofit the vehicle.

It was noted that we have received the new cruiser. It's in service now, without its full array of bells and whistles which are due to be added next week. Mr. Fuller said the board will now have to determine what to do "with the third one".

There have been two resignations in the Highway Department. Advertising for one of the positions is being held while the board conducts a mechanic study. No applications have been received for the advertised position.

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Rosalie McNamara resigned from her position as executive assistant to finance. Mr. Gulnick said he has had “productive conversations with a variety of resources and are developing a plan for Finance.”

Mr. Gulnick is working with the fire departments to develop the 10-year capital plans.

Ascutney Fire has accepted an offer for the 1986 ladder truck, funds from which will go into the reserves.

Mr. Gulnick asked to move agenda item #14 to this point on the agenda as Mr. Hier was present at the meeting.

(#14) Credit Card Policy – Second reading

Town Treasurer, Steve Hier, stated that he had incorporated the two changes that had been requested at the first reading; he added “or undocumented” in paragraph 3 and removed “finance director” from the last paragraph. There will be 5 cards in use, each with a different name on them. Each card will be authorized for use by the cardholder or their designated second. The credit card will still belong to the town. The maximum amount on each card will be \$2,000 with a total of \$10,000 between all five cards.

Mr. Jarvis asked that there be a periodic analysis of credit card use. Mr. Gulnick had no objections to the request.

Mr. Hier asked that the Board to adopt the credit card resolution so the new cards could be distributed and in use by the start of the new fiscal year.

Motion: To adopt the *Business Card Resolution Form for the Town of Weathersfield*

Made by: Ms. O’Brien **Second:** Mr. Jarvis

Vote: All in favor

6. General Fund Year-End Budget

For the purpose of this update, Mr. Gulnick removed the transfers to reserves and the fund balance from last year to provide better clarity. The \$30,000 special article was also removed from the Topside summary for the same reason.

Mr. Gulnick noted the emergency management line is no longer in the fire department budget due to the complexity of funding fluctuations during the pandemic. It is located in the administration budget for now. The LGER line was created to record grant funds and expenses. There were some complications due to COVID-related expenses having been incurred in FY20 and the grant funds not being received until FY21. There is \$4,003 remaining in this line.

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There is a projected surplus in revenue of \$57,267 and a projected decrease in expenses of \$31,517, with an overall project surplus in the General Fund of \$88,784.

There was some confusion about a new line in the budget for appropriation revenue/expense to cover \$43,000 (\$30,000 for highway) in appropriations voted on by the Board but not placed on the ballot. Mr. Gulnick will provide details in a memorandum to the Board to clarify.

Mr. Fuller said no funds will be moved at this point in time as the fiscal year has not yet ended. The discussion on what to do with any surpluses will happen at a later date.

7. Highway Fund Year-End Budget

There is a projected difference in highway expenses of \$41,633 resulting from some grant revenue and more State aid to highway than expected.

On the expense side, Mr. Gulnick stated, "When the Highway Budget was proposed and approved by the Weathersfield Voters we anticipated \$1,241,557 in expenses, of which \$946,770 was to be raised by property taxation. For review purposes I have excluded the fund balance and overall, we anticipate expending \$1,056,353. In the Topside summary, the projected actual is \$1,146,000 which includes a proposed transfer of \$90,000 to highway capital maintenance and improvements. By transferring this \$90,000 to Highway Capital Maintenance & Improvements, we will be able to fund the Kendricks Corner Road Paving Project this summer in FY22" (which is up for debate by the Board).

Approved: \$1,156,801

Projection with Reserve Transfer: \$1,146,353

Projection without Reserve Transfer: \$1,056,353

Projected Difference with Reserve Transfer: \$10,449

Projected Difference without Reserve Transfer: \$100,449

NET With Reserve Transfer: \$52,082

NET Without Reserve Transfer: \$142,082

There were no questions from the Board. Mr. Fuller said the Board would not decide on the \$90,000 at this meeting.

Mr. Fuller asked why these budgets are constantly generating surpluses. He said he wanted to learn which line item or items are continually overbudgeted.

Mr. Gulnick said two people resigned resulting in underspending of \$60,000. This cannot be anticipated when creating the budget. We also received a grant of \$38,414 and \$40,000 more in highway aid than anticipated.

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Mr. Stapleton said there were two grants – one for \$20,000, the other for \$38,000. They were for work that was done before June 30, 2020. Reimbursement wasn't until 2021.

Treasurer Hier said he thought there was a posting error. Mr. Gulnick said he hadn't included it in the report. Mr. Hier said he thought the \$38,000 was also a mis-posting. Mr. Gulnick said that makes for \$38,000 less that has to be dealt with. (He just learned about it at this meeting.)

Mr. Fuller said the paving project was going to require \$136,000 from multiple funding sources and fiscal years. He also said he didn't agree with putting all of the surplus funds into reserves, preferring instead to give some back in tax relief.

8. Solid Waste Fund Year-End Budget

Mr. Gulnick stated, "Year-end Solid Waste Revenues are projected at \$301,501. (There is still an outstanding bill from Downers 4 Corners for \$14,000.)"

Year-end Solid Waste Expenditures are projected at \$295,605.

Total net of \$5,896.

Mr. Fuller said he had heard the Downers store did not have any tickets to sell. Attendants at the transfer station are being given in IOU. He called for a discussion about how tickets are sold. He felt selling tickets is of no benefit to the store but a valuable service to the Town. He wondered if an incentive would help. He asked everyone to think about ideas.

Mr. Fuller said Mr. Gulnick and Mr. Tillman had reached an agreement with West Windsor to work things out. Apparently, there was some concern that that might not happen. He said this is very good news for the relationship between our towns. We don't want anyone to leave, but we want everything to be fair. Mr. Tillman said West Windsor is definitely willing to work with us.

9. Kendricks Corner Paving Project Bid Results

Mr. Gulnick stated, "After holding several site visits on Kendricks Corner Road and speaking to residents there is an urgent and compelling case to prioritize the paving of this road. On May 5, 2021, we advertised an RFP to pave Kendricks Corner Road. A Pre-Bid Conference was held at Martin Memorial Hall on May 18, 2021, at 10AM. Bids were received June 4, 2021, at 2:00 pm. Bids were opened on June 7, 2021, at 2:30 pm publicly. The Town Clerk certified the receipt and opening of all four (4) bids we received." Pike Industries was the low bidder at \$136,371.

Mr. Gulnick recommended transferring \$86,371 from this year's fund balance to capital reserves, then pull money from the reserves in FY22 and combine it with the \$50,000

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that's allotted for paving in FY22 and award it to Pike Industries for this paving project. However, he said he understood the board's hesitance to allocate a fund balance before the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Fuller stated he was not opposed to the project, only the funding of it. He asked if there was an expiration date of the numbers. Mr. Stapleton said it was FY22. Mr. Fuller asked for feedback on paying cash for paving or taking out a loan.

Mr. Gulnick said the auditors are coming next week for a pre-audit. This should help refine year-end projections.

Mr. Tillman asked Mr. Stapleton for a list of roads in order of greatest need so as to justify spending this money on this project.

10. Transfer Station Update

Mr. Tillman read from a letter written by Mr. Gulnick on June 21st: "We held several discussions with West Windsor since our June 7th meeting. WW Selectboard Chair Edwin Johnson and team have decided to move forward to enter an allocation in their budget for Transfer Station Use for FY22. Please remember, our FY22 begins on July 1, 2021, and their FY22 begins on January 1, 2022."

Mr. Tillman said there's no guarantee that the article will pass. (West Windsor's fiscal year begins on January 1st.) Their budget is voted on in March.

Mr. Gulnick said they are uncertain as to how much the allocation will be. He believes it will be between \$30,000 and \$35,000. The allocation formula must still be finalized. However, West Windsor has agreed to put this in their FY22 budget. There was much positive feedback on their wanting to pass this in the budget.

Mr. Tillman said we must persist in enforcing permit stickers for the transfer station.

Mr. Jarvis asked if the allocation would be a separate article or if it will be a part of their budget. Mr. Gulnick was uncertain.

West Windsor permit stickers will be \$75 between July 1st and December 31st (for us to charge them). West Windsor will charge their residents \$100 per sticker. West Windsor will pay Weathersfield \$30,000 (e.g.), then West Windsor residents will pay \$100 for each sticker. West Windsor is attempting to create a system where only those residents who use the transfer station actually pay for the transfer station. They will put a revenue line in their budget of \$20,000 and an expense line of \$30,000. They will attempt to get that money back in revenue and net \$10,000.

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Mr. Tillman said we will get a payment for services based on a formula that hasn't been finalized yet. He said it is up to West Windsor to sort out how the allocation is paid for.

Right now, the West Windsor town clerk comes to the town office to buy stickers. We currently charge them \$65 each. They have asked us to increase that to \$75.

Mr. Jarvis sees that we're doubling the cost to the people that use the transfer station. He said he would vote that down if that were happening to him. He said if it works for them, we should do the same thing.

Mr. Fuller said we charge \$50 to every parcel in town. Mr. Jarvis asked why don't we charge \$100 to only the people in our town who use it?

Mr. Gulnick said we don't micro-manage these decisions in any town. Once we have the equal-payment formula, West Windsor's allocation will be based on that. We give them their stickers; they allocate them to their town in whatever way they deem appropriate.

Mr. Fuller said this was the first he'd learned that we charge \$65 for tickets to West Windsor. He thought they paid the same as Weathersfield.

Mr. Tillman said we had to look at the total amount each town has to contribute, not each individual sticker.

Mr. Fuller said to take the total operating cost of the transfer station and divide it by the total number of parcels in the three towns. It came to \$42 per sticker. Mr. Gulnick said West Windsor does not want to do it that way and we cannot tell West Windsor how to have their residents pay for their share of the transfer station. We can only lay claim to how much their fair share is based on a formula that equalizes the 3 towns.

Mr. Fuller and Mr. Jarvis both opposed the proposal. Mr. Tillman asked them what they would like he and Mr. Gulnick to do. There was no answer to the question.

Mr. Fuller said to find out how many people in Weathersfield take curbside.

Mr. Jarvis said to go forward with the recommendations, but collect needed data over the next year.

Mr. Tillman asked if we were to go with the status quo or not. His question was not answered.

11. Set FY22 Transfer Station Permit Sticker Fee

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See discussion above.

12. Food Waste Disposal

It had been suggested that the town create a new \$1 punch ticket to cover the cost of disposing of food waste. Mr. Fuller objected, preferring instead to use the existing punch tickets of \$3.50 per bag, on the grounds that it would be too much work to create a new set of punch cards. He said to let the administration handle it.

13. Mechanic Study

This topic was tabled.

14. Credit Card Policy – Second reading

(Discussed above)

15. Disposing of Town-Owned Equipment

The town has 7 air conditioners to get rid of. There is no place to donate them and no other town building needs them.

Motion: To sell the 7 used air conditioners as the administration sees fit to advertise.

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

Vote: All in favor

16. Solid Waste District Appointment

Motion: To approve Brandon Gulnick as the Solid Waste District representative and Paul Tillman as the alternate.

Made by: Ms. O'Brien **Second:** Mr. Jarvis

Vote: All in favor

17. Personnel Policy Discussion

This discussion was continued from a previous discussion. Holidays are all set for this year. There was no other discussion.

18. Work-At-Home Policy

Mr. Fuller said he felt this arrangement is acceptable for emergency situations, but he said he feels strongly that if one works for the public, one's obligation is to be in the office. It was unclear where this policy is in the reading process.

19. ARPA Discussion

Mr. Fuller said there is a lot of money coming into the town and he wanted a special meeting dedicated to discussing only that. Further discussion was tabled.

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20. 2014 Purchase & Sale Agreement

Mr. Fuller asked everyone to be sure to make it to the June 29th Board of Abatement meeting. He said it would be the most serious meeting in Weathersfield history. He asked each selector to write to each board (of abatement) member to attend. He wants any member on the Board of Abatement barred from the discussion if they don't attend the first meeting. Ms. O'Brien wants Board of Abatement members to see the comprehensive summary written by Mr. Gulnick.

At 9:02 PM, Ms. O'Brien motioned to extend the meeting for 15 minutes. Mr. Tillman seconded the motion and all were in favor.

21. Set Public Hearing – Zoning Map

Motion: To set the date of a public hearing for July 19th to adopt the revised future land use map

Made by: Ms. O'Brien **Second:** Mr. Jarvis

Vote: All in favor

22. Proposed Future Agenda Items

23. Appointments

(Appointments were made earlier in the meeting.)

- a. Budget Committee – Nicole Gagnon
- b. Parks and Recreation – Nicole Gagnon, Joseph Bublat
- c. Planning Commission – Joseph Bublat

24. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for June 21, 2021 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$56,023.33
	Payroll	\$19,985.28
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$21,168.68
	Payroll	\$8,147.41
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$9,176.89
	Payroll	\$1,496.65
Library	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
	Payroll	\$1,937.70

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Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$86,368.90
	Payroll	\$31,567.04

Made by: Mr. Tilman **Second:** Ms. O'Brien
Vote: All in favor

25. Any Other Business

26. Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn the meeting

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

Vote: All in favor

The meeting adjourned at 9:14 PM

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

David Fuller, Chairperson

Joseph Jarvis, Selector

Kelly O'Brien, Clerk

Paul Tillman, Selector

Michael Todd, Vice- Chairperson