

TOWN OF WEATHERSFIELD, VERMONT

SELECT BOARD

Select Board

Martin Memorial Hall

5259 Route 5, Ascutney VT

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

6:30 PM

REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

Select Board Members Present: David Fuller, Joseph Jarvis (online), Kelly O'Brien, Paul Tillman, Michael Todd

Select Board Members Absent:

Brandon Gulnick, Town Manager

Others Present:

Table with 4 columns and 3 rows listing names: Howard Beach, Ray Stapleton, Barb Thomas.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Fuller called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

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

Board Members: Mr. Fuller said the State of Vermont has issued new Covid 19 guidelines in light of the recent surge. He asked that everyone wear a mask indoors when they can't be six feet apart. Mr. Fuller also referred to Nathalie Whitney's comments about reciting the pledge of allegiance before each select board meeting as the school board does. Mr. Fuller agreed this was a good idea and asked the board to implement it starting with this meeting.

Town Manager: Mr. Gulnick read a letter from Steve Aikenhead complimenting the Town on the music series at Hoisington Field throughout the summer and on the condition of Hoisington Field itself.

Citizens: There were no comments from citizens.

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Pledge of Allegiance

3. Review minutes from previous meetings – 8/16/2021

Mr. Fuller said someone had questioned the executive session that preceded the last select board meeting. He said it was an emergency meeting and therefore required no notice. The executive session was called to address a personnel issue. No action was taken and Mr. Tillman had taken minutes.

Motion: To accept the minutes of the emergency meeting on 8/16/21

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

Vote: All in favor

Motion: To accept the minutes of the 8/16/2021 (regular) meeting

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

Vote: All in favor

Mr. Fuller noted that there had been an accident involving a member of the highway department. He asked how the person was doing, to which Mr. Stapleton said he was resting comfortably. Mr. Fuller said the Town is concerned about his welfare and assured everyone the Town would take care of him.

4. Town Manager Report

Highway Department

The Highway Department continues its work to improve drainage on the Town's roads through grading, ditching, hydroseeding and culverts. The goal is to get water off of the roads as quickly as possible to prevent erosion and washouts. Mr. Gulnick showed photographs of South Mountain Road and Gulf Road as examples of what the crew has been doing. This work is being paid for through Grants in Aid (\$29,300).

The highway department has been awarded \$576,520 in grant funds from various sources in FY22. The funds are being used for engineering, culvert work, resurfacing and crack sealing on over a dozen roads throughout Town. The Board thanked Mr. Stapleton for his work in securing these funds.

Weathersfield Music Series

There have been nine performances this summer – three more remain (Friday evenings, 6-8 PM). Mr. Gulnick urged everyone to bring a folding chair and enjoy the music. Shout out to Dunkin Donuts and Dominos Pizza for their donations at two of the performances.

VOREC Grant

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The Town has partnered with the Chamber of Commerce and the towns of Chester and Ludlow to submit an application to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation Vermont Outdoor Recreation Communities Grant Program. The project includes, “the design and build of the remaining trail system to complete the goal of a desirable human powered trail network for the public”.

Tenney Memorial

The Tenney memorial sign was received today; the project is essentially complete except for installation of the new signage.

5. Martin Memorial Hall Repairs

The floor in the basement of the Town Office is bulging significantly in front of the kitchen. An insurance claim has been filed with VLCT. Mr. Gulnick met today with the adjusters. Pictures have been taken and the damage assessed. The information has been taken back to VLCT and we await their decision as to whether or not we have a claim.

The Board shared various theories on what the problems might be and how best to solve them, including adding perimeter drainage and extending the roofline to prevent water from collecting around the foundation.

The Trustees have been informed of the situation and will be kept apprised of developments.

All agree to wait until the status of the claim is known before deciding on a course of action, although Mr. Fuller urged being prepared to act quickly once the decision is known. The Board and the Trustees are to be notified right away when the decision is received.

6. Highway Department Radios

Mr. Gulnick said Chief Spaulding is offering to provide 6-7 radios to the highway department and the use of their repeater. We would need to purchase an additional 6 radios (\$400-\$500 per radio), but we would have no repeater expenses.

Mr. Stapleton prefers the digital radio option. Two options are offered -

- Option 1 – leasing radios with access to an established network
- Option 2 – create our own network and own the radios

Mr. Gulnick said we have received three quotes, but each quote offers a different solution.

Mr. Fuller prefers a single system that all departments can access. However, police and fire cannot be on the same system. Mr. Stapleton said that the highway department would be kicked off the fire department radios in an emergency.

Leasing provides the greatest degree of flexibility.

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Motion: To accept the 1st proposal from CVC for the radios for a two-year contract not to exceed \$11,070

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

Mr. Stapleton said he would still like to get the radios from the fire department in addition to the leased radios.

Mr. Todd recommended that the Board provide some type of contingency to the expense and suggested 15% of the \$11,070.

Mr. Tillman agreed to amend his motion to say \$12,500 to cover the 15% contingency. Mr. Jarvis accepted the amendment.

Mr. Fuller contested the amendment saying that it wasn't in the bid. He asked where the money would come from to pay for this. He questioned whether or not the bid was still valid. Mr. Gulnick said it could come from the highway budget or the fund balance. Mr. Fuller said he could not support that.

Vote on the motion: Mr. Fuller and Ms. O'Brien voted no; all others voted in favor

Mr. Gulnick said he would work with Mr. Hier to create a line in the budget for this expense.

7. Charging for Food Waste

Last year it cost the Town \$8,112 to dispose of food waste. At the June meeting, the Board recommended that we start charging for the cost and left it to the administration to work out the details. Mr. Gulnick said he is unable to set a rate without direction from the Board.

The Board discussed various options and methods for charging for food waste disposal. Public feedback was against charging \$3.75 for a gallon of food waste and the Board was concerned that the Downers store would be resistant to having to keep track of a different punch card, one dedicated to just food waste (although Mr. Gulnick assured the Board that our relationship with the store had improved and keeping track of a separate set of tickets would not be a problem). In the end it was agreed to go with a dedicated card for food waste that charges \$1 per gallon.

Motion: To create a green card with 10 \$1 punches to be used for compost

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

Barb Thomas asked why can't we compost the food waste ourselves and then sell the finished product? The answer was that we lack the resources and time to manage the waste stream.

It was agreed to reach out to other area stores for sales of tickets.

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There has been a problem with people bringing their food waste in plastic bags. This ends up being a nightmare for the transfer station personnel who have to extract the waste from the bags. It was agreed that this is unacceptable. Mr. Stapleton said public education and outreach from Mary O'Brian does help. Ms. O'Brian also has compostable plastic bags, which is also a useful solution.

Vote on the motion: All in favor

8. Vote to Appoint Alexander Taft as Interim Land Use Administrator

Motion: To appoint Alexander Taft as the Town's interim Land Use Administrator

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

It was noted for the record that the Planning Commission recommended Mr. Taft be appointed for this position.

Vote: All in favor

9. Appoint Barbara Thomas as Lister

Motion: To appoint Barbara Thomas as lister to fill an unexpired term

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

Vote: All in favor

10. Vote to Appoint NEMRC for Assessor Services for 1 Year

Motion: To appoint NEMRC for assessor services for 1 year (up to \$24,000 per year)

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

Vote: All in favor

11. Land Use Update

Mr. Gulnick revised the job advertisement by removing references to full or part time and by removing the compensation amount and has received 17 applications. He will close the advertisement at the end of the week and convene the interview team. The team will receive all the applications and make their recommendations on who they think should be interviewed. The Planning Commission will get all of the applications as well as the team's recommendations.

The possibility of combining assessor clerical duties with the Land Use Administrator duties to create a full-time position remains undecided.

12. ARPA Discussion

Weathersfield is to receive \$781,093 in ARPA funds. These funds must be spent by year end 2026.

Mr. Gulnick said we have much time to discuss how best to use the funds.

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Mr. Fuller would like to see \$300 go to each resident in Town. He wants to be certain that expenditure of the funds benefits all town residents.

VLCT suggests holding public meetings to gather ideas and suggestions.

Mr. Gulnick offered some suggestions:

1. Setting aside \$50,000 to provide small grants to local businesses
2. Fire department radios
3. Act 64 work – ditching and culverts on Bowen Hill and Goulden Ridge (highest priority roads)
4. Building an addition on the highway garage to store waste oil
5. New salt shed
6. Improvements in the Ascutney Water District, including water meters and replacement water lines – a \$758,000 project that could be funded from several sources using ARPA funds to leverage other funding (State grant funds and reserves)
7. \$75,000 to the library for reconfiguring the building to respond to the pandemic
8. \$10,000 to the Police Department for essential workers' pay

Discussion to be continued...

13. Proposed Future Agenda Items

- Paving in Kendricks Corners this year
- Final budget numbers for last year
- Budget and healthcare discussions

14. Approve Warrants

Motion: To approve the warrants for 9/7/2021 as follow:

General Funds	Operating Expenses	\$50,689.41
	Payroll	\$20,855.79
Highway Fund	Operating Expenses	\$30,554.95
	Payroll	\$14,147.02
Solid Waste Management Fund		
	Operating Expenses	\$15,108.64
	Payroll	\$2,326.79
Library	Operating Expenses	\$0.00
	Payroll	\$2,977.50

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Equipment Grant	Operating Expenses	\$2,388.60
Grand Totals	Operating Expenses	\$98,741.60
	Payroll	\$40,307.10

Made by: Mr. Todd **Second:** Mr. Tillman
Vote: All in favor

15. Any Other Business

16. Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
deForest Bearse

WEATHERSFIELD SELECTBOARD

David Fuller, Chairperson

Joseph Jarvis, Selector

Kelly O'Brien, Clerk

Paul Tillman, Selector

Michael Todd, Vice- Chairperson