

Minutes of December 28, 2015 Regular Select Board Meeting.

Present: Board Members Bill Hall, Carl Russell and Lisa Hill. Others present: Town Manager Keith Arlund, Assistant Town Manager Abbie Sherman, Jose Lazo, and Geneva Gaiko.

Chairman Hall called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Approval of the Agenda: Agenda was approved with a request from Carl Russell that an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters be scheduled for the next meeting.

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

Reports, Motions, and Ordinances:

1. Matters Associated with Annual Report:
 - a. Review of Updated General Fund Budget. Bill Hall felt that the increase of the base budget at 8% was too large and asked that the following items be considered for reduction: diesel, roadside mowing, sand, auditing services, health insurance. He further requested that \$140,000 of highway rehabilitation be moved to a special article on the Warning. Russell agreed but asked that special articles be included on the warning for many of the other items suggested for reduction. Arlund will review the health insurance, looking towards increased employee contribution. The Board will make further review of the budget at their next meeting. Jose Lazo requested that the draft budgets be made available on the Town website for public review. Draft budgets will be made available once they have been provided to the Board. It was noted that the budget amounts for the Human Services Appropriations had not yet been reviewed by that committee.

The Board acknowledged receipt of appropriation requests from White River Partnership and Bethel Historical Society (BHS). BHS requested an increase from \$500 to \$750 or a reduction in their Town Hall rent. After discussion, the Board denied both the request for an increased appropriation and reduction in rent.
 - b. Draft Warning. Hall requested further clarification for the public on the articles addressing possible addition of Selectboard members.
 - c. Selectboard's Report. Russell discussed with the Board the possibility of highlighting public service points of information so that it would be more visible to the public.
 - d. Draft Town Report. Hall requested a follow-up from Arlund regarding the delinquent water and sewer accounts. Arlund advised there are a few accounts that may be appropriate for the Board to abate. Many have agreements in place; others will go to tax sale in February. Regarding other aspects of the draft Town Report, Sherman advised that she incorporated as many of the Town Meeting Committee's suggestions as possible, but there were a few that just were not possible to accommodate.
2. Review of Sludge Disposal Proposal. The Board was provided with a 5-year agreement from Dimmick Wastewater Services for sludge disposal. Lisa Hill was reluctant to agree to the contract due to potential cost increases. Russell requested that the agreement be revised so that the Town will have an opportunity to review transportation and disposal cost increases. Arlund will work with Tim Mills and Dimmick to address the Board's concerns.
3. Town Manager's Report:
 - a. Status Update of Action Items.
 - i. There are 11 properties moving towards tax sale.
 - ii. The new bookkeeper is now onboard.
 - iii. Arlund has received information from the Vermont League of Cities & Towns regarding an updated model Class 4 Highway & Trail Policy.
 - iv. Hill inquired regarding the Constable position. Arlund has interviewed 2 out of 3 of the candidates.
 - v. Hill requested a bracket be placed at the bottom of the Church Street bridge as an alternate location for the speed sign. Jose Lazo inquired as to whether the Town had considered using solar power and cameras. Arlund advised that both options were cost prohibitive. Russell would like to see the Town follow-up with enforcement of speed violations.

Minutes and Communications:

1. Selectboard Minutes of December 14, 2015. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Carl Russell, and unanimously carried to approve the December 14, 2015 Selectboard minutes.

Any Other Business Necessary to Come Before the Board:

1. Hall brought it to the Board's attention that the Town doesn't not presently have a policy accepting postmarked checks for utilities, only taxes. He believes it would be sensible to have the same policy for both. Motion by Lisa Hill, seconded by Carl Russell, and unanimously carried update the Town policy to include language accepting postmarked payments for both taxes and utilities.
2. Arlund discussed with the Board an issue that has arisen due to delayed changes in Current Use allocations for a number of properties. The Town is required to issue a revised property tax bill for those properties, resulting in additional taxes being due. Each property owner has been advised of their rights regarding grievance procedures. The Board advised Arlund to redistribute the additional amounts due in whatever manner is easiest for the Town for collection purposes.

At 6:55 PM, Lisa Hill made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Carl Russell, and unanimously carried.

Bill Hall

Carl Russell

Lisa Hill