

APPROVED MINUTES
SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF BENSON, VT
February 6th, 2023, 7pm

Selectboard:

Guy Charlton (Chair), Ron Stewart Jr., John Hill, Jack Helm, and Brad Barrett

Others:

Heidi Chandler (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Carrie LaFond (Selectboard Assistant), Lisa Fontaine (Assistant Town Clerk)

Public: Steve Murray, Cheryl Murray, Jon Dodd, Elwin and Yavonne Smead

Call to Order: Guy Charlton (Chair) called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Approved Agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda written was made by John Hill and seconded by Ron Stewart Jr., motion was passed

Public Comment:

Question regarding article 11 on the Town Meeting Warning for \$5,000 for the reappraisal fund should the Town be spending this much on a Town wide reappraisal and is it needed? Discussion on whether the State mandates the reappraisal and consequences of not having a reappraisal. Question also asked if the \$5,000 was not used does it go into the general fund. Answer: No, the article states its intended purpose can not be used for anything else.

Update on the Website for the Town it is at substantial completion and the Facebook page is up and running. Cheryl Murray is still looking for landscape pictures of the Town if anyone has some, they would like to share please get ahold of her.

Discussion on the property damage to the Smead's land from the last storms plowing and the ditch on Frazier Hill has been filled in so water is not running off onto the Smead's land and causing damage. Discussion on a solution to the plowing issue.

Approve Selectboard Minutes:

Motion to approve January 22nd, 2023, Selectboard minutes as amended by John hill., second by Ron Stewart Jr. Motion passed.

Motion to approve January 23rds, 2023, Selectboard minutes as amended by John hill., second by Ron Stewart Jr. Motion passed.

Motion to approve January 30th's, 2023, Selectboard minutes as amended by John hill., second by Ron Stewart Jr. Motion passed. Brad Barrett abstained from the vote.

Fire Department:

Motion by John Hill to appoint Tom Newman as Assistant Fire Chief, second by Ron Stewart Jr., motion passed.

Sewer Commissioners:

Motion by Brad Barrett to recess as the Board of Selectmen and reconvene as the Board of Sewer Commissioners, second by John Hill, motion passed.

Discussion on capacity of the Sewer Plant for allocations

Motion by Guy Charlton (Chair) to grant Carole Fortier parcel number 10.101.3 a sewer allocation for up to two years with a 1 year option to extend for construction to hook up, second by John Hill, motion passed.

Motion by Brad Barrett to recess as the Board of Sewer Commissioners and reconvene as the Board of Selectmen, second by John Hill, motion passed.

Highway Department:**Road Foreman Brad Barrett:**

- Cutting limbs and filling in holes
- Maintenance on the chipper
- Started excavator repairs- called for a price on track.
- Mac is still at Avalanche waiting for parts.
- Salt shed is full.
- Hauling in sand as weather permits

Transfer Station: a

- Two dumpsters out last week
- Discussion with Pam Clap there are approximately 90 homes in West Haven that would like to come to the Benson transfers station, would cause about a 20% increase.
- Benson would have to have their permit amended.
- West haven residents would have to pay more than Benson residents because the stickers and permits only cover half of the expenses for the transfer station.
- Also, must have the permit amended the Town is over on electronics tons.
- Look into seeing if ANR would allow two dumpsters for storage to make sure dumpsters go out completely full.

Pay Bills:

Motion by John Hill to pay regular bills to the amount of \$19,935.93 and regular Payroll in the amount of \$10,336.07, second by Ron Stewart Jr, Brad Barrett abstained, Jack Helm objected, motion carried.

Motion by John Hill to pay Highway Payroll in the amount of \$6,136.71 second by Ron Stewart Jr. , motion passed. Brad Barrett abstained from the motion.

Town Clerk Report:

- Heidi Chandler Town Clerk/Treasurer provided the board with financial reports.
- Question can the Girl Scouts could sell cookies at Town Meeting, Answer: yes, but must be outside the meeting room.
- Question can The Benson Family Day committee sell snacks and coffee at Town Meeting? Answer: Yes, they are a Town organization.
- Aubuchon's need an updated list of people able to make purchases for the Town. The Selectboard agreed by consensus to Heidi Chandler's (Town Clerk) list of updates to remove Wesley Orr, Jeff Nobel, Ed Tracy, and Donald Dufour and add Brad Barrett, Heidi Chandler, and Jeff Jordan. (See list in file)
- Question asked if there was a date Town reports would be available yet? Answer: No

Motion by John Hill to move the regularly scheduled selectboard meeting of February 20th to February 21st at 7pm, second by Ron Stewart Jr., motion passed.

Library:

The library received two quotes for the library floor replacement. One from Green Flooring and one from Tim Charron. The library recommends Tim Charron. The library has \$3,900 to put towards the new floor and would require \$3,100 from the Building Maintenance fund.

Motion by Guy Charlton (Chair) to hire Tim Charron to replace the floor in the library using \$3,900 from the library funds and \$3,100 from the Building Maintenance fund, second by Brad Barrett, motion passed.

Excess Weight Permits:

Lathrop Forest Products, Spafford and Sons and Bournes Energy are requesting an excess weight permit.

Motion by Brad Barrett for the (Chair) Guy Charlton to sign the excess weight permits for Lathrop Forest Products, Spafford and Sons and Bournes Energy, seconded by Jack Helm., motion passed unanimously.

Purchase Order Plan: Tabled

Orwell Meeting Date: Tabled

Old Business:

The cost to replace the fluorescent lights in the office and get new fixtures would be \$3,000, Possible grant money.

Discussion on the Town Garage proposal.

Creamery:

Jack Helm met with the renter, and they are willing to increase rent. Discussion tabled until next meeting.

New Business

- Discussion on Letter from Attorney Christopher Howe who is representing the Smead's. (Letter in file). The Smead's explained the damage to their property. Possible solution is to plow Turkey Farm Rd with the small truck.
- Email from Attorney Christopher Howe clarifying that he will not be attending the meeting and it is understood the Smead's were to address the board and his representation is not intended to prevent them from addressing the board.

Motion by John Hill to instruct the Town Clerk to change Brad Barrett's person/sick time from 30 hrs. to 40 hrs., second by Ron Stewart Jr., motion passed. Brad Barrett abstained from the vote.

Correspondence: Addressed in New Business

Review Personnel Policy:

Continued with the review of the personnel policy. Stopped at section 18 tabled until special meeting 2/13/23.

Round Table:

Discussion if the Moderator wants to speak on an issue there should be an Assistant Moderator. John Hill will try to find a person willing to be an Assistant Moderator for Town meeting.

Discussion on having a special addition for the Benson Bulletin for Town meeting issues such as the budget, articles and candidates running for office since it is not know exactly when town report will be delivered to everyone.

Motion by Ron Stewart Jr., second by Jack Helm to have a Special Addition of the Benson Bulletin for Town meeting issues, Motion passed. John Hill abstained.

Executive Session:

Motion by John Hill to move into executive session for an issue that the board has determined that premature public knowledge would clearly place a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Second by Jack Helm, Motion passed.

Motion by John Hill to move into executive session per 1. V.S.A 313 (a) (3) for the purpose of appointment or evaluation of a public officer or employee at 9:45 pm Second Jack Helm, Motion passed.

Out of Executive Session at 10:35PM.

Motion to use the pickup truck to plow and sand Turkey Farm Rd Extension for the balance of the 2023 winter season by Ron. 2nd by John. Motion passed.

Motion to instruct the Town Clerk/Treasurer that a department supervisor has full authority to determine accounts to be charged for all purchases. If the Clerk/Treasurer disagrees with the classification she/he needs to take the issue to the Selectboard by John. 2nd by Guy. Motion passed.

No action taken. Guy reported that the investigation into the personnel issue is in progress.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Rom at 10:42. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted.

Carrie LaFond

Selectboard Assistant