

APPROVED MINUTES
SELECTBOARD MEETING
TOWN OF BENSON, VT
OCTOBER 16th, 2023, 7:00pm

Selectboard Present:

Linda Peltier (Chair), Guy Charlton, Jerod Glover, Brad Barrett, Tom Bartholomew

Others Present:

Heidi Chandler (Town Clerk/Treasurer), Carrie LaFond (Selectboard Assistant), Tom Pyle

Public Present:

Jack Helm, Jon Dodd, Mrs., and Mr. Smead, Gary Freeguard

Call to Order:

Linda Peltier (Chair) called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Approved Agenda:

Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Tom Bartholomew, seconded by Guy Charlton, motion passed unanimously.

Pyle Agency

- Linda Peltier (Chair) The Selectboard is looking for guidance in investing some of the Town's funds.
- (Mr. Pyle) The Salt shed was invested in a short-Term Treasury Bond, yield 5.3%, the market right now is yielding higher %'s in short term Treasury Bonds.
- Question- What happens if you need funds prior to maturity? **Answer-** you will get current market value if you liquidate early.
- Question- How much are the fees? **Answer:** Bonds are set up in a Brokerage account, so the maximum fee charges in \$50.00
- Question- are other Towns investing this way? **Answer:** Larger Towns yes, right now the market favors short-term Bonds however this could change.
- Question- How quick is the process? **Answer:** Bonds are invested as soon as the check clears.
- Question -what are the dollar increments for Bonds? **Answer:** \$1,000 increments
- Further discussion on what funds can and should be invested into treasury bonds.

Gary Freeguard- Town Garage Update

- Question - could he build the garage for the current budget as planned? **Answer:** No
- Cost as currently designed is \$495,000.
- Fire Alarm is around \$15,000.
- Quote does not include demolition and disposal of current building.
- Quote is for a Steel Building with R40 insulation.
- Cost for radiant heat w/ boiler is \$15,000, does not include Modine that would be an additional \$10,000 installed.
- Budget is over by \$45,000 could reduce possibly by \$55,000 if the office is not a separate area.

- Question was asked about the oil separator cost? **Answer:** Not included in the cost, could be around \$1,200.
- Mechanical room could be on the wall in the shop and not in a separate room.
- Current design is for a 52' x 72' steel building.
*No decision made at this point

Approve Selectboard Minutes:

Motion to approve October 2nd Selectboard minutes as amended by Jerod Glover seconded by Tom Bartholomew, motion passed unanimously.

Pay Bills:

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Regular Bills in the amount of \$33,528.86 second by Tom Bartholomew, motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Regular Payroll in the amount of \$4,100.76 second by Tom Bartholomew, motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Guy Charlton to pay Highway Payroll in the amount of \$4,803.64 second by Tom Bartholomew, motion passed, Brad Barrett abstained from the vote.

Highway Department:

Road Foreman Report:

- Rock on Stage Rd by the Manley's property has been hammered out.
- Dam let loose on Frazier Hill Rd and washed out a portion of Frazier Hill and North Stage Rd
- Grading on Sunset Lake and North Cross Rd
- Perch pond to be graded (done 2 times a year)
- Question- Is gravel put down on Perch Pond Rd? **Answer-** Only as needed.
- In possession of the new snowplow today
- South Stage Rd will be temporarily closed 10/17

Motion to add Public Comment to the agenda that was previously approved by Brad Barrett, second by Guy Charlton, Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Transfer Station:

- Guy Charlton placed the culverts that were left on the ground in the public's walkway in the metal dumpster.

Town Clerk Report:

Set Sewer Rates

Motion by Guy Charlton to adjourn as the Selectboard and reconvene as the Board of Sewer Commissioners, second by Jerod Glover, motion passed.

Motion by Jerod Glover seconded by Tom Bartholomew to approve a sewer rate of \$185.00 per allocation for 6-month period motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Brad Guy Charlton to adjourn as the Board of Sewer Commissioners and reconvene as the Selectboard, second by Jerod Glover, motion passed unanimously.

Sign MERP Agreement

- VT Energy audit

Motion by Tom Bartholmew, second by Jerod Glover to have Linda Peltier (Chair) sign the memorandum of understand for the MERP Agreement, motion passed unanimously.

Appoint SWAC Representative

Motion by Jerod Glover, second by Brad Barrett to appoint Greg Fontaine as the SWAC Representative and Guy Charlton as the alternate, Guy Charlton abstained, Motion passed.

Old Business:

Selectboard Calendar

- Selectboard Assistant provided a calendar of events to be updated bi-weekly to the selectboard.

Insurance Decision Under/Uninsured Motorist Coverage

Motion by Guy Charlton, second by Jerod Glover to authorize Town Clerk (Heidi Chandler) to change the under insured /uninsured motorist coverage to \$10,000,000, motion passed unanimously.

Town Administrator

- The selectboard needs to decide if there should be more investigation into the possibility of a Town Administrator.
- VLCT annual salary report should be out this month – could be helpful.
- Town Administrator and Town Manager have very different roles of authority.

Motion by Jerod Glover, second by Brad Barrett for Tom Bartholmew to further investigate the possibility of a Town Administrator motion passed.

Update on Picnic Tables

- Picnic Tables should be completed next week.
- Legally can't pay for the picnic tables out of building maintenance.
- Picnic Tables to be paid for out of the community events fund.

Update on Law Enforcement

- Jerod Glover spoke with Chief Humphreys regarding patrolling Benson, and it will be discussed at the Fair Haven Selectboard meeting.
- Possibility of patrolling 3 hours a week
- If the Fair Haven Selectboard does not agree than there is the possibility of hiring an offer as a "Special Officer"

New Business: None

Correspondence:

- Phone Message from Mrs. Brown thanking the Town for Putting up the “Slow Handicap” sign.
- Certified Letter Michael Bandler- (see file) Nothing the Town can do at this point. Health officer followed up with a visit to the property as suggested last February by the town attorney.
- Email- Yavonne Smead – (see file) -Thank you and request for reduced speed limit.
- Email -RRPC– South Lake Champlain Clean Water Service Provider (see file)
- Email- RRPC- Energy Burden Report- Benson at the Top of the list for need (see file)

Continued discussion on the Town investing some funds that would not be immediately needed.

- The Board asked to have Robert Bizek invited to the next meeting.
- Need to adopt an investment policy.

Motion by Guy Charlton, second by Jerod Glover to invest \$90,000 dollars of the equipment reserve fund in a 3-month treasury bond, Tom Bartholomew opposed, 3 in favor, motion passed.

Motion by Jerod Glover, second by Guy Charton r to invest \$100,000 dollars of the ARPA funds in a 3-month treasury bond (prior to investing the Town Clerk/Treasurer will confirm that it is legal to invest these funds), Tom Bartholomew opposed, 3 in favor, motion passed.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Brad Barrett; 9:23pm.

Respectfully submitted.
Carrie LaFond
Selectboard Assistant

Documents referenced in these minutes can be found at the Benson Town Office.