



Select Board

Town of Hinesburg
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Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2020

- Draft -

Attending the Meeting: Phil Pouech, Merrily Lovell, Jeff French, Mike Loner, Maggie Gordon, Joy Dubin Grossman, Dawn Francis, Andrea Morgante, Missy Ross, Jen McCuin, Al Barber, Lisa Truchon

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom remote meeting platform

Additions / Deletions and Public Comment

None

Town Administrator Report

Joy said it has been a very busy week.

- There are many open positions needing to be filled. She has advertised for a recording secretary for the PC and DRB as well as for winter sidewalk maintainer. The Zoning Administrator has also resigned and moved to California.
- Per new regulations Joy registered the Town into the portal for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Drug & Alcohol Clearing House. She has given the information for registering to the Town CDL drivers. It is their responsibility to register. Joy has offered help with this. Each year the Town will need to do a limited query for current drivers. A complete query will need to be done for any new hires.
- Spoke with Aaron Kimball today about the new website. Aaron said there will be a meeting November 25th to look at design of the site. Phil expressed his frustration on how long this is taking.
- A meeting for the Department Heads was held yesterday.

Select Board Forum / Correspondence Received

Phil noted the emails received from residents regarding the Town Administrator vs. Town Manager. Also, a letter from Anne Frost regarding the complaint about their dog.

Merrily said she had two meetings with the Conservation Commission about line items they wanted to remove from their budget and they have decided for now to keep them in the CC budget. This includes Lewis Creek Association, Lake Iroquois Association, and Tree Plantings.

Merrily also made it to the pre-school group run by the HCRC. She wants to go back when it can be in person to be a source of information for the young mothers. She may also go to the Library story hour.

Consider Approving a Letter of Support for Observatory Rd Solar Project

Phil said the request is for a letter requesting the PUC to consider that property be designated as a “preferred solar site”. The landfill has not been properly closed so is not considered a closed landfill. The Town will move forward and properly close the site.

Phil will be recusing himself and asked Merrily to sign the letter, if approved, as the Board Chair.

Merrily moved the Board approve the support letter to have the location of the Observatory land designated as a “preferred site” under Section 5.103 of Rule 5.100. Second by Mike and approved with 4 yes votes and Phil recusing.

Phil noted he and Joy had a meeting with Aegis. The Town has not yet signed the land lease as the landfill has not been properly closed. The Town needs to get the closure done ASAP. We want to make sure before the land lease is signed that the Town does not put itself in jeopardy by signing the lease and the landfill needs further work.

Consider Town Meeting Article Requesting Voter Approval for a Town Manager vs. Town Administrator Form of Governance

Phil said the Board received some feedback and wanted to know how the Board felt about waiting to allow for more comments. He advised the Board is not voting on the position but only if they go ahead and warn it.

Merrily said she favors moving forward with the article which will allow the voters to decide. She regrets that we are not able to have a “real” discussion with residents about the pros and cons.

Dawn pointed out that with any article voted on at Town Meeting there is typically a public hearing in January and there is opportunity to do that before the Board finalizes the warning. The Board can also have the informational (Annual Town) meeting via zoom the night before the Australian Ballot vote.

Dawn addressed Merrily’s question about Bristol returning to a Town Administrator after having a Town Manager. Dawn said in 2002 due to concerns of the inability to get rid of a Town Manager as well as the TM having too much authority and power, they decided to go back to a Town Administrator. Dawn reminded the Board that can be mitigated with a contract.

Maggie asked who writes the contract? Dawn said it would be the Select Board and the Town Manager candidate and it would have legal review.

Mike advocates to make the decision to warn the article tonight and allow more time for input.

Maggie agrees to move ahead.

Merrily said she does not view having an informational meeting to be about whether or not to include the question on warning, but for people to share their thoughts about the position. Perhaps this could be in February. Dawn said the ballots will be available 20 to 30 days before Town Meeting, so we need to have meetings before ballots are available.

Phil said if the Board decides to include the warning tonight or the next meeting that is fine. The point is, before the meeting where the warning is finalized by the Board if a strong argument is made not to include on the warning, the Board could at that point vote to remove it.

Mike moved the Board move to warn the vote to change from Town Administrator to Town Manager form of government by Australian Ballot on Town Meeting Day. Second by Maggie. Phil with approval of Mike and Maggie mad a friendly amendment that the language will be "Shall the Town of Hinesburg adopt the Town Manager form of governance in accordance with the provisions of chapter 37 of title 24 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated?". Motion voted as amended and approved with 5 yes votes.

Discussion of Hiring Process for a Town Manager vs Town Administrator

The Board reviewed a draft ad for the Town Manager position.

Merrily asked to include an emphasis on working collaboratively.

Phil asked the Board if they are ready to go ahead with advertising the position. Merrily asked for it to be clear the position depends on the vote. Dawn pointed out the first sentence states "pending a successful vote". In any discussion with potential candidates it will be made clear. Merrily asked to include by the voters of the Town of Hinesburg at Town Meeting. Phil suggested to include "if the vote is unsuccessful, the position will remain as Town Administrator".

Phil moved the Board move forward with advertising the Town Administrator/Manager position as noted with revisions as quickly as possible. Second by Merrily and approved with 5 yes votes.

Phil said the next step will be to start forming a committee. Dawn volunteered to chair the committee.

Consider Approving Australian Ballot System for March 2, 2021 Annual Town Meeting

Phil addressed the need to have an informational meeting before ballots are mailed out so voters can have an understanding of warned items. And to do the same informational meeting via zoom for Town Meeting.

Missy said we need to decide who is mailed ballots. Will it be only to those requesting a ballot. Missy feels having voters request the ballot rather than a mass mailing would be best. She also said the Board needs to decide how they want to organize the information on the ballot. She reminded the Board the State is not paying to mail ballots for Town Meeting.

Maggie said she is uncomfortable with just having just one large number to vote on. She feels people need to know how much each department costs and is in favor of listing each item. Missy said that information is in the Town Report.

Mike said it has been brought up in conversations about the ambulance and Police Department that people could vote down those budgets without voting down the entire budget.

Dawn said there are some things that can be consolidated. She said it can be worked on to have options on voting for items while still consolidating areas.

Andrea Morgante said it is the Select Board's responsibility to prepare a Town budget and present it at Town Meeting. At Town Meeting they help voters understand it. The value of Town Meeting is there can be debate and things can be changed. She would like to maintain showing the voters what each area of Town Government costs.

Merrily moved to approve the Australian Ballot system for our March 2, 2021 Annual Town Meeting for voting our budget without at this point deciding any of the details on how that budget would be written on the ballot. Second by Mike. Approved with 5 yes votes.

FY 22 General Fund Budget Review

- **Clerk / Treasurer / Elections** – Missy reviewed these budgets. Missy reported tax revenue outstanding amounts are similar to past years. There were no significant changes in these budgets and as anticipated elections are lower as there is no general election next year.
- **Assessor** – Lisa Truchon of NEMRC reviewed the budget. The Town is contracted with NEMRC for these services. The budget is level funded. Phil asked about sales activity level resulting from COVID. Lisa said she has not seen that influence on sales in Hinesburg. Concerning the Grand List, a very minimal increase is anticipated. It is expected that after available water allocation and construction of Haystack we should see an increase.
- **Recreation** – Jen McCuin reviewed the budget highlighting several changes. Youth sports and adult programs were reduced to offset reduced revenue. Jenn was happy to announce the zoom piano lessons have been a huge success.
- **Police Department** – presented by Phil. Phil noted this in one of the budgets that significantly changes this year primarily because of the new hire. Police equipment is increasing, this is for protective vests and body cams which are mandatory. Phil said Caleb will continue to look for grant opportunities for those items. There is also the addition of a line for community outreach which is for the program with the Howard Center. Phil addressed the copier costs. He asked Joy about a contract for all copiers with one vendor. Joy said they have it for Town Hall. She can look into this.
- **Fire and Rescue** – Al was present to answer any questions. Phil presented the budget as he has made some changes. Ambulance Transport has its own section in the budget. The amounts are

taken from the last 5 years of profit and loss data. In the revenue section there is new line for collected billings.

Discussion of Community Skating Rink

Jen talked about the plans of the Recreation Commission to construct a temporary community ice rink on lot 1.

The liner has been ordered and this week the side boards, with lumber donated by Clifford Lumber and the McCuin family, will be assembled. Jen said there has been lots of support and volunteers for this project. Alex advised there is no building permit required and Jen is working with Alex on the possibility of lighting the rink.

Review Minutes from November 4, 2020

Maggie moved to approve the minutes from November 4, 2020 as amended. Second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Consider Approving the Warrants

Phil moved to approve the warrants, including payroll, as submitted by the Town Treasurer. Second by Mike and approved with 5 yes votes.

Consider a Motion to Enter Executive Session Under Provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1) (a)(2) & (a)(3)

Phil said the purpose is an update on personnel issue and possible legal action.

Phil moved to go into executive session including Joy and Dawn as premature and public disclosure of these items could put the Town at a disadvantage. Second by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

Phil moved to go into executive session Under Provisions of 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1) (a)(2) & (a)(3). Second by Jeff and approved with 5 yes votes.

Merrily moved to come out of executive session, second by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

Merrily moved to adjourn at 10:32 p.m., second by Maggie and approved with 5 yes votes.

Respectfully Submitted,
Valerie Spadaccini, Clerk of the Board