Select Board Meeting

Budget Committee

January 20, 2022

6:30pm

Athens Town Office

Present were Janet Perry, Darlene Wyman, David Bemis, Denise Randall, Hannah Regier, Fact TV, Mike Bates, April Lyman, Danny Taylor, Krista Gay, Wichie Artu, Amber Stevens, Sherry Maher, Sandi Capponcelli, Lynn Morgan, Dennis Mirante and Don Capponcelli.

David called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

Budget Committee: Hannah reported there were 2 items for the budget committee. What to do with the surplus and quotes for IT support. She mentioned that the $32,000.00 for the town garage the people voted to put back into the 2021 budget was not deducted from the figure for taxes raised. It was decided to deduct it from the 2022 taxes to be raised. Hannah also asked how to handle the $39,206.00 surplus. Discussion followed about using some of the monies for the matching grant fund. Denise made the motion to add an article in the warning to use $15,000.00 for a matching grant fund and use the remainder for offsetting 2022 taxes to be raised. David seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

Hannah presented three quotes for IT support for the town computers. She mentioned it was timely because VLCT sent a survey for a Cyber Insurance Policy for 2022. This needs to be completed before next year in order to obtain cyber insurance. Discussion followed on the companies that gave quotes as to what services they provided. David made the motion to contract with All Access for IT support. Denise seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried. Janet mentioned there may be grants available for cyber security.

It was decided to change the school building maintenance to $8,000.00.

Fire mutual aid, elected town official pay raises and DeCamp Trucking costs were discussed. Hannah stated these were already in the budget.

David made the motion to authorize the startup fees for All Access and authorize the signature of the contract if needed. Denise seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

Adjustments to the agenda: Janet stated she would like to speak before public comments. David made the motion to add to the agenda to discuss the pay rate for elected town officials. Denise seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

Minutes of Prior Meetings: Denise made the motion to accept the minutes of the prior meetings. Janet seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

Janet stated she wished to thank Krista Gay for the holiday card and gas gift certificate and although she appreciated the thought, as an elected official she felt it would be inappropriate to accept the gift and felt the card should be given to Grafton Cares to help those that could use it.

Public Comments: Krista mentioned the light over the flag on the war memorial was out. It was stated that it is solar powered and may be covered with snow. She also stated she was interested on being on the Community Center Advisory Committee.

Wichie had concerns about the redistricting of the towns. He will follow up on this.

Sherry asked about there being nothing on the agenda about tonight’s meeting beginning at 6:30pm. David quoted the item about the Select board and budget committee meeting at 6:30 to review the final budget on the warning.

Sherry asked how things were going for the forms needed for election of the town officials. Darlene stated she had received some, but didn’t have them all yet. Darlene will contact Sherry after the deadline with the officials that have completed the forms.

Boards and Officials: Lynn reported there were 35 cases of COVID throughout the SU following the return from Christmas break. A huge thank you goes out to the SU administration, the business office staff, RHR Smith auditors and a group of CPA’s who put in long hours over the Christmas break on straightening out the financial books. All the line items within these books are now corrected. The WNUESD articles and district board member elections will be presented in a separate informational booklet from the town report. Voting for the school district items will be by Australian ballot. Both the booklet and the ballot will be provided by the school district. Lynn reported that Andy Haas has been hired as superintendent for a 3 year period. A discussion followed on how many members should be elected for the school board for next year. David made the motion the select board’s preference would be 3 members from each town and both towns in the WNUESD vote. Denise seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried. Lynn stated that Grafton is holding a pre town meeting February 24th for the district. Lynn stated the high school representative goes on the town ballot.

Sherry reported the Meetinghouse committee is zeroing in on putting the bid package together. It needs to be reviewed by the Preservation Trust of Vermont, then it will be ready to go out.

Wichie stated he received an email from FEMA concerning the flood insurance rate maps. It is slated to have “workmaps” distributed in spring of 2023, with preliminary maps and effective maps to follow. Wichie also presented handouts to the board with examples of Vermont Model Flood Hazard Bylaws.

David made the motion he sign the MOU’s for the Saxtons River Market and Sister Garden. Darlene will sign as well. Denise seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

David made the motion to appoint Krista Gay to the Community Center Advisory Committee. Denise seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

2022 Town Warning/Town Meeting: It was stated the town’s address needed to be changed to 25 Brookline Road. Discussion followed on the petition to eliminate the Road commissioner position. Article 1 will read to see if the Town shall eliminate the position of elected road commissioner and that the select board perform all the duties now conferred by law upon the road commissioner of the town as of the first Tuesday in March of 2023. Article 2 will read shall the town of Athens expand the Select board from 3 to 5 members. Article 7 will be shall the town of Athens vote to start a matching grant fund using $15,000.00 of surplus from the 2021 budget year to be used for highway and Town of Athens projects approved by the Select Board. Article 16 will be to set the time of future Town meetings. Article 17 will be to transact any further business proper to come before said meeting. David made the motion to approve the town warning as drafted. Denise seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

Town meeting: David suggested to set the Town meeting on the regular Tuesday of March at 10:00am, then adjourn to a later date if necessary. Janet suggested the meeting be done by Australian ballot. Denise suggested having the meeting later in the year. Discussion followed. Denise made the motion to set the Town Meeting for March 1, 2022 at 10:00am. David seconded. Put to a vote. David and Denise approved. Janet opposed. The motion carried.

Darlene stated she would like to call a meeting of the BCA to discuss election procedures before Town Meeting. The meeting will be held January 27, 2022 at 6:00pm at the town office.

Warrants and Mail: The warrants were reviewed and signed.

David made the motion to sign the credit application for Eurovia. Denise seconed. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

David made the motion to sign the weight permit for Newport Sand and Gravel Company. Denise seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

The board reviewed the quotes for a new plow for the Ford 550. Discussion followed. David made the motion to wait for the quote for the Everest plow, but compare all quotes then make the decision to purchase when all quotes are reviewed. Denise seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

David made the motion to continue to enforce the mask requirement for the town office, elementary school and meetinghouse until the next meeting. Janet seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

Roads: The Ford truck’s sander has had some small problems. The sand and salt are good. The FEMA grant is still being worked on.

David made the motion to raise the elected town officials pay rate to $12.55 per hour. Janet seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried. This will be effective as of January 1, 2022.

David made the motion to sign the certificate of highway mileage with the information to reference the change of Sam Farr Road from a class 4 road to a trail. Denise seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

Further business: Janet mentioned the sick time had not been carried over to the new year. Darlene and Hannah will check into this. More discussion on the matter. David made the motion to look at the personnel policy and amend if needed at the February meeting. Janet seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried.

Janet asked about the Meetinghouse Committee paying back the loan to the housing rehabilitation fund. Sherry stated that once the renovations were done they hoped to generate money from renting out the building. David stated a time line needs to be put in place to pay the loan back. Discussion followed. Sherry stated she would bring it up at the next Meetinghouse Committee meeting.

There being no further business, David made the motion to adjourn. Janet seconded. Put to a vote. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:38pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene Wyman, Town Clerk