

Waterford Board of Selectman Minutes
Monday, January 10, 2022
In Person – Union Baptist Church
7:00 PM

Handouts Available and attached: Modifications to Agenda, Questions to budget Meeting, Attorney letter regarding Petition for Special Meeting by the voters regarding open meeting law

Minutes

- Meeting Called to Order: Fred called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
- Members in Attendance: Fred Sarr and Warner Hodgdon
- Sign In sheet attached
- Modification of Agenda: NOTE: See separate list attached
 - Town Officers Meeting- Town Clerk is looking into to see if needed.
 - Resignation of Selectboard Member: Bill Piper letter of resignation submitted to Town Clerk on January 2 effective January 1. Letter didn't get to Selectboard until January 6 via email. Debbie Allard questioned why they didn't say that on Monday at the meeting. Fred said it had been rumored but Town Clerk didn't forward the letter to them until January 6 so they couldn't confirm it.

Confirm appointment of Bill Piper to the Communication Union District and the River Bend Subcommittee of the Connecticut River Joint Commission. Fred made motion and Warner seconded it.

- S.172- Town Meeting Day Practices:

Vote by mail in 2022: provides increased participation.

Marcia stated the governor had not signed the bill, so results of the vote by the Selectboard have no effect.

Roberta asked Warner what he thought about Australian Ballot, and he thought you got a lot more voter participation and was in favor of it. As of now an in- person meeting can be held according to the ruling. Kathleen Goslant wanted to know if meeting was also going to be held in Zoom. Fred said couldn't answer that.

Howard Remick had spoken to Mike Barrett Monday and is working on getting the Zoom up and running properly.

Roberta asked if meeting could be held at school instead of Union Baptist. Fred will investigate it but when he checked a couple months ago the school said no due to COVID.

Fred made motion for mail in ballots Warner seconded. Vote unanimous.

At a subsequent meeting Town Meeting was scheduled for April 5, 2022 at the Waterford School with voting from the floor.

- Hazard Mitigation Plan Update: -Vulnerability Assessment update will be sent by Mid-January
- Budget Questions from Public Meeting:
Fred went over the questions from the Special meeting as to what was charged to certain lines. They are on the separate attachment. Roberta asked when the budget needed to be to the printer's, could we push it back so another Budget meeting could be held. Fred stated it could.
- 2022 Budget: -
Gary Allard says it doesn't show the down payment amount for Truck #7. He had emails from Fred to show that there was a down payment. Fred will go back to get this amount.

Regarding the item Selectboard is recommending that the 5.4% be paid to Town Office staff, but not to other elected officials. This created a lot of discussion. Town folks do not feel they should get the 5.4% cost of living.

Robert & John Gillott wanted to know if the Department Heads were made to stay within their budget or allowed to overrun. Fred says the overrun is taken from the Reserve Fund. John asked for the amounts in each reserve fund. Fred will get information from Jesse and ask her to post to the Town web page.

- Auditors Compensation:
Per public input the Auditors stipend will be increased to \$18/hr. as of January 10. Marcia thanked Selectboard for this.
- Items for a Town vote at Town Meeting:
Library Budget request: Mary Jo O'Neil, Kandace Barrett are asking for \$27,481 in town appropriations. They are unable to raise funds due to Covid. They are asking that this be done annually going forward. Fred made the motion that his be on the ballot without a petition and Warner seconded it. Vote unanimous.
- Delinquent Tax Collector be changed from appointed to elected.

Maria Desanto gave a Historical recap how it was changed from elected to appointed in March 2021 going back to minutes from November 2020. Fred stated Gib Trenholme had moved out of town, and they wanted to move it to in house. Maria stated Gib had done the job for several years and done a great job why would you not leave it as was.

Maria asked Fred if it was bad blood between Fred and Gib. Fred said he didn't have a problem with Gib. Fred stated that the girls in the office had a difficult time working with Gib and were afraid to be in the office with him. They had complained several times. In the future a formal complaint needs to be written and presented to the Selectboard.

Asked why Warner voted yes for appointment when it was his first meeting after election without doing any investigation. He thought he was doing what was right for the town he said.

Roberta asked about the 8% going to the town.

It became a heated discussion between Maria and Fred regarding how it was not handled properly and Gibs rights were violated firing him without due process.

John Gillott asked why we wouldn't appoint Gib again and make it effective immediately. Fred said we are unable to do that as Donna Berry as the position until March 1 when it is rumored that she is leaving. A letter of resignation has not been presented as of this date.

Kathleen Goslant volunteered to accompany Gib to office when he wanted to go in if it would make the Town Clerk and her Assistant feel more comfortable.

John O'Malley said in the future there needs to be a standard operating of procedures on how to handle problems, so it is fair for all employees across the board. The town has an obligation to investigate complaints, do due diligence and mediation must be done.

Discussion about needed personnel policy and updates maybe needing to be made to it.

Delinquent Tax Collector will **NOT** be an article on the ballot.

- Articles For 2022 Town Meeting
- Should the Town provide an annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to the Town Office staff? The amount of the COLA shall be determined by the Consumer Price Index – Northeast and the COLA shall be effective January 1st of each year. Yes. Article for ballot.
- Should the Town provide an annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to other Elected Officials? The amount of the COLA shall be determined by the Consumer Price Index – Northeast and the COLA shall be effective January 1st of each year. Yes. Article for ballot.
- Should the Town include funds in the annual budget to provide an annual bonus for Town Employees and Elected Officials? The amount of the bonuses shall be determined by the Selectboard and shall be disbursed in the first pay cycle in November. Yes. Article for ballot.
- Should the Town change the current practice of paying for all benefits available to the Town Employees to a formula requiring that 85% of the cost paid by the Town and 15% paid by the Employee? Yes, on article?
- Approval of Minutes: Marcia gave Fred the December notes with corrections that must be made, and the missing sign-in sheet must be attached. Also add in that Clem Gray asked for Freds resignation. Fred will make the changes so minutes NOT approved at this time.

- Budget Report: Not available last one presented was December 13th. Dwayne Keach asked if Department heads couldn't come to meetings to provide Department updates.

- Town Boards:

Davis Memorial Library- 2022 Appropriation – it was covered in the above items.

Listers Great River Hydro Update- Howard Remick stated in discussions with them.

- Highway Department:

Winter road maintenance, Lisle stated we are good with sand and materials.

NVDA Grant to acquire a roller attachment for the grader. Warner explained that he had worked with Lisle on the grant application which will pay \$6,000 and the Town must pay \$1,500. Warner explained that this will help with compaction of materials. Jasper Billig asked if it would cut down on materials and the response was probably. Fred made motion to proceed with the Grant and Warner seconded it. Vote unanimous.

Justin Stahler asked if there was Highway equipment that could be sold to cover some of the cost. Warner said that they are looking into possible sale of unused equipment.

- Old Business:

ARPA- Roberta & Kandace gave an update that a survey is being sent out with items to be selected on how to spend the money. They will need to come up with a cost before presenting to the Selectboard. The survey will be on the Website, Town Library and Town Office Lobby. It will be available at Town transfer station as well and working on when that will happen. Roberta asked if Heather could contact Jesse directly to get the report that is needed regarding loss of income. Fred made the motion that Heather contact Jesse directly and Warner seconded it.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20