

Waterford Selectboard Working Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 24, 2024 @ 6:00 PM

Davies Library

In Attendance: Gary Allard, Warner Hodgdon, Ron Gray, Kevin Gillander. Attendance list attached.

Gary Allard called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Modifications to Agenda

- Add a statement from Gary Allard

Gary Allard Statement

- Gary Allard shared his regrets about the action that was taken on an unwarned article and the suspension of the purchase policy during the last meeting. He stressed that the Selectboard should be upholding the ordinances set forth to maintain accountability and order. He doesn't want the Board to overstep their authority and he will strive to make sure this mistake is rectified and will not happen again.
- Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw explained that she does not believe it was appropriate to ask for crushing bids. She met with Selectboard members and department heads last year while they were building the 2024 Town Budget. Road Foreman Jim Hayes had advised that his department would need \$55,000 for crushing, according to a deal he had discussed with McDonald. The previous Road Foreman had hired McDonald to do crushing for many years before Jim had taken the position as he consistently offered the best prices with good quality work. They used that estimate to build the budget which all Selectboard members agreed to at that time. If the Board wanted it to go to bid, it needed to be done before the budget was voted on and accepted by the town citizens.
- Heather went on to explain that the Purchasing Policy states that any bids received after the deadline cannot be opened and must be returned to the sender. By voting to accept the late bids, the Board suspended the purchasing policy without listing any reasons for making the decision. They also didn't provide any solutions for how to reconcile accepting a bid that is \$7,000 over budget.
- Ron Gray responded by saying they accepted a bid that was over budget because they increased the scope of the work. He believes they got a fair price for the extra work.
- Warner Hodgdon explained that only one bid was received on time, so he voted to accept the late bids in an effort to abide by the purchasing policy which requires multiple bids. He reiterated that he always strives to follow policies to the best of his ability and always does what he believes is best for the town.

- Ron Gray took responsibility for the miscommunication about the deadline for receiving bids. The Selectboard had agreed to the deadline of June 1st, but he noticed the date fell on a Saturday, so he adjusted it to fall on a weekday, May 31st.
- The Board all agreed that some adjustments need to be made to policies and ordinances to make sure they are as effective as possible. They plan to revisit the purchasing policy to ensure it reads how they believe is most effective, and change the bidding criteria so the deadline is on the same day the bids will be opened to avoid similar mistakes in the future.
- Board members expressed their desire to rectify the situation. They decided it was best to follow the purchasing policy by accepting the only bid that was received on time. They were unable to take any action during the meeting because it was not warned in the agenda, so it will be voted on in the next Selectboard meeting.
- Ron Gray volunteered to speak with the contractor who was previously told their bid was accepted and will explain that the final decision will be made in the July meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- The minutes of the June 10, 2024 meeting will be voted on in the July meeting.

Citizens' Concerns

- Dave Morrison expressed his concern that the current Road Foreman Jim Hayes is making lower wages and has fewer benefits than the previous Road Foreman, even though Jim has greater experience. He would also like the town to consider returning to electing a Road Commissioner without requiring residency instead of having the Selectboard take care of Road Commissioner responsibilities.

Lister Update/Reappraisal Contract (Discussion/Action)

- Town Lister Michael Keach reported that the numbers from the appraiser came back, and the CLA off those numbers is 83.7%. That amounts to millions in tax revenue the town won't get. They reached out to the company that did the appraisal in 2021, but all the appraisers in VT are booking out for 3-4 years because 169 towns are forced into reappraisal.
- They agreed to do a statistical reappraisal instead. They will look at the numbers from 2021, adjust them based on housing sales, verify the numbers, and bring the CLA back to 100%, but it will take about one year. Reappraisals will be required every six years if the state goes through with Bill H.480. The state will no longer give money for appraisals next year, so the town would have to pay the full price if they did not do the statistical reappraisal this year. The appraisal in 2021 cost \$68,000. They have the money in the budget to do a statistical reappraisal this year, they just need the Board's signature.
- Warner Hodgdon made a motion to approve the Chairmen signing the contract. Ron Gray seconded. Motion passed 3-0. Gary Allard signed the contract.

Paving Bids (Discussion/Action)

- Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw stated that the paving project does not need to be put out to bid. She worked with Road Foreman Jim Hayes and followed the grant management policy. They got notice of the funding opportunity, and Jim got a quote. Heather took the quote and met with a state representative to put together the application. The Selectboard approved the application and signed the document. The town was awarded the grant based on that quote. The town is responsible for a 20% match that she and Jim accounted for in the town budget.
- Heather assured the board that she followed the grant management policy which was approved by the Selectboard years ago. The town is in compliance with \$800,000 worth of grant money, which is why they are favorable to granting agencies. She strongly disagrees with this bidding.
- Heather informed the Selectboard about the grant in February of this year and they were given the compliance paperwork in April. The opportunity to send out for bids was between Feb-April, before they approved the application and the grant was awarded.
- Heather pointed out that the discussion and action of sending out for bids on paving was an unwarned agenda item. The Grant Manager wasn't there to go over the facts. It should have been its own discussion/action item on the agenda with someone present to give information and answer questions.
- Heather suggests the Board does not open or accept bids. She recommends they move forward with the company that gave the quote used in the grant application. They can revisit the Grant Management Policy in a future meeting and make any changes they deem necessary.
- Warner Hodgdon made a motion to not open the bids, reach out to the companies who bid to explain why their bid won't be opened, and work to improve policies. Ron Gray seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Town Garage (Discussion)

- Gary Allard wants the first action to be removing the mold. He wants to evaluate what is left once the mold is gone, and then determine how to best utilize it to meet the towns' needs.
- The Maintenance Fund for the Town Garage is \$25,000 per year in the budget. Delinquent Tax Collector Marcel Lapierre estimated there is currently about \$80,000 in funding available.
- Gary reached out to the St. J Academy and their Trades Department. Depending on what they have for students, they can assist the contractors with free labor. He would accept a motion at the next meeting to use the ARPA money they have left to do the mold removal.

- Howard Jones did look at the building, but Gary does not have his contact to get more information about what he found. Gary will work more on that.
- Marcel Lapierre volunteered to reach out to companies for quotes for mold removal.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Review Crushing Bids (Action)
- PC Update on Town Plan (Discussion/Action)
- Vermont Declaration of Inclusion (Discussion/Action)
- Review Draft Report from External Auditors (Discussion)
- Review Quarterly Budget to Actual (Discussion)
- Policy Updating (Discussion/Action)
- Transfer Station (Discussion/Action)
- Signature on Local Emergency Plan (Action)
- Review Mold Removal Quotes (Discussion)
- Executive Session 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) - Personnel

Brief adjournment at 7:57pm before entering Executive Session at 8:00pm.

Executive Session 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B) - Personnel

- The Group reviewed employment applications. They will call three applicants for interviews on July 8th.

Adjourn

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Waterford Selectboard Meeting June 24, 2024

Sign In Sheet

Name

Signature

Sandra J Lyon

Sandra J Lyon

~~Clem Gray~~

~~Clem Gray~~

Herb Nutter

Herb Nutter

Martha Nutter

Martha Nutter

Howard Remick

Howard W. Remick

~~John Hays~~

~~John Hays~~

Maria Dantos

Maria Dantos

Nigel Friend

Nigel Friend

Marcel Lapierre

Marcel Lapierre

David E. Morrison

David E. Morrison

Deb Benoit

Deb Benoit

Debbie Allard

Debbie Allard

MICHAEL KEACH

Michael Keach

Kathleen Hodgson

Kathleen J. Hodgson

~~Tou Sjolander~~

~~Tou Sjolander~~

Karl Sjolander

Karl Sjolander

TIMOTHY DEXON

Timothy Dexon