

## Waterford Selectboard Working Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 18 @ 6:00PM

Davies Library

In Attendance: Gary Allard, Mike Barrett, Warner Hodgdon, Sue Hayes, Rob Begin. Attendance list attached.

Mike Barrett called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Gary Allard made a statement noting that Mike Barrett may have a conflict of interest concerning the new fire truck proposal considering he is the landlord of Fire Chief Colin Fucci and provides health insurance to the fire department. Mike agreed to abstain.

### Modifications to Agenda

- Add Citizens' Concerns

### Approval of Meeting Minutes:

- Rob Begin motioned to approve the meeting minutes as corrected of December 11, 2023. Warner Hodgdon seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

### Final Review of Livestock Ordinance

- Rob Begin made a motion to accept the Livestock Ordinance. Warner Hodgdon seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

### ATV Survey Update

- Sue Hayes provided a summary of the responses and gave a brief analysis. There were 221 responses in total, with 178 being registered voters of Waterford, and 43 being non-registered voters. 114 voted in favor of amending the ordinance, and 107 voted for no changes to be made. Of those who voted in favor of amending the ordinance, 28 voted to make the ordinance more restrictive, and 84 voted to make the ordinance less restrictive. There were 67 comments left in total, and 19 mentioned the need for more enforcement.
- Sue Hayes presented two drafts of possible articles to include in the next Town Meeting. James Hemond, Caledonia County Sheriff, shared some general information and answered questions regarding the way the Sheriff's Department handles the enforcement of ATV ordinances. After the Selectboard answered questions and heard comments and concerns from citizens, Gary Allard motioned to move forward with the second article. Warner Hodgdon seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0. There will be a meeting held in the first week of January with the Town Moderator Maurice Chaloux to

continue editing the article so it can be brought to the Selectboard for final review and approval in the Jan 8 regular meeting.

- The Draft Article that was approved: "Shall the Town revise its current ATV ordinance to include comprehensive State and local regulations, increased enforcement, and identification of all costs and funding requirements? The policy is to be written by the Selectboard, with the help of the Planning Commission, for approval by the Selectboard. If this Article is not approved, the current ordinance limiting ATVs to Class 4 roads will remain in effect."

#### Final Review of 2024 Town Budget

- Rob Begin and Gary Allard met with Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw last week and went through the budget line item by line item to identify areas where reductions could be made. Before the group's edits, the 2024 budget was 14.5% higher than the 2023 budget. They were able to make significant reductions, so the 2024 budget is now only 7.9% higher than 2023's budget. The group answered questions from board members and citizens.
- Calx is currently included in the budget even though the new contract they offered has not yet been approved. Calx terminated the previous contract and raised their rates to \$45 per capita. If the contract is not approved and Calx is removed from the 2024 budget, it would go down to being only 3.4% higher than 2023. Rob Begin explained that the implications and consequences of dropping the contract with Calx are currently unknown; they could potentially deny ambulance service to the town.
- Citizens shared their concerns and many asked if bids could be collected from other local ambulance services. The Selectboard noted that there is not enough time before the new year to collect bids and make another plan. The group explained that the termination clause in the contract with Calx applies to both parties, so the town retains the right to terminate the contract and pursue a better opportunity later on.
- Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw suggested renaming the line item in the budget to "Ambulance Service" instead of explicitly naming Calx. This will allow the town to be prepared to pay Calx' rates if necessary while preserving the opportunity to take it out to bid in the new year.
- Caledonia Record journalist Paul Hayes shared some insights into how Littleton currently handles their ambulance service. He advised that the town would need to be asked immediately in order to respond to the bid for 2024 coverage.
- Kathy Hodgdon asked if Roger Leroux, the town's Calx representative, could be invited to the Jan 8 Regular Meeting to answer questions. The Selectboard agreed and will reach out to him.
- Rob Begin motioned to approve the budget as corrected. Sue Hayes seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0. Gary Allard abstained.

## New Fire Truck Update

- Gary Allard read a statement outlining his intentions of following the Purchase Policy and meeting the April deadline.
- Sue Hayes stated that the Purchase Policy does not require public notification or Open Meeting Law to prepare specifications. The Selectboard can use the specifications that were developed to ask for Best and Final Offers to be submitted prior to the February 12, 2024 Selectboard meeting where they can be opened.
- Warner Hodgdon and Sue Hayes met with the Tanker Truck Committee last week. The Committee worked with 4 manufacturers to develop specifications and receive cost estimates that ranged between \$475,000-\$532,000. The trade-in value of the old truck is \$50-75k. The fire department planned to use \$50k from their capital purchase fund, as well as the \$22k in capital surplus rollover, and the \$24k remaining of the ARPA grant from earlier this year. The group discovered through their calculations and analysis that a loan of up to \$278k would work within the current budget and would not require additional funding from the town. The tanker truck has an 18-month delivery from date of purchase.
- Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw investigated the possibility of applying for the VT Municipal Equipment Loan which offers a much lower interest rate. She found that the town does not meet the qualifications, so it is not an option.
- Sue Hayes drafted an Article for Town Meeting that included financial information for a cost-neutral purchase that would rely on 2024 and 2025 Town Budgets that haven't been approved yet. Town Treasurer Heather Gonyaw had some concerns and offered solutions to improve the draft. She will work with Rob Begin to create an amended draft to present at the Jan 8 Regular Meeting for approval.
- Representatives from the Fire Department answered questions from citizens and the Selectboard. Among many other things, they explained why the truck needs replacing, giving specific examples of failures that cause serious safety concerns.

## Citizens' Concerns

- Mike Barrett gave an overview of his project of looking at replacing/unifying/increasing the efficiency of town phones. He and Town Clerk Deb Benoit met with a company that could connect the phones of the entire town of Waterford. The first year after buying equipment the price would be the same as we currently pay for phone service, but all future years would be \$700 cheaper. He answered questions from citizens. No action was taken.
- David Morrison asked for information about the term lengths and election cycles of Selectboard members.
- Howard Remick asked about an update on the Town Garage. Rob Begin and Sue Hayes are set to meet with Road Foreman Jim Hayes about it in the new year.
- Town Clerk Deb Benoit needs the Selectboards letter by the end of the month.

## Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Review Articles for Town Meeting

## Adjourn

- Gary Allard motioned to adjourn. Rob Begin seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:30PM.

DRAFT

Waterford Selectboard Meeting December 18, 2023

Sign In Sheet

Name

Signature

Howard Remick

Howard W Remick

Jim Hayes

Jim Hayes

Robin Migdelang

Robin Migdelang

Sukey Watson

Sukey Watson

Tom Thomas

Tom Thomas

Clem Gray

Clem Gray

Kathy Hodgson

Kathy Hodgson

Debra Benoit

Debra Benoit

William Jones

William Jones

Deborah Caldwell

Deborah Caldwell

Debbie Allard

Debbie Allard

Marcia Martel

Marcia Martel

Maria Santos

Maria Santos

Tommy Broughton

Tommy Broughton

Marc Broughton

Marc Broughton

Ross Gray

Ross Gray

Kevin Gillander

Kevin Gillander

Jasper Billig

Jasper Billig

Elke Billig

Elke Billig

Craig Few

Craig Few

David E. Morrison

David E. Morrison

James Hemond

James Hemond