

Select Board

Informational Meeting Minutes

May 10, 2022

* Members in Attendance: Gary Allard, Rob Begin, Sue Hayes
* Others in Attendance: See attendance sheet.
* An unofficial informational meeting was held in lieu of the monthly Select Board meeting due to improper warning of Meeting Agenda, lack of Zoom link and absence of two board members and the Town Clerk. The monthly meeting will be rescheduled and warned for Tuesday, May 17th.
  + Access to change/update the website will be extended to the Town Clerk and Treasurer.
* Treasurer Report:
  + Heather has provided First Quarter Financial Report (budget to actual), Fire Dept. First Quarter Financial Report (budget to actual) and Special Reserve Account spreadsheet to Select Board members and is waiting for their responses.
  + There is a $534 difference in the January 2022 reconciliation that can’t be unraveled. Auditors may have to perform a Forced Reconciliation in order to move forward. February 2022 reconciled.
  + Heather is addressing several of the Town Audit issues and is working on processes, procedures and responsibilities of Town Treasurer.
  + Division of duties – an Assistant Treasurer position is required to meet best practice of one person not being able to control all aspects of spending Town funds.
  + New Auditors require training. There is $200 in Town Budget for Auditor training. There may be more salary budgeted for Auditors than needed due to late start that could be used for training.
* ARPA Funds
  + Heather completed quarterly reporting with the Dept. of Treasury. Full amount was taken.
  + An ARPA Committee came up with a list of projects. Heather will send the list to Board members.
* Highway Department:
  + Mud season is over.
  + Need a contract for 3/4” crushed gravel. Prices are up.
  + No accident report or insurance claim filed for damage to Town Garage door. Damage has not been fixed. Happened many years ago. Clear policy of what steps should be taken are not in place.
  + Heather to meet with AOT to close out work performed with a grant.
* Town e-Mail:
  + Mike provided Select Board members with comparison of Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace. Sue and Rob support the selection of Microsoft 365. Board to decide at next meeting.
* Sexton
  + Bids for mowing cemeteries and Town Office Building: No written Statement of Work, no written contracts. Warner talked with three potential bidders.
  + Discussion of Sexton duties approved at a Select Board Meeting on 9/13/21 vs. description of Sexton duties outlined by the State. At issue is the authority of Sexton to enter into contractual agreements.
  + Urgent need to take action with Memorial Day fast approaching. Town Clerk may have received bids.
  + Warner also wants to repair a fence that is falling down and repair some headstones.
* Items not able to address tonight:
  + Festival Permit
  + Driveway Permit
  + Dog Licenses Warrant

These items will be addressed at May 17 Board Meeting.

* Citizen Concerns:
  + Ron Gray – when Marcel Lapierre declined the nomination for the Treasurer position at the Town Meeting, he was left with the impression that the duties of Treasurer would be split between two people and that additional funds would not be required. Rob stated that the Select Board will need to figure out if additional funds are required for the Assistant Treasurer position.
  + Select Board received 3 e-mails from concerned citizens.

1. Joe & Sandy Babcock – complaint of a torn up Class IV road at Old County Road this Spring. The road has since been repaired by the Highway Dept.
2. Justin Stahler – concern with “road creep”, ongoing efforts to widen roads. Several locations throughout the Town have been widened well over 50’.
3. Clem Gray – concerned about several Highway Dept. items that will be addressed at next week’s Board meeting.
   * Dave Morrison – Citizens Concerns should be at top of Select Board meeting agenda vs. at the end. As Chairman of the Select Board, Gary Allard prepares the agenda. He explained that the Board has to address Town business that has already been identified before asking citizens to bring up new issues. There is a chance that some of their concerns will be resolved as the Board takes action on old items. Action will not be taken on citizen concerns when they are brought up, they will be added to the next meeting agenda to give Board members time to research and devise a resolution. Approximate times will be added to the agenda so people can arrive a little later in the meeting.
   * Dave Morrison – there was no transparency in the rank choice voting for the appointment of the 5th Select Board member at the last Board meeting. Rob read the results of the votes. Sue had the highest number of points with 12.
   * Discussion on the amount of business the Select Board has before it. Gary, Sue and Rob believe that it will take an additional meeting each month. The full Board can discuss and take action at next meeting.
   * Discussion on why the Town can’t continue to do “business as usual”, issuing contracts without a competitive bid process or written contracts. Sue explained that contracts is an area where fraud can occur, costing residents more than they should be paying. There are two acceptable contract methods: Invitation for Bids – where the Town invites 3-5 qualified contractors (known entities to the Town that will provide high quality services) and selection of sealed lowest bid; and Request for Bids – where the work is advertised, all bidders are welcome but then the Town has to devote resources to evaluate the bids for “best value”, throwing out bids that are suspect. Bids only work if there is a clear description of the work to be performed and a written contract to guarantee that the Town will get the services it is paying for.
   * Heather Gonyaw – would like guidance on Appropriations from the Board. There is no written policy on when expenditures should be paid out. Specifically, she would like to give the Library their appropriation. Gary didn’t see any reason why she couldn’t do that.
   * John Gillott – Will the Town follow the budget that was voted on at Town Meeting or will the Board continue practice of previous Board, borrowing funds not approved by voters? How much do we owe in loans? Rob stated that it is evident that the Board has a lot of work to do and establish priorities. With a full Board at next Tuesday’s meeting, priorities can be set and start being worked on.
   * Kathy Hodgdon – can the Quarterly budget report be put on the Town website? Heather is waiting on Select Board review/comments and then it should be able to be posted.
   * Ron Gray – The Revised Delinquent Tax Collector Report posted on the Town website seemed inappropriate and unprofessional.
   * Debbie Allard
     1. Concern with Leave paid to elected officials: In all of 2021 Jessy Pelow was paid 160 hours of Leave, and Donna Berry was paid 30 hours of Leave. In just one month of 2022 Jessy Pelow was paid 160 hours of Leave ($4,480) and Donna Berry was paid 65 hours of Leave ($1,105). There is not an Employee Handbook and there is no Leave Policy in place.
     2. Concern there was a misappropriation of funds and falsifying a public record: Jan 2021 - Select Board Meeting Minutes were altered.

Feb 2021 - Board Member Fred Saar obtained an unapproved loan at a bank.

The Select Board should address both of these issues or refer them to the appropriate place to be addressed.