

PRELIMINARY MINUTES

**TOWN OF LUDLOW
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

January 8, 2018

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman Logan Nicoll
Brett Sanderson Bruce Schmidt

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

John Neal

STAFF PRESENT:

Frank Heald

OTHERS PRESENT:

Carl Matteson Paul Orzechowski
Ted Reeves Vince Guerrero (Okemo Valley TV)

1. **Call to Order**

- A. Howard Barton called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All members present except John Neal.

2. **Consideration of any Changes, Additions or Removals to the Agenda**

- A. Frank Heald advised that no changes were necessary.

3. **Approve Minutes of Previous Meetings**

- A. Howard Barton advised that the minutes to be reviewed are from the meetings on December 4, 2017, December 18, 2017 and December 28, 2017.
- B. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Brett Sanderson to approve the minutes from December 4, 2017, December 18, 2017 and December 28, 2017 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. **Comments from Citizens**

- A. There were none

5. **Liquor Control Board**

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- A. Howard Barton advised that this is for outside consumption for Homestyle Hotel, dba Main and Mountain Bar and Motel. The application has been approved by the Police Chief.
 - B. **MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Logan Nicoll to approve the liquor license request for Homestyle Hotel dba Main and Mountain Bar and Motel.**
 - C. Bruce Schmidt noted that Chief Billings had suggested a change in the hours of operation that had been requested. The applicant requested 4:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. and the chief suggested 12:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.
 - D. Howard Barton said that the chief has some concerns for the area.
 - E. Logan Nicoll noted that at his last project hearing, Mr. Hyjek did not have a problem with changing the hours.
 - F. Bruce Schmidt suggested changing the hours to those suggested by the chief. The applicant may appeal this if he wants to.
 - G. **MOTION by Brett Sanderson amended to change the hours of operation to those suggested by Chief Billings, 12:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Amendment accepted by Logan Nicoll.**
 - H. **Amended Motion passed unanimously.**
6. **Consider & Approve VLCT's Advertising Schedule & Rates for Municipal Manager Recruitment**
- A. Frank Heald said he had included an email from Heather Law in the packets. She noted that THE VALLEY NEWS ads are very costly and she was asking if the joint boards would consider using THE TIMES ARGUS/HERALD instead. She added that it would be a broader distribution and still stay within the \$2,000 range.
 - B. Howard Barton said this would have to be run by the Trustees.
 - C. Frank Heald said yes.
 - D. Bruce Schmidt noted that THE TIMES ARGUS/HERALD papers are not what they used to be and said that THE VALLEY NEWS would have a more professional readership. His main concern is to get the ads out.
 - E. Frank Heald said all of the electronic ads are in place.
 - F. Board consensus for the changes.
7. **Execute 2018 Certificate of Highway Mileage**
- A. Howard Barton asked about any changes over the last year.
 - B. Frank Heald advised that there was a small piece by Buttermilk Falls Road that was included this past summer. There was a piece by Vermont Properties Real Estate that was backed out.
 - C. **MOTION by Bruce Schmidt and seconded by Brett Sanderson to sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage for 2018. Motion passed unanimously.**
8. **FY 2019 Budget Workshops**
- A. **Ambulance**
 - 1) Frank Heald said that included in their packets is a memo outlining changes to the initial budget draft they had seen. Due to changes in staffing because of decline in volunteers. For the past 2 years, the deficit has been funded from reserve funds. This year, they are proposing fully funding the service by assessing the towns (Ludlow, Cavendish and Plymouth) on a per capita basis. Ludlow's share would be \$68,400. This would increase the budget to 4.6%

- 2) Bruce Schmidt suggested that Ludlow should possibly get something extra for being the “host” town. We incur additional cost for plowing, building maintenance and lawn mowing.
- 3) Frank Heald said we are only looking to fund the operational shortfall. He added that 70% of the calls are for Ludlow. Ludlow utilizes the service to the greatest extent, with the nursing home and Okemo Mountain. He added that the population of Ludlow in the summer grows to an additional 1,500 to 2,000 people and in the winter much more. He added that Cavendish does have other options that they have been discussing.
- 4) Howard Barton said if Cavendish did leave, it would cut down the call volume. He agrees with Bruce Schmidt, that Ludlow does have additional costs.
- 5) Frank Heald said that the Ambulance Service does support all but about \$130,000. This must be allocated to someone and defensible. Per capita is more defensible than call volume. If shares were based on call volume, the contributions from other towns would be less.
- 6) Bruce Schmidt said we just did a big change in the Police Department and now this. He suggested an arbitrary assessment of \$50,000 for Cavendish, and \$15,000 for Plymouth because of Ludlow’s additional costs of building maintenance, plowing, mowing and trash.
- 7) Frank Heald said that the Ambulance service is 24/7 and they are there whether they go to other towns or not.
- 8) Carl Matteson said they would lose about \$80,000 if they lose Cavendish.
- 9) Brett Sanderson asked about the recent mailings.
- 10) Carl Matteson said they sent to all 3 towns and collected about \$10,500. It was better than expected.
- 11) Howard Barton asked what other towns do.
- 12) Carl Matteson said most do per capita. He said that Woodstock also balance bills the towns for unpaid patient call bills.
- 13) Frank Heald noted that the \$10,500 was not included in this budget and will bring it down somewhat.
- 14) Bruce Schmidt asked if they have considered balance billing.
- 15) Carl Matteson said we send the bills to collections or write them off. He said that the balance billing is in the arrears. Bills for 7/1/16 to 6/30/17 will be billed next year.
- 16) Frank Heald said it is a budgeting nightmare.
- 17) Bruce Schmidt said we should consider it for down the road.
- 18) Frank Heald said that the Ambulance service is a proprietary fund and the shortfall should be treated with an appropriation.

B. Transfer Station

- 1) Frank Heald said there is an additional concern about the transfer station. We are subsidizing permits. He bag program was designed to avoid pay to throw. There have been questions about what goes into the purple bags and the honesty of who is using them. He suggests that permit fees be increased or pay to throw be included.
- 2) Bruce Schmidt said he does not want pay to throw up there.
- 3) Frank Heald said the property managers have their customers buy the permits and get the bags. Now, the property managers are just using the bags and not going across the scales. The across the scale income has dropped significantly. He said that the residential permits are \$10.00; business permits, like small book stores, are \$50 and commercial permits are \$100. We have allowed commercial to have the business rate and need to watch that.
- 4) Brett Sanderson suggested raising permit rates to \$25, \$75 and \$125.
- 5) Frank Heald suggested \$20, \$75 and \$125.
- 6) Bruce Schmidt said we need to make sure which companies are businesses and which are commercial. He asked about plastics.
- 7) Frank Heald said we have been sending trucks that are full of plastics, but little weight. The 3rd compactor will reduce those trucking costs. We are still doing well on cardboard and

getting a lot of it from a local source. He will rework the budget with the increased permit fees. And make sure there is a stricter interpretation of business and commercial permits.

C. Schools

- 1) Frank Heald said there are no operational changes in the school budget for FY2019. There are things in our budget that are school costs like uniforms, busses for sports and sports equipment, but he recommends we leave things as status quo for the time being, because it all benefits the students.
- 2) Howard Barton said no one disagrees, but Ludlow taxpayers have been picking it all up for years and Mount Holly does not have it in their budget. A percentage should be billed to Mount Holly. We can't use our gym, so we have been busing the teams to Green Mountain for home games and Ludlow pays for that.
- 3) Bruce Schmidt said that about 30 to 40% of the students are from Mount Holly. He would like to see Mount Holly pay their share.
- 4) Howard Barton said it would be a lot of work, but it's a lot of money.
- 5) Bruce Schmidt said this should be discussed with the Mount Holly board. He asked Frank Heald what Mount Holly's costs should be.
- 6) Frank Heald said transportation costs would be hard to figure.
- 7) Bruce Schmidt said we would need to go to Mount Holly quickly because they are also in the budget process. He said we should ask for reimbursement for their portion. We need to cut our budget.

D. Tax Rate

- 1) Bruce Schmidt asked where the board would like to see the tax rate go to.
- 2) Brett Sanderson asked what impact the change in the transfer station fees will have.
- 3) Frank Heald said about \$25,000. It's .14 for every \$10,000. He said they can get under 4%.
- 4) Bruce Schmidt said we need to cut expenses to \$140,000.
- 5) Frank Heald said we can get to \$150,000.
- 6) Bruce Schmidt said he would like to see the rate get to 3.5%.
- 7) Frank Heald said that would be pretty steep. He added that they can get to any place by cutting from all departments. This is a reasonable budget.
- 8) Bruce Schmidt said he did not expect the additional \$68,400 for the Ambulance Service. The budget was at 2.7% before that.
- 9) Frank Heald said that he had explained at the last meeting that there was an issue with the Ambulance Service and that we cannot keep funding the shortfall out of the reserves.
- 10) Bruce Schmidt said there is a volume issue; we need the two ambulances or more mutual aid. The taxpayers have confidence in this board to keep the rate down. Other departments will have things taken away to add to the Ambulance. Or, we can explain to the taxpayers at town meeting why Ambulance is so high.
- 11) Howard Barton said 3.5% is our goal.
- 12) Frank Heald said it will come from several places and we will find out in a year and a half, June 2019, how well this works out. He recommends biting the bullet now for Ambulance. They will need new equipment down the road.
- 13) Bruce Schmidt said we need to shoulder the burden now. This is a health safety situation. It is our responsibility to stand up at town meeting to explain to the taxpayers why the Ambulance Service budget went up so much.

9. Set Date to Sign 2018 Town Meeting Warning

- A. Frank Heald advised that they will meet next Monday, January 15th to finish the budget. The board will also need to meet to sign the Warning for Town Meeting. This meeting will take place on Thursday, January 25th at 8:00 a.m.

10. **Department Heads Reports**

- A. Howard Barton advised that all reports are in.

11. **Other Business**

A. **Senate Bill for Public Notices**

- 1) Frank Heald advised that there is a bill in the Senate to allow electronic media for warnings and public notices. The younger generation uses all electronic versions and this may be the way of the future. Their packets include a copy of a letter to the legislators which supports the legislation. We already post our notices on our website. VLCT supports the bill.
- 2) Bruce Schmidt said he wonders if the town can just put it on our own website. We would have to pay for other web postings.
- 3) Frank Heald said it is a value decision. THE VERMONT JOURNAL is the least expensive media.
- 4) Bruce Schmidt said he likes using the town website and we need newspapers. He is not in favor of paying for other sites.
- 5) Frank Heald said they can discuss this at their next meeting.

B. **Dog Walking at Site 2**

- 1) Frank Heald explained that there have been concerns about people not cleaning up after their dogs at Site 2. It is a water supply source for the town. He will bring this back at the February meeting.
- 2) Logan Nicoll suggested baggie stations.
- 3) Bruce Schmidt said people can bring their own baggies.

C. **Wheelabrator Funds**

- 1) Bruce Schmidt asked about the funds received from the split up of Wheelabrator.
- 2) Frank Heald said they are kept in the Land Fill fund and part will be used for the proposed third compactor and Transfer Station improvements.

D. **Transfer Station Sewer/Water**

- 1) Bruce Schmidt asked if there are plans to put water/sewer up at the transfer station.
- 2) Frank Heald said the sewer would be a long haul and as for water, there is a rock ledge at the bottom of the driveway. The portable facility is heated in the winter. It would be very expensive to put in town water/sewer.

12. **Set Date for Next Meeting**

- A. Special meeting on January 15, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.
- B. Next regular meeting will be February 5, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

13. **Sign Warrant Orders**

- A. Warrant orders have been signed.

14. **Possible Executive Session/Personnel/Contracts**

- A. Frank Heald advised that an Executive Session is not needed.

15. **Adjourn**

- A. **MOTION by Brett Sanderson and seconded by Bruce Schmidt to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

Howard Barton, Jr., Chairman

Brett Sanderson

John Neal

Bruce Schmidt

Logan Nicoll