

**PRELIMINARY MINUTES**

**TOWN OF LUDLOW  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Special Meeting  
December 12, 2023**

**6:00 P.M.**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brett Sanderson, Chairman      Bob Brandt      George Tucker,, Jr.  
Scott Baitz      Justin Hyjek (Phone)

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Brendan McNamara

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Steve Meyers      Marissa Selleck

**AGENDA**

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

- A. Brett Sanderson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. **CONSIDERATION OF ANY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR REMOVALS TO THE AGENDA**

- A. Brendan McNamara said that no change is needed.

3. **CORRECTIONS TO UNAPPROVED MINUTES FOR THE MEETING HELD ON DECEMBER 4, 2023**

- A. Brendan McNamara said that at the meeting on December 4, 2023, the board approved the Liquor License for Yeah Wine Shop. It was listed on the minutes as 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> class, it was 1<sup>st</sup> class only.  
B. **MOTION to correct the minutes specific to the Liquor License for Yeah Wine Shop to 1<sup>st</sup> class license. Motion passed unanimously.**

4. **SELECT BOARD TO REVIEW AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF ANNUAL LEASE OF 'STEAR'S PIT' WITH OKEMO**

- A. Brendan McNamara said that at their last meeting, the board noted that the printouts received were missing sections 2G.  
i. Okemo further agrees to undertake, on behalf of Ludlow, all responsibility for the winter maintenance of Okemo Ridge Road (f.k.a. Apache Ridge Road) from the Loft Tavern, so-called, to the intersection of Ponus Road. Winter maintenance shall include plowing Apache Ridge Road from the afore-described locations and sanding the same when necessary. Okemo agrees to plow the Okemo Mountain Road (f.k.a. Access Road from Route 103 to the Upper Cross Road intersection. LUDLOW agrees to provide OKEMO the sand and/or

- ii. salt it uses in connection with this maintenance, provided that LUDLOW is reimbursed for excess and/or salt use over-and-above municipal highway maintenance standards.
- iii. He said that West Hill has not been used for the shuttle.
- iii. Brett Sanderson noted that in Section 1 a) the period should read December 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.
- B. **MOTION by Bob Brandt and seconded by George Tucker, Jr. to approve the Lease for the Stearn's Pit with Okemo with correction to period dates to December 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.**
- C. Steve Meyers asked how the lease rates have been increased over the years.
- D. Brendan McNamara said it is based on the Urban CPI, adjusted yearly, not to be less than 3% or exceed 5%. Last year is was about 4%.
- E. Brett Sanderson noted that Okemo maintains part of the road.
- F. George Tucker, Jr. said the lease was \$79,759.08
- G. **Motion passed unanimously.**

## 5. **FY2025 BUDGET WORK AND REVIEW**

- A. Brendan McNamara said that the budget is about 75% complete and the Department heads' reports are in. They will be making a master for the next meeting. This meeting is a start.
- B. Administration
  - i. Brendan McNamara said that Administration is mostly level funded – down 1.5%. There will be a few tweaks. The insurance costs have increased about 12 – 13% and it is unavoidable. There will be some partial reorganization. He said there is no Part Time Assistant. That was when the Planning and Zoning assistant split her time with the office.
- C. Ambulance
  - i. Brendan McNamara said that he and Stephanie Grover have been meeting. He said that since they have hired more full- time employees, the overtime and part time numbers have decreased. He said that they have taken over the Mount Holly service and they do need 2 ambulances. He said the contract with Mount Holly is about \$88,000. He said there was a mistake in the payment note last year and the \$27,400 is coming out.
  - ii. George Tucker, Jr. asked about Mount Holly numbers.
  - iii. Brendan McNamara said he does not have them tonight.
  - iv. George Tucker, Jr. said that an increase of 31% seems high.
  - v. Brendan McNamara said the numbers are still rough
- D. Buildings & Grounds
  - i. Brendan McNamara said that they added a full- time assistant who works part time at the Community Center. He said that insurance and FICA are the largest part of B&G budget.
  - ii. George Tucker, Jr. said it also includes the windows for the Senior Center.
- E. Cemetery
  - i. Brendan McNamara said that cemetery has a fund balance of about \$45,000 and will use it to trim down the budget. They will have an increase of about 4%. He said that with the flood, some of their staff were also working at the Community Center.
  - ii. Brett Sanderson said that the Cemetery Commissioners have been setting aside funds for paving and stone restoration. They try to do chunks at a time. They prefer to pave larger

- areas, plus they need to pave the new upper section. They have to bring someone in for the stone restorations.
- iii. Justin Hyjek noted the new mower/tractor and noted that labor is also up from \$49,700 to \$60,000.
- iv. Brendan McNamara said they are still calculating out the FEMA work. He said they were on track before the flood and he will pull out the FEMA numbers
- v. Justin Hyjek noted that the Grounds Foreman is up 91% and the Sexton is up 6%.
- vi. Brendan McNamara said that accounts for the increases the board approved this year in August.
- vii. Scott Baitz asked when they will be doing the paving.
- viii. Bob Brandt said next year.
- ix. Brett Sanderson said they will also be doing the new section.

F. Community Center

- i. Brendan McNamara said that the Community Center Assistant costs decrease will be offset by the increase in staff labor.
- ii. George Tucker, Jr. noted the 25% increase in Utilities.
- iii. Brendan McNamara said that is heat and electricity.
- iv. George Tucker, Jr. said that the Community Center was used more in 2023 due to the flood.
- v. Brendan McNamara said that is not in here, but fuel skyrocketed.
- vi. Justin Hyjek asked if we can increase revenue.
- vii. Brendan McNamara said he will talk to Nick Miele, try to limit costs and increase revenue. Maybe look at grants. He said that it is hard to get building use fees. For example – how to charge a soup kitchen.
- viii. Marissa Selleck said they recently had a Recreation Committee meeting and discussed fund raising. They should market the fitness center more. They don't charge huge fees and it is affordable.
- ix. Brendan McNamara said we need to make sure that we do collect the fees. He said we will eventually need to replace the equipment.
- x. Marissa Selleck said that the kids like the Community Center.
- xi. Brendan McNamara said that their budget will not change much.

G. Fire Department

- i. Brendan McNamara said that he and the chief will be meeting this week to review the budget. He said there is \$15,000 for equipment for trucks
- ii. George Tucker, Jr. asked if they are setting aside money for trucks.
- iii. Brendan McNamara said they signed on to a retirement program at a substantial cost to the town - \$50,000. And we are not ready to go forward now with it. If one department goes, the others will also.
- iv. Scott Baitz said there is not a big appetite in town for that and we shouldn't consider it at the present time
- v. Justin Hyjek that the actuals for Training increased last year to \$12,000.
- vi. Brendan McNamara said it is on the docket for his meeting with the chief. Some of it is to pay for the training, but some is to pay for someone to go to the training.
- vii. George Tucker, Jr. noted that Protective Gear is up 25%.
- viii. Brendan McNamara said each set is about \$3,000. He said that the LOSAP program was presented to the Select Board and is a retirement program for volunteers, based on time served and age.
- ix. Marissa Selleck said it was presented as an incentive
- x. George Tucker, Jr. said no other town in Vermont has started that program.

- xi. Scott Baitz said they also wanted to go back 5 years.
- H. Highway Department
- i. Brendan McNamara said that Ron Tarbell is dead on at 3.1% increase. He said the grader is in the state and we need to decide if we will purchase or lease.
  - ii. George Tucker, Jr. asked if it is already allocated.
  - iii. Brendan McNamara said yes. He is on a program to rotate equipment replacement. We have been down one truck to 2 weeks and the trackless breaks down a lot.
  - iv. Brett Sanderson said our trackless is used for more functions than it is designed to be used for.
  - v. Brendan McNamara said they run about \$150,000.
  - vi. Brett Sanderson said ours is about 5 years old.
- I. Listers Department
- i. Brendan McNamara said that the \$6,000 increase is for the increase in the assessor's contract.
  - ii. Bruce Schmidt referred to page 16 and asked about the 11% increase in Workman's Comp.
- J. High School Building
- i. Brendan McNamara said that Repairs and Maintenance increased by \$2,000 and Custodial Labor increased by \$500.
  - ii. George Tucker, Jr. asked if there will be an increase in the Tenant lease.
  - iii. Brendan McNamara said they need to bring that back up in the spring and set up a rate structure. We need to have a community discussion about what the people want to do with that building. The school now has state funding. He said people want input.
  - iv. Marissa Selleck said the school is having a development meeting on Thursday and would like to come back and talk to the board.
  - v. Brendan McNamara said the lease is in place, but if it is to be extended is something for community discussion.
  - vi. Justin Hyjek said it was a 5-year lease and expires in 2024.
  - vii. Brett Sanderson said that is this coming spring.
  - viii. Brendan McNamara said they will need a new lease and again, we need community discussion.
- K. Planning Services
- i. Brendan McNamara said that this is a work in progress. He said a big issue is whether to renew the Registry Rental contract. They also added a full-time assistant. (It was needed.)
  - ii. George Tucker, Jr. noted that there was an increase included for the Planning Commission but not for the DRB.
  - iii. Justin Hyjek asked what were the Advertising costs
  - iv. Brendan McNamara said notices and posting of hearings.
  - v. George Tucker, Jr. suggested that the costs included for Legal was low. He said he will talk to Rose Goings about that.
  - vi. Brendan McNamara said the numbers are wacky because of the flood.
- L. Police
- i. Brendan McNamara said that the Police budget is pretty straight forward and is affected by the union contract. He said insurance is up and we added a 5<sup>th</sup> officer. The increase is about 8.8%.
  - ii. George Tucker, Jr. asked about vehicles.

- iii. Brendan McNamara said they are good at this point.
- iv. Justin Hyjek asked how many dispatchers we have.
- v. Brendan McNamara said 5.

M. Parks and Recreation

- i. Brendan McNamara said that Nick Miele does a good job with this budget. The Support staff is hourly and some of their costs should be added to the Community Center Operations. The real increase is the cost of the fireworks and it will be partially covered by Magris. It was \$3,000 last year and this year \$14,000. We have included the Magris donation of \$6,500 under West Hill revenue.
- ii. George Tucker, Jr. asked if Magris is okay with the increase.
- iii. Brendan McNamara said yes.
- iv. Brett Sanderson suggested we advertise and may get donations.
- v. Scott Baitz said the Okemo location is a great spot.
- vi. Justin Hyjek asked about the Fields (Fletcher, Little League and Dorsey) and no increase. Is this because we are using the fields at the old high school.
- vii. Brendan McNamara said it is okay to level fund because we are not using the fields at Fletcher, but we are using Dorsey. He said that the Little League field is gone and not sure what insurance will cover.
- viii. Justin Hyjek asked about the Dog Park noting that it was over budget for a few years. Will they be reopening it
- ix. Brendan McNamara said there are about \$10,000 in donations and we will get some money from FEMA and insurance. We will put it back.
- x. Justin Hyjek suggested that while it was recently rehabilitated, we should still put \$1,000 - \$1,200 in for maintenance.
- xi. Brendan McNamara said he will talk to Nick Miele about that.
- xii. Marissa Selleck said the focus is to locate the Little League field at the high school with a hybrid of 60 and 90 feet. She said it makes more sense to move it to the high school.
- xiii. Brendan McNamara said that consolidating the fields will lower our maintenance costs.

N. Solid Waste

- i. Brendan McNamara said that Patti is on top of this. They added one full time person. He said the flood affected their numbers. Disposal fees are lower.
- ii. George Tucker, Jr. asked about the tractor.
- iii. Brendan McNamara said that is addressed separately. He said it works, but needs to be replaced. They are considering a simple lease.
- iv. George Tucker, Jr. asked about the bathroom project.
- v. Justin Hyjek asked about the town logo trash bags.
- vi. Brendan McNamara said the cost is about \$28,000 per year. He said that all of the transfer stations have different procedures. We do the bags. He said that Ludlow's is considered the "gold standard" for transfer stations. We get revenue from the sale of the bags and weighing. He said that Cavendish uses tickets and that is incredibly inaccurate and hard to keep track. He said the Ludlow system works. He added that it is tough to make money at the transfer station.

O. Town Clerk/Treasurer

- i. Brendan McNamara said there are wage and insurance increases.
- ii. George Tucker, Jr. noted that revenue is down and asked why.
- iii. Brendan McNamara said he will talk to Ulla.

- P. Brendan McNamara said he will have a master, full copy soon. They are in good shape, but the budget still needs some tweaking.
- Q. George Tucker, Jr. said he would like at least one more meeting.
- R. Brett Sanderson suggested adding it to the meeting on December 19<sup>th</sup> – if time allows.
- S. Brendan McNamara said that they must submit the first draft of the town report to the printer by January 19, 2024. He will have paper copies of the budget for them next week.

6. **OTHER BUSINESS**

- A. George Tucker, Jr. suggested they look at the Rental Registry, 1% Local Options tax and a Capital Improvement plan.
- B. Brendan McNamara said he thinks there is a Capital Improvement plan.
- C. George Tucker, Jr. said we need real numbers. He mentioned the trackless.
- D. Brett Sanderson said they should get into a rotation of replacement for trucks.

7. **POSSIBLE EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. Brendan McNamara said that an Executive Session is not needed.

8. **ADJOURN**

- A. **MOTION to adjourn by Bob Brandt and seconded by Scott Baitz. Motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisha Klaiber

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brett Sanderson, Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Justin Hyjek

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Baitz

\_\_\_\_\_  
George Tucker, Jr.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bob Brandt