

Wallingford Selectboard Meeting
Minutes
January 3, 2022

Selectboard Members Present: Bruce Duchesne, Kathy Luzader, Patricia Pranger, Rose Regula, and Nelson Tift.

Others present: Sandi Switzer, Julie Sharon, Phil Baker, and Greg McCormack.

Selectboard Chair Nelson Tift called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Agenda Amendments. None.

Minutes. R. Regula made a motion that was seconded by K. Luzader to approve the 12/20/21 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried (5-0).

Pay Orders. R. Regula made a motion that was seconded by B. Duchesne to approve the 01/04/22 pay order total of \$55,278.69. Motion carried (5-0).

Honorable Mentions. N. Tift noted residents of Nash and Circular Drive continued the Christmas Eve tradition of lighting candles along the roads. Ozzie & Linda Mercado donated to the food shelf. Lisa Donohue and family routinely pick up trash along Route 140E and other roads. On December 17, they filled up an extra-large bag of trash in just 35 minutes.

Road Commissioner's Report. Road Commissioner Phil Baker said there were mechanical issues with both the 2014 and 2016 Kenworth sanders. He expected the 2014 to be repaired in a day. He noted South Wallingford Crushed Stone had increased prices across the board by \$2/ton. The road commissioner said he had submitted paperwork to the state AOT's Pam Thurber regarding a revised load rating on the Van Wyck Bridge and was awaiting a response.

N. Tift asked about budgeting a down payment on a new grader with financing over a five-year period. Mr. Baker said he only talked to Milton Caterpillar about a price (under \$300,000). He said John Deere in Springfield had a five-year 0% financing, but he was unsure whether that would be extended to municipalities. Mr. Baker said a Case dealer in Georgia, VT sells graders and he would get a price. He said it would take six months to a year to for delivery.

N. Tift said the Revenue Augmentation Trust funds was one source of revenue for the grader purchase, but he said the FY'23 budget would need to include a down payment. By consensus, the Board agreed to include a down payment for the grader in the next budget with the amount to be set at the 01/17/22 meeting.

Public Comments. None.

Building Use Request. N. Tift said Nan Dubin had requested use of the Town Hall second floor for an upcoming candidate forum. He noted he wanted to avoid crowds gathering in the building due to the pandemic.

K. Luzader suggested approving a Zoom meeting candidate forum with just the candidates and moderator at Town Hall. After further discussion, the Board agreed by consensus to approve the Building Use Request for a Zoom meeting.

Recreation Committee Resignation. N. Tift read aloud a Letter of Resignation from Michael Luzader, Tabitha Davis and Cassie Ahearn from the Recreation Committee. B. Duchesne made a motion that was seconded by P. Pranger to accept the resignations. Motion carried (5-0).

N. Tift said letters of appreciation would be sent to those individuals.

FY'23 Revenue Budget. Board members reviewed figures to date related to Ordinance Fines line 4503. With sheriff patrols at 20 hours per week in the new budget cycle, the Board agreed to set line 4503 at \$7,500. Summer Recreation income line 4545 was set at \$2,500; Elfin Lake Gate line 4547 at \$6,000; Elfin Lake Concessions line 4548 at \$2,200; Recreation Field Advertising line 4549 \$0; Communication Group line 4553 \$4,800; Great Elfin 5K line 4555 \$0; Recreation Programs line 4556 \$0.

J. Sharon said some accounts were never approved by voters and carrying over unspent funds from budget to budget amounted to the same thing. She asked whether the Board wanted to include articles on the Town Meeting Warning to establish Reserve Funds. As an example, J. Sharon explained excess funds from Communication Group could go into a voter approved Reserve Fund or into the general fund (if no Reserve Fund was established) at the end of the fiscal year.

P. Pranger said the Town could end up with Reserve Funds for every category. B. Duchesne said excess funds should be rolled over into the general fund and Board members agreed. P. Pranger said the Town was supporting the Communication Group (monthly newsletter) in the budget as part of a service to residents and hoped donations would cover expenses.

K. Luzader asked about Wallingford Day line 4554. J. Sharon calculated income and expenses and said the balance was \$6,664.02 through June 30th.

B. Duchesne noted Wallingford Day was not a Town function and the municipality needed to get out of the banking business. He said an outside professional auditor would question these practices. The Board agreed \$6,664.02 would cover the annual event this summer. By consensus, the Board agreed to budget \$0 on Wallingford Day revenue line 4554 and \$0 on Wallingford Day expense line 5816 with the plan to budget a nominal amount (suggested at \$1,000) in future budgets for the annual event. Board members agreed any excess Wallingford Day funds from FY'22 would roll over into the general fund.

N. Tift read through the rest of the Revenue line items filled in by Town Clerk and Treasurer Julie Sharon prior to the meeting. No changes were made.

FY'23 Administration. Board members agreed to level fund budget line 5000 Auditor Stipends at \$150 and line 5001 Selectboard Stipends at \$5,100 (\$1,000 per Board member and \$1,100 for Board Chair). Line 5002A Assessor Clerk Salary was reduced to \$2,000 based on hours worked. Following a recommendation from NEMRC's Chris Miele; 5002B Assessor Expenses was set at \$7,250; line 5002C Property Maps was set at \$1,650 based on an estimate from CAI Technologies; and 5002G Assessor Contract was set at \$18,400 - an increase of \$3,400 based on NEMRC's recommendation. Hourly assessor rate will remain at \$95/hour.

N. Tift said he reviewed Vermont League of Cities and Towns Municipal Wages and Compensation manual compiled with data from surveys completed by municipal officials from across the state. He said Wallingford's town administrator had the second lowest pay rate in the state with the lowest a part time administrator who worked 7 hours a week in Lowell. He said the median was \$28.95. N. Tift recommended setting a rate of \$27/hour. The Board by consensus agreed.

N. Tift said the VLCT compensation survey showed Wallingford's assistant town clerk/treasurer was the lowest paid for part time posts in the state. The mean average was \$18.01/hour. He noted the Board approved significant raises for the Highway Department in September to bring them in line with road crew salaries across the state. He said he wanted to do the same for other municipal positions. After further discussion, R. Regula made a motion that was seconded by K. Luzader to set the assistant town clerk and treasurer rate at \$17/hour. Motion carried (5-0).

By consensus, the Board agreed to set Zoning Administrator Salary line 5004 at \$5,100 and grant a 2 percent raise. N. Tift said the Town Clerk and Treasurer salary in the VLCT compensation manual showed Wallingford's salary for that post fell in the middle range. He added the federal Cost of Living raise (COLA) was 5.9 percent and the state retirement was 2 percent. By consensus, the Board agreed to raise the Town Clerk and Treasurer salary by 3 percent. By consensus, the Board agreed on 1 percent raises for the Highway Department (as they were awarded sizable raises in Sept.) and 3 percent for transfer station employees.

The Board set 5004A Zoning Expenses at \$300; 5007 Road Crew Overtime at \$15,000; 5010 Road Commissioner Stipend at \$2,000; 5011 Tree Warden Stipend at \$250; and 5026 Fire Warden at \$0 as they take transfer station punch cards instead. N. Tift said Tree Warden Rob Barker had submitted a budget report, which included plans for the upcoming year.

Insurance line 5025 Insurance was set at \$96,750 for health, liability, unemployment, disability, eye and dental. Line 5041 Health Officer stipend was set at \$250.

Revenue Augmentation Trust Article for Town Meeting. N. Tift read aloud a draft Town Meeting Warning article related to the termination of the Revenue Augmentation Trust (Fernfield Farms). The language proposed by Kathy Luzader, Pat Pranger, Tammy Heffernan and the town administrator was based on Selectboard instructions from a previous meeting. B. Duchesne made a motion that was seconded by R. Regula to approve the Town Meeting article as written:

Shall the voters of the Town of Wallingford appropriate 2/3 of the Revenue Augmentation Trust upon the date of its termination to be used for Capital Project(s) as determined by the Selectboard with 1/3 of the balance to remain in the custody of the Trustees of Public Funds to lower future taxes.

Motion carried (5-0).

Town Meeting Articles. J. Sharon provided an overview of various funds: the Bridge Fund was first included as a Creek Road Bridge line item in the FY'12 budget for voter consideration at the 2011 Town Meeting; the Building Fund was added as a line item to the budget in 2006 for a Town Hall renovation and then funded by cell tower lease income; the Cemetery Fund was established prior to 1965. J. Sharon asked whether articles should be placed on the Town Meeting Warning asking voters to approve creation of Reserve Funds for those monies. She also asked whether voters should approve Reserve Funds for Conservation and Recreation certificates of deposits and unspent monies.

By consensus, the Board agreed to include Building and Bridge Reserve Fund articles on the Warning. By consensus, no Reserve Fund articles related to Recreation, Conservation or Cemetery will be added to the Warning.

Employee Handbook - Combined Time Off Request. N. Tift said Road Crew member Charlie Woods offered to share some of his Combined Time Off with new employee Laurie Phillips as she did not get paid holidays until her 180-day probationary period ends due to language in the Employee Handbook:

Permanent full-time employees will be paid for the number of hours the employee normally works on the holiday following their 180-day probationary period.

N. Tift said Mr. Woods was particularly bothered by the fact that Ms. Phillips was not paid for Veterans' Day and she is a veteran. B. Duchesne said the Employee Handbook should maintain the 180-day probationary period, but he said the probationary period should have nothing to do with paid holidays.

By consensus, the Board agreed to amend the handbook language to:

Permanent full-time employees will be paid for the number of hours the employee normally works on the holiday.

Property Map Update Agreement. By consensus, the Board approved CAI Technologies contract to update property maps to April 1, 2022 for \$1,650.

Town Hall Floor Refinishing. Board members approved by consensus a quote from Don Tredtin to refinish the major areas of the Town Hall second floor without moving exhibits at a cost of \$2,400. The town administrator will verify whether the wood stairs leading to the stage are included in the price.

COVID Protocols. The Board discussed whether to resume Zoom municipal meetings. By consensus, the Board agreed to continue in-person meetings. K. Luzader advised the latest Covid spike warranted more cautious behavior.

E Waste Collection Agreement Extension. By consensus, the Board approved an extension to an existing agreement with National Center for Electronic Recycling, Inc. for the collection of e-waste.

Selectboard Concerns. K. Luzader suggested using Building Funds for Elfin Lake concession stand improvements. N. Tift noted resident Gary Fredette had emailed the full board with the same recommendation.

Other Business. P. Pranger asked about Daniel Alcorn and Sumio Seo's interest in volunteering for two of the vacant seats on the Recreation Committee. N. Tift said the Board would revisit the direction of the Recreation Committee at an upcoming meeting.

N. Tift noted Assessor John Tiffany's decision related to the Narragansett tax exemption request was in the Board's packet.

N. Tift pointed out the letter of support written by the town administrator on behalf of Monica DeLorme's application for funds to develop a Village Market.

It was announced Bill Lohsen would no longer be part of the Building Committee.

Submitted By: Sandi Switzer/Town Administrator

APPROVED THIS 18th Day of January, 2022

WALLINGFORD SELECTBOARD

Bruce Duchesne _____

Kathy Luzader _____

Patricia Pranger _____

Rose Regula (Vice Chair) _____

Nelson Tift (Chair) _____