

**West Rutland Select Board Minutes**  
**January 12, 2015**

**Present:** Chet Brown, Peter Bianchi, John Harvey, Mitch Frankenberg, Sean Barrows, Joe Skaza, Michael Skaza, Tom Lacz, Mike Mosier, Sheriff Stephen Benard, Mary Ann Goulette.

**Call to order:** John Harvey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with pledge of allegiance.

**Agenda:** On a motion by John and seconded by Mitch the agenda was approved as written. Motion passed unanimously.

**Minutes:** John made a motion to adopt the minutes of 12/22/14 as presented. Peter seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**Public Concerns:** None

**Discussion Items:**

**Police budget:**

The police budget was presented with a 3% increase to \$69,416. Animal control will stay the same at \$8,500. Chet asked why revenues were lower by almost half than last year. Sheriff Bernard explained when crime is high, tickets are down. Investigating cases is very time consuming and takes away from patrolling. Sheriff Bernard is going to apply for additional grants, which could allow more services available to the town. Sheriff Bernard mentioned the School may not renew their contract for a resource officer as their grant is about to run out. This will use more of the sheriff's resources. Sean asked how much time is the resource officer? Stephen said there were about 7 juvenile cases and a two assaults which he figures is about 8 hours a week.

Sean asked if they have they dealt with random dumping of garbage or have they resourced it out. Stephen said they can identify who it is through the contents of bag and deal with it appropriately. Sean suggested if they needed help to contact The Agency of Natural Resources and they could help. Stephen said he would look into it with Lt. Fox.

Mary Ann asked if an award could be offered to find the person(s) responsible for starting the fire on Clark Hill. Sheriff Bernard said he would look into it and talk to Sgt. Castle about it. Joe Skaza believes if it's pursued with a reward the person(s) could be found and the town could be reimbursed.

**Fire Budget:**

Mary Ann and Joe went through all line items. Overall fire budget is up 5.79%. One of the largest increases is fuel. Joe hopes they can make it on \$2500 as they have bigger trucks with bigger engines. The other bigger increase was in equipment maintenance. Joe does not have enough resources to test the hose. He found a company that will test it

for .22 / foot. The department has 14,000 feet of hose. The company could do it in a day versus the department trying to do it over weeks. It would be around \$3,200 for next year to have this done. Joe said it could be done about every 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The bond payment also increased. A refinance was done and the town is overall saving substantial amount of money but it causes a higher payment during the first few years. Mary Ann suggested taking the hose testing expense out of their savings which is now at \$131,000. After some discussion John and Sean said to keep the hose expense in the line item in budget since it's a maintenance expense not a capital expense. Joe said the pumper truck is the oldest and may have to be replaced sometime in the near future. Joe wants to keep building up savings account to have down payment available for a new truck. Michael's opinion was that capital savings should not be used for maintenance. Joe also mentioned that it is \$250/day for 40 days to rent a truck if one of their trucks were out of commission due to accidents/repairs. Chet asked about fireman's fund for 6K. Joe explained how many of the nearby municipalities are moving towards a hourly pay for the volunteers versus the current point system we use. Currently volunteers have to leave their jobs to respond to a fire call. The volunteers don't get paid by their employer for this. Joe wants to contact other departments on how they pay hourly. Joe thinks there would be more volunteers if we went hourly. Michael says based on last years hours at 12\$ would be around \$16,000. Michael said we need a solution to entice people to volunteer and retain the good ones they have. Michael said there has not been a waiting list for volunteers in 22 years. Mitch asked if the community is aware of the need for more volunteers. Michael says no because they always come to aid people. Joe says their crew is all cross-trained across the board and they have enough but they want to keep them. The department also lost their volunteer administrative person. Mary Ann said our office could help with administrative work. Mitch asked Joe what they need for admin help and Joe said most importantly they need someone to complete fire reports as they are submitted monthly. There is also filing, documentation of training and submitting information to insurance companies. Joe says they would need help with payroll if they went to hourly pay for volunteers. Mary Ann said that would be no problem.

#### **Water Budget:**

Overall budget is up 2.1%. Chet asked what the assistant labor line item represents? Ed says it is their summer help and IT help. John asked why workers compensation went up? Maryann said increasing age increases workers comp insurance. Ed found a new equipment maintenance company called LCS that should cut the current contract in price. Ed mentioned we need someone to come look at the pump at Pine Hill as it doesn't appear to be working right. It runs all the time not just when pressure is high. John asked about the tank maintenance expense. Ed said every 5 years the state requires the tank be inspected with cameras. Sean asked if the vehicle maintenance is enough. Ed thought it was as the van just needs running boards. The van is 10 years old but Ed takes the van out whenever he can to keep it going. Sean mentioned getting rid of van and truck for one new vehicle but Ed said he didn't think that's necessary at this time as the truck seems to be running fine. Ed added that he will be spending more time training with Derrick Root. It's important for him to be trained in all aspects of the water

management and Ed feels he has great potential. Ed wants him to take the Sacramento course which will teach him all he needs to know about water management.

**Wastewater Budget:**

The wastewater budget didn't change much, up .3%. Electricity fell to a lower rate so its decreasing every year. Sludge management is kept low as it is sent to Stratton for free to be used as "seed" for their inventory. Ed has made a lot of changes since he has been here and mentioned that Frank is really diligent about the changes Ed has made to save money. Ed is going to mentor Derrick more going forward so he is cross trained is wastewater as well. John asked if there are any pump stations in danger? Ed said Elm Street pump 2 was a problem as a lot of rags were getting stuck in the pump. He back pumped with Frank and got rags out and it seems to be running fine now. Pump 1 may have to be rebuilt. Ed suggested getting new pumps if any large users come in with the Center Rutland expansion. Ed said that Barnes Street could use a new generator as it is smaller than Clarendon Avenue. Brookfield services could provide a new generator. Those expenses would come out of savings which is at \$300,000. Chet asked if we have a portable generator and could we use that instead? Ed said we do but it's more than what we need for Barns Street plus its good to have an extra on hand. Sean asked if the town has a network between pump stations and the plant. Ed said only between Pleasant Heights to well house. The signals weren't working well and it went down 3 weeks ago during a bad storm. Ed and Sean recommended using phone apps to record all pump activity etc. for networking. Unfortunately there is no signal. John gave 2 references for help in generators, pump handling etc. Both are current vendor of our already.

Mary Ann said the town hasn't had an increase in the municipal rate in the past 7 years. Currently our budget will produce a 3 cent increase. With a 10,000 decrease – would equal a 2 cent increase. John said we can't level fund forever. We have \$426,000 in our fund balance. Chet suggested trying two scenarios taking 26K and 50K from the fund balance and run the numbers. All said we should keep fund balance at 400,000. Next meeting Mary Ann with bring new scenarios to set the tax rate.

**Town Manager Report:**

Met with WWII Committee and they have a design for front lawn. Sean feels that the board should recommend that Mary Ann be part of the project management as it's on the town's lawn. John agrees that the town should be involved as well. Sean made a point that with Dan Pratt doing the design he too should be able to work with Mary Ann to manage project. The next WWII meeting is Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>. There is a new heater in the garage and its working well. New events coming up at the town hall are The Not Too Far From Home Comedy Show on January 31st and Caitlin Canty's album release party on January 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Action Item:**

Strong Communities Better Connections Grant – The town received the grant for the Rutland and West Rutland Smart Growth Connection Plan. The town is very fortunate to receive this. It will look at land use, market analysis, streetscape and transportation improvements.

Chet made a Motion to accept grant and it was seconded by Sean. Motion approved.

**Board Member Concerns**

Peter wanted to know who was responsible for the tree removal on Clarendon Avenue. Chet said the Banias did since it was out of the town's right of way.

**Adjournment**

Peter made a motion to adjourn at 7:53 p.m. Chet seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christen FitzGerald