

**West Rutland Select Board Minutes**  
**January 11, 2016**

**Present:** Chet Brown, Mitch Frankenberg, Sean Barrows, Stephen Benard, Ed Savage, Mary Ann Goulette, Nick Basile, Ed Tuliper, Carl Wener, Bill Harvey, Peg Harvey, Joe Salengo, Mike Moser, Lisa Garcia, Michael Skaza, Tom Lacz, Joe Skaza

**Call to order:** Sean Barrows called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. with pledge of allegiance.

**Agenda:** A motion was made by Chet to accept agenda as written it was seconded by Mitch . The agenda was approved. Motion passed unanimously.

**Minutes:** Chet made a motion to adopt the minutes of 1/4/16. Mitch seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Chet requested to change the sidewalk paving article on page 2 of the minutes from 65K to 80K. Sean made a motion to accept Chet's change. Passed unanimously.

**Public Concerns:** Residents from Harrison Avenue were present to voice their concerns regarding suspicious activity (speeding, garbage and noise zoning violations and suspected drug dealing.) They are very concerned for their safety as well as the community's. Nick and his neighbors have been diligent in recording evidence and giving information to the Sherriff's department. They believe the Sherriff and the Deputies are great but believes there needs to be other agencies involved. He said the situation is getting out of hand with noise and activity. Mary Ann agrees – many people have complained about Harrison. Bernard also agrees and said Harrison Avenue is a resource draining endeavor. Bernard said statewide the drug task forces are dealing with bigger caseloads. Bernard will call the U.S. Attorney's office on Wednesday to take the situation to the next level. There have been cases where the U.S. Attorney has seized houses of homeowners who are knowingly renting to tenants that deal drugs. Benard will keep the board up to date with what he finds.

**Discussion Items:**

**Sheriff Budget-** The Sheriff budget is up just under 2% directly related to the increase in labor. Animal control stayed the same at 7,644. The labor increased to 70,800 from 69,416.

**Library Budget -** Carl Wener, Joe Salengo and Bill Harvey were present to talk about the library budget. They have had excellent donors to help them this year but all the generous donations are restricted for building improvements and maintenance. The library's total expenses have gone up 25% from 2014-15. Payroll has gone up 35%. They are not comfortable with one person working in library. They have had to call police 3 times during the last 6 months for protection. People have been at the library under the influence of alcohol/drugs and have had people suspiciously hanging around

the back of the building. The library has installed a new elevator, heat pumps, and handicap bathrooms with the donations they have received. They reported a 33% decrease in heating costs with the new heat pumps. New security cameras were installed too. Programs and staff are what drive up costs. With volunteer work they have been able to digitize their records/inventory. They need extra funds for operational expenses. They got 42K last year and would like the Town to consider raising it to 50K this year. They have a 6K deficit this year. Libraries are used for a lot more than books now with more community activities. Mary Ann asked how many hours a week they were open. Carl said about 24 hours a week. Mitch asked what is the mix is for attendants (kids vs. adults) They said it's about a 50/50 mix. The library is now linked with the state with ILL software. It allows the library to loan to and from other libraries. It helps save them from buying other/extra volumes. They informed the board that Pittsford's budget is 89K from the town which is comparable to West Rutland in size etc. Sean asked if it was a possibility to get a HS student or college intern/volunteers? They said it's hard to get volunteers to dedicate allotted times, but an intern would be helpful. They will consider that-Mary Ann has a contact on Castleton she can refer them to. They will be short this year and probably next year too so the increase to 50K will be very helpful.

**Fire Budget-** The only major increase to their budget this year is in wages. The department wants to change their structure from volunteer workers to paid town employees. Many other departments are doing this. Currently the department pays firefighters following a point system which averages about a dollar a call. Michael explained that they have an excellent team and wants to keep them. It is getting harder to get people to attend fire calls as they can't afford to leave their jobs (and commonly second jobs) for the reimbursement they get currently from the department. They also think they can raise recruitment with the incentive of being an employee. They also believe firefighters would be less likely to seek part time work if they could get paid a fair wage for attending calls. The department proposed a pay scale ranging from \$10-11/hour depending on experience/certification. They think it is a reasonable wage comparing to surrounding towns. They also proposed a fixed annual stipend of \$750 for the chief, and \$500 for the two assistant chiefs. Last year was a high call volume/hours given by firefighters. Using last year's call hours they would like to budget \$28K to cover the hours (about 1640 hours) which breaks down to 20K for labor, 2K for stipends, additional 3K to cover the points they owe firefighters for the current year and an additional 3500 for FICA taxes to be matched by the Town. Joe mentioned the traditional 6K point system reimbursement they have gotten over the past 4 years has never been raised. He also mentioned that the department does a lot of fundraising, they raised 12K last year which helps the budget. The members have put 4K in the ladder truck and purchased nozzles (just one is \$3K) The department performs their own cleaning/grounds maintenance work which also helps the budget. The department would like to take the 3,200 from last year's hose inspection line item and increase their software line in communications. The FCC mandated narrow banding which has shrunk radio frequencies. There is also a decrease in reception in VT. Since that has happened they have experienced difficulty paging firefighters. The department used \$150 of their fundraising money to try a 6 month trial with software that will text the firefighter directly when a dispatcher radios a call. The software allows firefighters to respond on

their phone via text to the Chief so he knows who is attending the call. It also has GPS tracking so the Chief can see where people are in transit to the station. The cost is 900/year. They will still need pagers as the system isn't a guarantee if internet is down. Sean asked what the call breakdown is. Michael will have it Friday for the town report. The Department would also like to use 10K of their reserve to purchase a truck to replace their 82' van that was purchased years back. There are many problems with it and Joe does not think it's worth putting money into it. They will sell it. They have been using their own trucks to transport equipment and its damaging their vehicles. Mary Ann mentioned there is an extra water department truck they could use. Joe said there isn't enough time to pick up the truck enroute to a call. It would be more efficient to have their own at the station. Ed said the water department uses it minimally but they use it for plowing. Joe mentioned it would be a problem if there was a fire while town was using the truck to plow. Chet said he doesn't see the problem spending 10K for a truck...there is enough in the reserve that keeps building every year. It's such a minimal amount. Mitch made a motion to allow the fire department to spend 10K from the fire department reserve for a used utility truck and Chet seconded. It passed unanimously. In November the department voted to keep the officers the same. Mitch made a motion to accept the officers as voted and it was seconded by Chet. Joe will remain the Chief and Michael as 1<sup>st</sup> and Tom Lacz as 2<sup>nd</sup> assistant chiefs. Lori is the clerk. It passed unanimously.

**Water** – increase of 3.8% A few line items were adjusted lower slightly. Salaries are up due to the extra employee. Electric is lower with efficiency measures. It was questioned whether the Center Rutland will increase budget. The bond payment is due in December 2017. There is nothing in the budget as the expectation is to have user fees to pay for that. Another increase to the budget is an additional 10K for capital improvements (for a total of 20K this year). It is very low. There are no improvements in plan now but the town should be prepared. The town has a relatively young water/pipe system. There are a couple of pipes we may have issues with in the future and they are being monitored. Ed had a sanitary survey and they found that the Town has AC pipes. They asked if we are testing for asbestos as we should be. The surveyor is not concerned about health issues- they were more concerned about how long it will last and making sure the asbestos testing is done going forward. The Town has 6" AC pipe and it should be 8". The small pipe on Woodward was fixed. Savings was increased for that. The Town's water pumps are doing OK. Ed is still trying to find a water leak. We are typically at 280/90 thousand gallons a day for usage this time of year and we were at 310 thousand gallons a day. Mondays seem to higher on a regular basis. Ed mentioned people may be running water for fear of freezing pipes. It appears only Elm Street pump is running higher. VT Rural Water came down to test the problem areas and they didn't find anything non functional. Sean was wondering if GMP can do something with their real time reading with their smart meters-Ed said possibly. The water department is doing a lot of research to find this leak. Ed would like to replace/upgrade one/two lines a year which is represented in the 10K line maintenance. Mitch asked if the 10K is sufficient. Ed said we have a good basis for an asset management program in replacing lines. With the 10K this year and the rate increase last year we should be OK. The board asked how accurate the

mapping to the lines was. It isn't accurate. Mary Ann mentioned a grant would help with the mapping costs but Ed mentioned AC pipe can't be easily located underground.

**Wastewater-** The Town's current main control board that runs the pump system and maintains readings is now obsolete. If the system fails now they have no way to manage the water cycles other than manually. That would be extremely labor intensive and problematic. The new system LCS Controls is recommending will be about 21K. It will replace the entire system and allow the water department to monitor/manage it remotely. Mitch asked if it will be obsolete before we get the cost out of it. Can we lease it for cheaper? Ed doesn't think it would be an option as. This system can be integrated with all the pump stations/wells to provide feedback on how they run. Chet made a motion to take 20,230 out of the capital account for the LCS Control system and Mitch seconded. It passed unanimously. There is also 162K in the sewer reserve account. Monies spent this year were on the garage, new truck and a new pump station. 150K was put in the capital account. Chet asked how the Town was with generators? Harrison Street is in need of one for about 25K. Main Street would be next after that but it's not critical. Ed is having a hard time getting contractors to put in a bid/quote for installation of the new pump station on Harrison. Ed can do some on his own but not the whole thing. It really needs to be engineered by someone independently.

Lisa Garcia was present to discuss her proposal for the Lister's Office. Lisa doesn't understand why it has to go out to bid. She thought anything under 16/17K required the town to request a bid. Lisa can refigure the numbers. She didn't want the total to change, rather make the Lister hours less and Lisa's more at a greater pay rate. She noted that Manchester is hiring an assessor for 50K for 2800 parcels. Pittsford spends 45K on their Lister department which has 1400 tax parcels. Lisa said if the town under budgets there will be more mistakes and under-assessing. Mitch asked her to explain her proposal. And Chet asked how many hours for each listers. She explained her proposal included her as an Assessor at 45/hour 7 hours a week for a total of \$11,655 with 2 listers she would meet with once a month for four hours. To keep the budget at 12,500 at her rates Lisa needs to see the breakdown of 12K (software, vs labor vs other misc.) Mary Ann said only labor is budgeted in the lister's number. Mary Ann said we discussed at the last meeting that we should issue an RFP to get other bids to get a fair budget number. VLCT's report shows the average assessor is paid \$30 hour. Lisa believes she is the most qualified in this area. The board is considering a few different models for the Lister department. One option is a contract assessor based on a per parcel fee. Another option is a contract for a Chair person with 2 listers. There is enough in the budget to accommodate a few different models. Lisa suggests comparing apples to apples – request a list of qualifications compared to her. Mitch thinks continuity is important in terms of hiring new people. Lisa is familiar with the Rutland County market. Mitch asked Lisa what her timeline was in terms of responding to her proposal. Lisa has other bids out so it will be better to do it timely.

**Action Items:**

**Request for extension-**The state is letting people pull out acreage from current use. With that, the state is behind in processing these and suggest requesting an extension in finalizing the Grand List until January 31, 2016. Chet made a Motion to sign the extension request for the grand list Mitch seconded. Passed unanimously.

**Engineering proposal-** The proposal for engineering the Marble Street parking lot came in at \$5300. Thrall was surveyed at 5K so it is in line. Chet made a motion to accept the proposal and Mitch seconded. Passed unanimously.

**Rutland Town Resolution-** Rutland Town presented a resolution to increase the input of Vermont municipalities regarding the siting of renewable energy projects in certificate of public good proceedings before the public service board. Mitch made a motion to sign the resolution for the reform and Chet seconded. Passed unanimously.

Board Concerns NONE

Meeting was adjourned at 9:26 by a motion made by Chet. Mitch seconded.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christen Fitzgerald