

Meeting of the Waterbury Select Board
January 18th, 2021
28 North Main Street

Present: M. Bard, K. Martin, M. Frier, C. Viens and N. Fish, Select Board; W. Shepeluk, Municipal Manager; and C. Lawrence, Town Clerk. The meeting was held via videoconference.

Public: Lisa Scagliotti, Waterbury Roundabout; ORCA Media; Curtis Ostler, Christine Wulff, Shannon DeSantis Gile and Dan DeSanto, Library Commissioners; Kathi Tarrant; Hadley Laskowski, Valley Reporter; and Almy Landauer, Library Director.

The meeting was called to order at 7:06pm.

APPROVE AGENDA

K. Martin made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by N. Fish and passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

K. Martin made a motion to approve the consent agenda items including the minutes of the January 11th meeting and liquor licenses for Maplewood Convenience Store and Thatcher Hill LLC. The motion was seconded by N. Fish and passed unanimously.

PUBLIC

There was no public comment.

SELECT BOARD ITEMS

Consider Town of Waterbury Declaration of Inclusion

Maroni Minter of the Vermont Racial Equity Task Force asked that the Select Board consider the following declaration: 'Waterbury condemns racism and welcomes all people regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, age or disability, and will protect these classes to the fullest extent of the law. As a town, we formally condemn discrimination in all of its forms and commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community. Waterbury has and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinion.' C. Viens asked if the residents of Waterbury would need to approve the Declaration. It was decided that the Board could so approve. M. Bard is in favor of the Declaration and would like it included on the website, if approved. A discussion was held as to why the statement is necessary. M. Bard stated it would be a statement of affirmation and that it is federal law that people cannot be discriminated against. C. Viens made a motion to adopt the Declaration of Inclusion. The motion was seconded by N. Fish and passed unanimously. The Declaration will be posted on the Town website.

Review Draft Annual Meeting Warning

W. Shepeluk screen shared the draft Annual Meeting warning and reminded the Board that the vote in 2021 will be entirely by Australian ballot. The tax collection due dates are proposed to be on August 13th and November 5th. W. Shepeluk brought the Board's attention to the proposed Article 8 on cannabis that reads as follows:

Article 8: Shall the town authorize cannabis retailers and integrated licensees in town pursuant to 7 V.S.A. § 863?"

This article can be broken in to two separate articles or left as one, to allow the production and/or sales of cannabis. The Board can decide next week whether or not to include this Article on the warning when it is finalized. There may be one additional article related to the Hunger Mountain Childcare Center. It is the intent to list the special articles separately. Discussion continued as to whether or not to include Article 8 on the warning.

Last week, the Waterbury Area Senior Center asked for an increase of \$2,500 in their funding. By consensus last week, the Board decided to put \$12,500 in the budget, an increase of \$2,500 from last year and funding of \$20,000 in a special article. The date for the informational meeting will be set when the warning is approved next week.

MANAGER'S ITEMS

Library Budget

W. Shepeluk screen shared the proposed library budget. S. DeSantis Gile gave a review of library activities during 2020. W. Shepeluk explained that the recommended tax revenue is \$433,535 and he has been charged by the Select Board to hold the tax rate at 51 cents. The proposed budget shows a deficit of \$16,562. The budget can be left as is, or expenses can be cut or revenues increased to balance the budget. This is a decision to be made by the Commissioners. The Select Board's role is to determine the tax revenue.

A discussion of the library budget and deficit continued. D. DeSanto stated that there are no line items that can be reduced where the effect will not be felt. A brief discussion was held about potentially raising the tax rate, but the Board has requested a level rate of 51 cents. The rate may be revisited later in the meeting.

Overall Budget Review

K. Martin screen shared the general fund budget. W. Shepeluk reviewed the budget and what was proposed for tax revenues for the general, highway and library funds. Based on the estimated grand list, the estimated tax rate is 51 cents. W. Shepeluk continued to review the general fund budget.

W. Shepeluk reviewed the fire department, health and social service, recreation, and planning budgets. He then briefly reviewed the debt management and special articles concluding the review of the general fund. The projected ending fund balance is \$802.00.

W. Shepeluk reviewed some of the CIP Funds and a discussion was held about amortizing some of the equipment and vehicles purchased with the \$1,366,880 loan by refunding the note.

The proposed tax rate was discussed and whether or not it should be raised by a penny or two, so that the increase in future years is not as dramatic. Discussion continued as to what the tax rate should be for 2021. Board members wanted to keep the tax rate at 51 cents, but with the pandemic, they were concerned over the dramatic reduction of the CIP budget allocation and felt a 2 cent tax increase was justified. By unanimous consensus the Board decided on a 53 cent tax rate for 2021. The Board then, by consensus, agreed to appropriate an additional \$5,000 of tax revenues in the library budget via taxes raised and will encourage the Library Commissioners to find the remainder of the deficit by reducing expenditures.

There being no further Select Board business, the meeting adjourned at 9:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carla Lawrence, Town Clerk

Approved on: January 25, 2021