

**Select Board Meeting, Thursday, January 18th, 2024, at 6:00pm**

**Location: Town Office Meeting Room: 37 High Street Cavendish Vermont**

**Present:** Bob Glidden (Chairman), Mike Ripley, George Timko, Shannon Devereux, Dave Norton, Rick Chambers (Town Manager) and Jen Leak (Recording Secretary).

**1. Call the meeting to order**

Bob Glidden, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**2. Adjust agenda**

Rick said that he would like to add item 3.a. Discussion on Town Meeting Warning

**3. Work on FY25 Budget.**

Rick said that he adjusted the salaries for the Highway department (winter & summer roads) since the budgeted amounts had not been fully spent over the last few years. He said that decreased the budget by \$10,000. He said that he added amounts for grass seed for the new hydro-seeder and crack sealing.

Rick said that he had been comparing this budget to the FY23 budget in error, so the estimated 29% increase over last year's budget was incorrect. He said that the current budget shows a 26% increase over the FY24 budget. Rick added that he did not have an updated Ludlow ambulance request so he is using last year's figure.

Rick said that the Town budget makes up about 25-26% of the total property tax rate. He handed out a pie chart showing the breakdown of town, education and fire district taxes. Mike suggested putting that in the Town Report for people to see. Rick said the increase in this year's budget, using last year's education and fire district rates, would increase total property taxes by 6.5%. He said that is about \$150 per year per \$100,000 of property valuation. He added that this budget does not include revenues so the actual increase will be a bit less. Rick said that he thought this budget puts more money into road maintenance and equipment, which were areas that needed it the most.

*Dave Norton moved/Shannon Devereux seconded a motion to accept the Selectman's Budget as written in the amount of \$2,456,889.39. All voted in favor.*

**3.a. Discuss Town Meeting Warning**

Rick said that he will put the usual articles together for the warning. George asked if he would email a draft for the Board to review. Rick said that he would. The Board decided to meet on Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm to review and approve the warning.

George asked if the Board would agree to put an article on the warning to grant tax exemption for the Black River Health Center for 5 years. He handed out a proposed article warning for the Board to review.

*George Timko moved/Bob Glidden seconded a motion to accept the Black River Health Center tax exemption article. All voted in favor.*

Rick said that Fletcher Farm has submitted a petition to have their tax exemption article on the warning. Rick said that he will put articles together based on what other towns have done to allow retail cannabis and to change the Town Meeting voting to Australian ballot. George asked if we needed an article to accept the Town Report. He said that had always been on the warnings previously but wasn't the last few years. Rick said that he would look into it.

Rick asked the Board what they wanted to include in their report for the Town Report. The Board discussed their annual report. The Board discussed whether to include anything about Greven Field.

Rick said that Greven Field will need to be a big discussion with the Board and Planning Commission since it is in the floodway and will need to be compliant with the Town's flood hazard regegulations. Rick said that he did not think it would be in shape for this spring's baseball season but playing in Ludlow may be an option. Rick said that he will have a draft report for Board to review next week.

The Board thanked Rick for his work on the FY25 budget.

**4. Adjourn**

*Mike Ripley moved/Dave Norton seconded a motion to adjourn at 6:43 pm. All voted in favor.*

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_