

Select Board Meeting, Thursday January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:00pm

**(Meeting Held Via Zoom Meeting)**

Meeting login info can be found on the Town Website

www.cavendishvt.com

**Present:** Bob Glidden (Chairman), George Timko, Sandra Russo, Stephen Plunkard, Brendan McNamara (Town Manager), Jen Leak (Recording Secretary), Kem Phillips and Peter Labelle.

**Absent:** Mike Ripley

**1. Call the meeting to order**

Bob Glidden, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**2. Adjust Agenda.**

Brendan said that he had no adjustments to the agenda.

**3. Hear Citizens**

There were no citizens wishing to be heard.

**4. Select Board to consider and approve People's United Bank Corporate Resolution that Jane Pixley, Trustee of Public Funds and Diane McNamara, Town Treasurer are authorized to act on behalf of the Town of Cavendish as so state in the Resolution.**

Brendan said that he had emailed this resolution to the Board for them to review. He explained that Jane Pixley is currently the only Trustee of Public Funds and the purpose of this resolution is to add the Town Treasurer, Diane McNamara, to be authorized to allocate funds as needed.

*George Timko moved/Stephen Plunkard seconded a motion to approve the People's United Bank Corporate Resolution that Jane Pixley, Trustee of Public Funds and Diane McNamara, Town Treasurer are authorized to act on behalf of the Town of Cavendish as written. All voted in favor.*

**5. Select Board to discuss options for March Annual Town Meeting.**

Brendan said that he would like to present some options for holding Annual Town Meeting this year in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines. He said that he would ask the Board to consider them over the weekend so that the full Board could make a decision at the regular monthly Board meeting on Monday, January 11, 2021. He said there were three options:

1 – the Board could postpone the meeting to a later date when conditions might allow an in-person meeting

2 – the Board could decide to hold an in-person meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup> and follow social distance and limited capacity guidelines

3 – the Board could decide to hold an informational meeting via Zoom and vote the Town budget by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, when votes are cast for the school budget and local officials.

He said that the Town Clerk didn't feel sending ballots to all voters was a good use of resources but absentee ballots could be requested.

Stephen asked if voting by Australian ballot would extend the budget process. Brendan said that it would not. He said that all the items normally put on the Town Meeting warning could be voted by Australian ballot.

Brendan said that he has received feedback from residents supporting the Australian ballot option. He added that the current allowed capacity for CTES multipurpose room was probably only about 50, which is less than typically attend Town Meeting.

George asked what the process would be if the budget was voted down. Brendan said that the budget would need to be re-presented, another informational meeting would need to be held and another vote conducted. He added that he thought that there was a way to reverse the Town Meeting decision so an in-person meeting and floor vote could be held later on if conditions had improved.

Sandra asked if an informational meeting was held every year. Brendan said that an informational meeting was only held if there was a special article which needed to be explained. He said that an informational meeting this year would be to present and review the budget and to answer questions. Brendan also said that anyone with budget questions could call him directly and he would advertise that in the Town Report which will be mailed to all registered voters in February.

Brendan asked the Board to consider these options so that a decision could be made on Monday.

#### **6. Begin work on FY2021-2022 Selectmen's Budget.**

Brendan said that he had emailed a first draft of the budget to the Board. He said that he would like to review it tonight without asking for any approvals since Mike isn't present. He said that he is still waiting for some pieces, such as the Recreation budget.

Brendan gave the Board an overview of the budget. He said that this first draft shows an increase of \$149,000 or 9% from last year, without adding any funds into the capital equipment or resurfacing funds.

Brendan explained that the state highway aid the Town receives every year is supposed to be used for bridges and road repairs. He said that in the past it has been added to the general fund but it should be put into a separate fund for road or bridge maintenance. He said that since the state highway aid is about \$150,000 per year he was comfortable leaving the paving funds out of the Town budget. He added that he has discussed this with VTrans and the Town Treasurer who both agreed.

Brendan said that he put the capital equipment fund contribution at zero since the budget was high but added that the equipment fund balance is pretty low and the Town needs a new loader. He said that he is looking into the costs of leasing vs buying a loader. Sandra commented that it might be worth adding some money back into the equipment fund. Brendan agreed that could be discussed. Stephen asked how unexpected expenses were handled. Brendan said that some repairs were planned for but agreed it was difficult while trying to maintain a reasonable budget.

Brendan said that the largest budget increases were due to increased costs of insurance and retirement, mainly due to employees joining or changing health insurance plans. He said that another area of large increase is paying down some of the debt that the Town holds, including the delinquent tax note, garage construction bond and grant revenue anticipation note.

Sandra asked how the Fire Department tax miscalculation on the FY20 tax rate has affected this budget. Peter said that the interest on the loan to cover that miscalculation is the only amount which directly adds to this budget.

Brendan said that another area of increase is the Solid Waste department. He said that salary costs have increased due to having two employees working there now and the hauling costs have also increased. Brendan suggested that the Board might look into increasing disposal fees to better cover operating costs.

George asked what the federal COLA was this year. Brendan said that he was using 2.9% for salary increases, same as last year. George commented that he thought the federal rate was 1.3%.

Sandra asked what the impact of this budget would be on property taxes. Brendan said that he would get that figure.

7. **Other Business**

Brendan McNamara – none.

Stephen Plunkard - none.

George Tinko - none.

Sandra Russo - none.

Bob Glidden – Bob said that the Proctorsville Fire Department volunteers would be able to receive Covid-19 vaccines in few weeks since they go on medical calls with first responders. Sandra asked if they were required to receive the vaccine. Bob said they were not.

8. **Executive Session (Employee Matter)**

*Sandra Russo moved/George Timko seconded a motion to enter executive session at 6:41 p.m. to discuss an employee matter. All voted in favor.*

*Bob Glidden moved/George Timko seconded a motion to exit executive session at 6:53 p.m. All voted in favor.*

9. **Adjourn**

*George Timko moved/Bob Glidden seconded a motion to adjourn at 6:54 p.m. All voted in favor.*

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

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