

**Town of Tinnmouth
Select Board
Thursday, January 13, 2022
Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes**

Members present: Meadow Squier and Cathy Reynolds in person, with Frank Sears via Zoom

Others present:

Via Zoom Eric Buffum – Road Commissioner, Sherry Johnson, Kim Harbaugh, Jenn Montoro,

In-person- Stan Wilbur-Public Works Project Manager, Rick Smyrski-Morton Buildings, Hollis Squier, Eric Davenport-Wallingford Rescue, Michael Fallar, and Gail Fallar – Select Board Assistant (SBA)

Frank called the meeting to order at 7:02 and welcomed everyone.

Board reviewed agenda, moved Wallingford Rescue to the top, added question from the Bond Bank.

Minutes: Minutes of 12/9/2021 – Meadow moved, Cathy 2nded, to approve as written, all voted in favor.

Wallingford Rescue Squad ~ Eric Davenport, President, was touching base to thank Tinnmouth for its annual contribution of \$3,000 and see if there were any questions. He advised calls have increased in the past couple of years, that Rutland Regional Ambulance Service covers for them if they are busy or can't get a team to go, and that they are looking for staff/volunteers. There are currently no Tinnmouth folks volunteering at WRS. Board thanked them for their efforts.

Public Works Facilities Update ~ Stan noted the Board had received the latest proposal for the town garage from Morton Buildings 1/12/22, and asked Rick to present. Rick apologized for not making the December meeting, advised that the latest total was \$576,434, which does not include any site work. The new proposal includes line items discussed at the November 11th meeting. Timing was discussed, as Tinnmouth does not have signed contract, and Morton is booking projects into early summer at this point, it will not be a spring ground breaking. July would be a target date if the Board signed now. Board expressed disappointment as they thought he had assured them the town would be among the first spring projects. They asked about a guaranteed start date, and expressed the need to review the proposed contract – having only received it a day ahead of the meeting. Rick advised that Morton was getting commitments every day, that there was no way to guarantee start or completion without additional cost, and that their part of the construction would only take about a month. Stan advised he had a few questions, but felt the Board could approve and any changes needed could be done via work change order – the big thing is to lock it in now. He inquired about a foundation design (Eric Buffum will need for site work), Rick handed it to Stan.

Michael expressed concern with the rush, urged the Board to take the time to review the proposal, as it is a big decision.

Stan advised that the Board has to accept it as Morton presents it. Frank inquired about a guaranteed start date. Rick advised the contract says target date is June 6th. Frank asked Eric B. for his thoughts, Eric advised to press the go button, July 1 would give him more time to get the site work done. Cathy expressed concern about the details – some need fine tuning – but the project needs to get done this year. Meadow expressed trust and confidence in Morton Buildings. Frank moved to sign the contract, Cathy 2nded, motion to include authorization for Cathy and Meadow to sign for the Select Board, as Frank was remote. Cathy would like the contract to include a statement that Morton Buildings certifies the building meets Vermont's energy code – not in there now, Rick noted it could be added later. All voted in favor. Cathy moved and Meadow 2nded to authorize the Treasurer to pay the \$172,930 down payment from the Capital Building Fund. All voted in favor.

There was a discussion about total cost, whether that should include the amount spent over the last several years on engineering, audit, studies, etc., from the regular highway budget. And whether the highway budget should be reimbursed from the Capital Building Fund. No action taken.

Well Quotes ~ Stan advised that none of the well drillers contacted had submitted a quote to drill a well at the town garage, he will check into it and report back at the SB meeting on the 25th.

Highway ~ Eric reported they are working on the roller for the grader, plowing lots of snow, cutting some brush, and has found someone to rebuild the pistons on the grader.

Michael inquired about recently watching the road commissioner plowing a bare paved road. Frank interjected that the road commissioner uses the proper techniques and personnel feedback is not appropriate in open meeting. Frank ruled him out of order, upon strong argument from Michael, and threatened to make him leave the meeting.

ARPA Funding ~ Regulations concerning the use of this funding have recently been relaxed. Board needs to think about possibilities/best use – parse it out in small projects or keep it all for the salt/sand shed?

Bond Application Question – The Bond Bank inquired about re-payment schedule, does the town want to pay interest only, for a year or two, or begin making principle payments now? Board requested more information.

FY23 Draft Highway Budget ~ Board discussed various line items, decided to change highway improvement projects to crack sealing (Eric is considering doing it in-house – suggested a couple of towns could purchase equipment necessary and share), extra help line - is \$7,500 enough, roadside mowing – town rent equipment or sub-contract. Excel spreadsheet for budget appears to have a couple of errors, SBA will review for the 25th.

Board reviewed end of year Capital Building Fund and Special Accounts summaries.

Roadside Mowing RFP ~ Board reviewed draft, Frank noted that if the amount is less than \$10,000 it doesn't have to go out to bid. After discussion, Board decided that an announcement at least needed to be made advising subcontractors about the opportunity. The RFP and map need a bit more editing before it is released via Front Porch Forum and *Tales of Tinnmouth*. Cathy and SBA will work on it.

New Loader RFP ~ Still being worked on, hope to be ready by the meeting on the 25th. Hollis advised the Board to consider purchasing a used one from the State's Surplus Property Agency – they often get used military equipment, town's get it as a discount – town has purchased a back hoe and loader before that way. Eric suggested leasing one, Cathy explained the Equipment Fund was created so that the town could buy equipment when it needed it, leasing is the opposite of that and costs more.

Potter's Culvert Arch Culvert Bid ~ Board reviewed and approved revised RFP – due on 1/25/22.

Financial ~

FY23 Draft General Budget ~ Cathy questioned why the new roof over the library section of the town office came out of the general budget and not the Capital Building Fund – Gail advised because the general budget could cover it. Board discussed the unencumbered balance in the general checking account - \$38,146 on June 30, 2021. Should it be left for cash flow purposes, used for a special expenditure, or returned to voters. No action taken.

Board briefly discussed budgeting or not for delinquent taxes, Barry Cohen was unable to attend. Decided to not budget for it. It will just be reported as additional income. Treasurer will try to report current year taxes paid late and prior year taxes paid, as separate lines.

Financial Report FY22– Board reviewed monthly reports, Cathy moved and Meadow 2nd to accept, all voted in favor.

Payroll Warrants

#23 dated 12/13/21 for \$3,111.08

#24 dated 12/20/21 for \$4,383.09

#25 dated 12/27/21 for \$2,171.82

#26 dated 12/31/21 for \$5,722.17

Accounts Payable Warrants

#12 dated 12/16/21 for \$ 13,171.42

#13 dated 12/23/21 for \$ 8,655.90

#14 dated 12/30/21 for \$ 453,452.33

#15 dated 1/6/22 for \$15,168.17

Meadow moved and Cathy 2nded to accept and approve warrants as presented, all voted in favor.

Old Business ~

Mill River Unified Union School District Proposed Amendment of Agreement – No update

New Business ~

2022 Town Meeting ~ Due to the continuing corona viruses, the Vermont Legislature again gave Select Boards options regarding annual town meeting’s held from the floor. They could hold it in person, move it to a later date, or switch to Australian balloting for this year only. After brief discussion, Meadow moved and Cathy 2nded to hold a virtual Informational Meeting on Saturday, February 26th this year, with Australian balloting for officers, budgets and public questions on Tuesday, March 1st. All voted in favor.

Petitions From Voters ~ Town Clerk Gail Fallar advised the Board that two petitions had been received with proposed articles for town meeting. As these petitions request changing the method of voting from voting from the floor for public questions and budgets, to voting those by Australian ballot, and that the recent legislation enabling the Select Board to switch to Australian ballot for this town meeting only, also states that these questions cannot be voted on by Australian ballot. This means there will need to be a special town meeting held at a later date to consider these articles from the floor. Board took under advisement.

Warning for Town Meeting ~ Board reviewed draft, still need to finalize budgets numbers, will do at its meeting on the 25th.

Select Board Report for the Town Report ~ Board reviewed draft, edited a bit.

Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) ~ Vermont Department of Taxes sent notice that Tinmouth’s CLA had decreased from 98.25 to 91.38 for 2022. This potentially means that the school tax rate will increase nearly 7% even if the school budget stayed the same. Cathy moved and Meadow 2nded to appeal this determination. All voted in favor.

Members Concerns – Need to consider unencumbered year-end balance, perhaps using some of it for the town’s share of the culvert project on North End Road.

Mail/Correspondence –

Executive Session – None

Next Meetings Schedule ~ Tuesday, January 25th at 6:30 and Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 7:00.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Fallar, Select Board Assistant