

**Town of Tinnmouth
Select Board
Thursday, January 11, 2024
Meeting Minutes (Regular)**

Members present (in-person): Kevin Eaton, Meadow Squier, and Judy Gilmore

Others present:

In-person: Michael Fallar, Eric Buffum-Road Commissioner, Marshall Squier, Melody Squier, and Gail Fallar-Select Board Assistant (SBA)

Via Zoom and phone: Sherry Johnson, Kim Harbaugh, Rick Fallar, David and Nancy Birdsall, and Alex Hillard

Meadow called the meeting to order at 7:00, welcomed everyone.

Members reviewed the **agenda**, added CLA Appeal

Minutes of 12/14/23 were approved as corrected (Kim was not at the last meeting). Judy moved, Kevin 2nded. All voted in favor.

Citizen's Input ~ Sherry requested meeting rules be followed to not allow comments during the meeting and asked that voting annual allotments individually should be put to voters in 2025 and that changing the road commissioner from elected to appointed should also be considered by voters in 2025.

Highway ~

Eric reported the road crew is working on the insurance company's list. He requested permission to order the culvert for the grant project on North East Road near the Patry's. He would like to get it done this spring. After brief discussion, Kevin moved and Judy 2nded to order culvert. All voted in favor.

West Tinnmouth winter maintenance was discussed – cost is much higher than expected or paid in the past. Board discussed options for next year, which included hiring Glenn or have a member of the road crew do it. Kevin and Eric will talk with the current contractor regarding expectations and cost.

FY25 Highway Budget – reviewed draft, made a couple of changes. Kevin moved and Judy 2nded to budget 3% for salary/wage increase, all voted in favor. Board will review and approve at meeting on the 16th. Draft total stands at \$634,800. Board decided to add a separate article asking voters for an additional \$25,000 for paving. It's been budgeted at \$100,000 for several years, as the cost of paving goes up, the distance being paved is shrinking.

Board discussed the Equipment Replacement Fund – cost of trucks and equipment is rising faster than the fund is growing – process for purchasing needs to change – Allegiance Trucks bought all the International dealerships in New England – so there is no way to bid that truck. The State's bid this year is International, perhaps that is an option. An 18-24 month lead time is needed. Equipment needs to be bid separately as well, and there is only one dealer in the state – that also has an 18 month lead time. Board will work on the process for FY26.

Equipment Procurement Procedure – Judy moved and Meadow 2nded to amend it to add trucks and/or equipment to the section dealing with state bids. All voted in favor.

Board reviewed VLCT PACIF's Risk Assessment Report on the new town garage. Eric advised the road crew will begin to address the issues raised. One included a fire alarm system - at the time the town garage was being built it would have added \$11,000 so it was not installed. Eric will report back.

Potter's Brook culvert project, total cost was over \$72,000. State grant was for \$36,000 (80% of initial estimate of cost.)

Those present discussed salt/sand sheds. It was reported that Ira recently completed theirs for \$250,000. Current estimate for the town is nearly \$1M. The Board is going to meet soon with D&K, AOT, and Steffanie at RRPC regarding conceptual design of the salt/sand shed. Board decided not to hold a public meeting until after that meeting.

Financial ~

Board reviewed FY24 reports and Bills and Orders. Meadow moved and Kevin 2nded to approve reports and the following Warrants. All voted in favor.

Bills and Orders ~ Payroll warrants #24 dated 12/18/2023 for \$3,874.54, #25 dated 12/26/23 for \$3,279.62, #26 dated 12/31/2023 for \$7,239.41, and #27 dated 1/08/24 for \$1,600.32; and **Accounts Payable** warrants #25 dated 12/28/23 for \$8,017.58, #26 dated 12/31/2023 for \$9,428.62, #27 dated 1/4/2024 for \$19,131.37, and #28 dated 1/8/24 for \$18,296.74.

FY25 General Budget ~ Board reviewed proposed draft. Judy moved and Kevin 2nded to separate the annual allotments to service agencies as individual articles for town meeting. After discussion regarding how to contact them to let them know about the change, how often the review might be (3 or 5 years), and giving voters a say regarding these allotments, all voted in favor. Proposed budget of \$268,525 minus \$46,675 (allotments) = \$221,800 was approved. Meadow moved and Kevin 2nded, all voted in favor.

Grant Application Policy ~ After brief review, Meadow moved and Judy 2nded to adopt a Grant Policy, all voted in favor. The policy requires any town committee or commission to seek Select Board approval before applying for a grant. SB needs to be aware of any required matches that may be required.

CLA Appeal ~ After brief discussion, Meadow moved and Judy 2nded to appeal the Vermont Tax Department's CLA (Common Level of Appraisal) and COD (Co-efficient of Dispersion) and ask for a re-determination. All voted in favor. This year's CLA dropped from 79 to 60, which would result in a huge increase in the education tax rate. The drop is due to sales of properties with the selling price double the town's assessed value. The reappraisal should bring that back to 100.

ARPA Funds ~ After brief discussion, Kevin moved and Judy 2nded to allocate ARPA Funds as follows: \$25,000 to the Tinnmouth Volunteer Fire Department, \$20,000 to the Old Creamery Project, and \$15,000 to the Capital Building Reserve Fund. All voted in favor.

Special Informational Meeting on the 16th Prep ~ Board will review the budgets, discuss when to hold the formal Informational Town Meeting, advise voters about separating service agency requests, and hear from the Vermont Farmer's Food Center regarding their request for town funding.

Select Board Report for the 2023 Town Report ~ Board agreed by consensus to the report Meadow wrote.

Feedback Forms ~ None

Members Concerns ~ Judy suggested considering using a separate email for the bidding process. Concern was raised about the Town's website – it's now .gov, it was .org. Some folks are having trouble getting to it. There seems to be an older version on the Internet. Nancy suggested it might be one she started many years ago and will try to remove it. Meadow advised she will not be able to attend the February 8th meeting, but felt confident that Kevin and Judy could handle it.

Correspondence ~ None not already discussed.

Next meetings are January 16th at 7:00 at the Old Fire House – pre-town meeting- and February 8, 2024 at the Town Office.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Fallar, Select Board Assistant