

**BRATTLEBORO SELECTBOARD
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2019
SPECIAL MEETING – 6:15PM
SELECTBOARD MEETING ROOM, MUNICIPAL CENTER
MINUTES**

Selectboard members present: Brandie Starr, Tim Wessel, Elizabeth McLoughlin, Daniel Quipp, and David Schoales.

Staff Present: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland, Town Clerk Hilary Francis, and Executive Secretary Jan Anderson.

Media present: BCTV staff and volunteers.

Others present: Robyn Flatley, Rikki Risatti, Anne E. Howes, Franz Reichsman, ASL interpreters Elizabeth Fox and Janet Dickinson, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Chair Brandie Starr called the meeting to order at 6:15pm. She confirmed that the meeting was properly warned.

MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Town Manager Elwell provided an update on the status of the properties upon which the Board recently issued a Health Order, located at 6 Reynolds Drive and 48-50 Central Avenue. He said that not much improvement had been made since the last inspections and that another inspection was scheduled on December 12. He said that because steady progress had not been made on the required improvements, the Town could impose daily fines of \$800 per day per address. He said that if substantial progress had not been made by the next inspection, the Town could ask the Court to impose an injunction with corrective action to be taken by a date certain. He added that the tenants were still on-premise because the most serious public safety violations had been addressed. There was some discussion by the Board.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Robyn Flatley spoke about health risks and safety concerns around 5G technology. She cautioned Selectboard members about “spreading misinformation” about the safety of the technology, saying there was no credible proof about its safety. She encouraged the Board to follow New Hampshire’s lead in considering forming a commission to study the health effects and risks of 5G. She encouraged stopping installation of 5G technology until it had been proven safe.

Franz Reichsman, from the Finance Committee, suggested that the Board include funds in the FY21 budget for the possibility of installing municipal broadband services.

Rikki Risatti said they appreciated the Board holding weekly meetings which provided members of the public more opportunities to speak. They also suggested that members of the public be allowed to vote on Selectboard motions in order to encourage democratic involvement.

NEW BUSINESS

FY21 Proposed Budget –

- (i) *Town Manager's Office*
- (ii) *Finance*
- (iii) *Attorney*
- (iv) *Town Clerk*
- (v) *General Services*
- (vi) *Risk*
- (vii) *Employee Benefits*

- (viii) *Bonds/Notes*
- (ix) *Human Services*
- (x) *Auxiliary Services*
- (xi) *Facilities Maintenance*
- (xii) *Municipal Center*
- (xiii) *Regional*
- (xiv) *Solid Waste*

(i-iii) Town Manager Peter Elwell reminded viewers that the proposed budget was posted on the homepage of the Town's website if they wanted to reference it during the discussion. He said that the Town Manager's budget was located on page 5 of the Operating Budget. He briefly spoke about the budgets for the Town Manager's Office, Finance Department, and the Town Attorney. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

(iv) Town Clerk Hilary Francis provided an overview of the department and she reviewed many of the tasks performed by Town Clerk staff, including issuing licenses, sale of cemetery plots, and voting and election duties. Rikki Risatti asked about pay, if any, for Representative Town Meeting Members. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

(v) Elwell spoke about the proposed General Services budget (page 6). There was some discussion by the Board about the proposed budget, allocating funds to support Selectboard goals, and raising Board members' salaries. Rikki Risatti suggested paying Board members \$25/hour.

(vi-viii) Elwell then reviewed the proposed budgets for Risk Management (page 7), Employee Benefits/ Compensation, and Bonds/Notes (page 8). There was some discussion on each of the topics and substantial discussion about benefits. Franz Reichsman provided his opinion and comments. Many Board members spoke of their concerns about the cost of health insurance and suggested that the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) and legislators apply pressures in the industry.

(ix) Elwell said that the Human Services Review Committee's recommendation to Representative Town Meeting (RTM) for FY21 was \$4,510 higher than the amount in the proposed budget (pages 8-9), and he suggested that the Board approve adjusting the figure accordingly to \$190,105. Rikki Risatti provided their comment and opinion. The Board reviewed several specific lines items within that portion of the budget. Board Members asked that the committee come to a Selectboard meeting in January to discuss their recommendations.

(x) Elwell reviewed increases and decreases in Auxiliary Services (page 9). There was much discussion by the Board about many items in the category. McLoughlin spoke of some concerns pertaining to the bus service. The Board requested that representatives from the bus company come and meet with the Selectboard. Franz Reichsman asked for additional information about the ambulance service. Elwell then noted that the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce ("BACC") and Downtown Brattleboro Association ("DBA") requested additional funds for the Community Marking Initiative ("CMI") in FY21. He said that BACC/DBA requested and received 10% of the FY18 rooms and meals receipts to fund the CMI this year, and now the organizations were requesting 10% of FY19 rooms and meals receipts, which would increase the amount in the budget from \$42,119 to \$43,748 (an increase of \$1,629). There was discussion that the CMI plan had not yet launched and consequently there was no data available about the success of the plan. The Board discussed whether it had discretion to release funds that were approved by RTM if the Board did not approve of the CMI plan in the upcoming year. Reichsman noted that if RTM approved the funds then the Selectboard would not have discretion about releasing them. McLoughlin expressed concerns about funds being automatically released without the Selectboard first approving a plan. There was substantial discussion by the Board about the need to impose conditions and adding the matter as a separate Article on the RTM Warning with certain conditions. Board members agreed to continue this discussion at a future meeting.

(xi-xiii) Elwell spoke about the newly created Facilities Maintenance category (page 12 of the budget). He also briefly reviewed the proposed budget for the Municipal Center (page 12) and items in the Regional category (page 16). McLoughlin requested that the Windham Regional Commission come speak with the Board in January and other Board members agreed. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

(xiv) Elwell spoke about the Transfer to the Solid Waste Fund (page 19). He discussed the volatility and instability of the recyclables market and spoke of many unknowns to be considered in estimating this area of the budget. Franz Reichsman asked several questions about the budget. There was much discussion by the Board.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

There was no further business.

MOTION BY ELIZABETH McLOUGHLIN TO ADJOURN AT 8:38PM. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Elizabeth McLoughlin, Clerk