

Town of Royalton
Selectboard Meeting Minutes DRAFT
12/12/2023 6:30 PM
Virtual / In-person Meeting

Royalton Selectboard: Stuart Levasseur, Chris Noble, Jerry Barcelow, Tim Murphy, John Dumville

Town Staff & Committee Members: Victoria Paquin (Town Administrator), Rita Hull (Treasurer), Loretta Stalnaker (Police Chief), Brad Salzman (EMD)

Public: Jo Levasseur, Beth Willhite, Kathy Hassey

Approve the Agenda: John moved to approve the agenda. Stuart seconded and the motion carried.

WRV Energy Committee: Kathy Hassey updated the board that Randolph has decided not to continue in the group and will pursue an energy coordinator position on its own. The WRV group is working to determine whether a full time or part time decision makes the most sense and what the actual costs will be. Kathy requested that the board consider adding an article to the town meeting warning. The board agreed by consensus that they would be open to an article for town meeting. They requested that Kathy have the article composed for the January 9th Selectboard Meeting.

Police Department: Loretta reports that she has a candidate for Sean's position. She requested that the board consider making the hire. Additionally, it was requested that the board consider allowing the officers to participate in VMERS retirement Group D, which is a special retirement group for first responders. This change does come at additional cost which is reflected in the draft budget for FY 25. It was noted that an executive session is needed to discuss the hire.

Beth Willhite let the board know that additional public safety committee details are forthcoming. It was discussed whether this will be an official ongoing town committee. It was determined that it would be an official committee and the board will make the appointments. Beth will send the board the names of people who are interested. There is a tentative January date for the first community forum meeting which Beth will send to the board with her report.

Buildings & Grounds: Walter reports that the hot water heater at the academy building needs to be repaired or replaced. To repair the current would cost approximately \$2,000. Replacing the unit with a heat pump hot water heater will cost approximately \$5,500. The board discussed other needs within the building and grant opportunities. *Jerry moved to install a heat pump hot water heater for a cost of approximately \$5,500. John seconded and the motion carried.*

Bid Review: Bids have been received and reviewed for the construction of the temporary road on Broad Brook Road. L&M had the low bid at \$59,000. The bid range was reviewed by the board. *John moved to award the contract to L&M. Tim seconded and the motion carried.* Chris will sign the necessary documents.

Budget Discussions: The general fund and highway fund budgets were reviewed. The police department labor budget was increased to reflect an additional part time officer as well as the change in retirement plan. The board discussed the overall increase in the amount of taxes to be raised, as well as the need to be prepared to present the budget at town meeting. At present, the budgets reflect a zero balance budget. In prior years, we budgeted to a deficit to spend down available fund balance. The FY 25 budget does not continue this practice. The board accepted the budgets in their current form and will review again in January.

Town Meeting Needs: Brief review of items that need to be accomplished in January. Budgets will need to be finalized, the town meeting warning needs to be drafted and the Town Report needs to be created. Victoria reminded the board that they will need to write the selectboard report. Tim noted that they should consider a dedication.

Approval of Warrants: *John moved to approve the warrants. Jerry seconded and the motion carried.*

Approval of Minutes: *Tim moved to approve the minutes of the last two meetings. John seconded and the motion carried.*

Other Business: A request was received to utilize the town office property for firearms training. The board discussed the request and determined that the town could not accommodate the request and suggested referring the requestor to existing firing ranges within the state.

Jerry moved to enter executive session at 8:04 PM to discuss personnel. Tim seconded and the motion carried.

Executive session concluded at 8:37 PM.

Jerry moved to authorize Loretta to hire an applicant for a full time position as requested. John seconded and the motion carried.

Jerry moved to offer VMERS group D to all qualified employees to begin July 1, 2024, with all qualified employees hired after this vote to be automatically enrolled as per the terms of the program. John seconded and the motion carried.

Jerry moved to adjourn at 8:40 PM. Tim seconded and the motion carried.

Victoria Paquin
Royalton Town Administrator