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MORRISTOWN

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
OF JANUARY 6, 2025

Members: Don McDowell, Christopher Palermo, Laura Streets, Richard Craig, George Cormier

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Brent Raymond, Town Manager; Judi Alberi, Executive Assistant; Tina Sweet, Finance Director; Gail Beck, Economic & Comm Dev Director; Elz Townsend, HR Director; Sara Haskins, Town Clerk/Treasurer

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Yon Perras, Uwanna Perras, Brent Teillon, Martin Green, Evelyn & Jerry Throne, Leah Hollenberger, Sheila Tarbox, Tony Cote, Donnie & Julie Blake, Jim Pease, Seth Jensen, Megan Rodier

**participating via Zoom*

5:30PM - CALL SELECTBOARD MEETING TO ORDER

Don McDowell called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 5:30 PM at the Tegu Building.

5:31PM - AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

Change item 1.Enhanced Energy Plan to last item of New Business and add item 7. Additional Budget Review.

5:32PM - APPROVE MINUTES

1. **Approve minutes of 12-16-24**
   Motion made by Chris Palmero to approve the minutes of 12/16/24. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried (5/0) with amendments.
   Correct a typo.

5:35PM - NEW BUSINESS

1. **Appointment of:**
   Lenny Wing as a Regular Member of DRB
   Chris Wiltshire as an Alternate Member of DRB
   Motion made by Chris Palermo to appoint current full time Develpment Review Board member Chris Wiltshire as an Alternate Board member and appoint current alternate member Leonard Wing as a full time Deveopment Review Board. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

2. **Consideration to adopting the Vermont 250th Anniversary Town Resolution**
   The Vermont 250th Anniversary Commission was established by Executive Order from Governor Phil Scott in December 2020 to inspire Vermonters to learn from the history, legacy, and context of the American Revolution and its impact on the state and nation.

   Motion made by Chris Palermo to adopt, approve and sign the resolution. Motion seconded by George Cormier. Motion carried (5/0).

3. **Consideration of Summer Recreation**
   Elz Townsend presented a slideshow for the summer recreation program. Peoples Academy has offered the use of the cafeteria and 3 classrooms for the program. 75 children will be accommodated in groups of 6-7 years, 8-9 years, and 10-12 years old. This number of children will only require 1 bus versus 2 for trips. The staffing requirements include 2 co-directors, 6 lead counselors, and 8-10 full and part-time counselors. The cost of staffing will total $106,000. There will be required counselor training. The fee per Morrisville resident will be $290/week, with a fee of $320/week for non-residents. This will be a cost-neutral program with no extra expense to the town. The next steps include staff recruitment, registration opening in the spring, and reserving space and activities.

   Don expressed the board members' thanks to the Morristown school system for housing this program. Also discussed by the board members were: the need for participants' committed enrollment for the cost of the program regardless of absences; consideration of cost allowances for multiple children enrolling per family; and an acknowledgment to the program initiators for all the time that went into this well-planned proposal to meet the needs of Morristown families.

   Motion made by Chris Palermo to move forward with the Summer Recreation program as presented. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

4. **Discuss Capitol project budget**
   Recently, the Highway Supervisor informed the selectboard about the roads and sidewalks that need repairs. New information was announced regarding the funding for some of these problems. The good news is that FEMA will reimburse the town for completed road repair work. The total amount expected is approximately $610,000.00 This can now be used to fund 90% of the problems identified as the most in need of repair on our paved roads and sidewalks. In addition to these funds, the town will request an article for the voters asking to raise taxes equal to 2 cents on the grand list for the bridge/sidewalk/infrastructure reserve fund. Brent Raymond commented that budgeting annually will be necessary to address the full scope of these problems. He anticipates this to be an 8-10-year cycle to catch up on the extra road expenses. Laura Streets asked if we have an established emergency fund account and was told we do. George Cormier supports Brent's plans by using the FEMA money which is the first step to addressing the roads/sidewalks problem.

   Motion made by Chris Palermo to move forward with the FEMA funds to address the paved roads and sidewalks. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

   Ron Stancliff is 100% behind the work on the roads and the culverts. Tony Cote suggested increasing the 2 cents tax to 4 cents. Others contributed to the conversation with references to filling potholes and repairing the Brooklyn St. Bridge. Laura suggested that the board needs to work on revenue sources. Jerry Throne agreed this was a step in the right direction.

5. **Additional Budget review**
   There is controversy about the library's lack of funding in the budget planning process. Don McDowell shared a report with the board documenting the funds granted to the library over the past 10 years showed a steady trend. The exceptions were in 2023 and 2024 when the library appropriations were increased. During those years, the library's endowment was in poor condition. Currently, the endowment portfolio has had significant growth due to their asset distribution. The board recognizes that a library's role in the community is more than as a book depository. It is an active resource center for all ages. Nonetheless, the library is in better financial shape, and this is a difficult budgeting year with many town departments cutting their budgets. Laura Streets proposed establishing a set amount

for the library, allowing both parties to know their budget. Richard Craig felt the budgeting process should start earlier in the year. George Cormier said the library needs to share its endowment amount when developing the amount, they request from the town and submit it before the budgeting process.

Chris Palermo spoke to another budget issue. He visited the Noyes House and saw the buildings' structural problems. The Noyes House has not received financial assistance from the town in 2 years. It was agreed that a further discussion was needed about the Noyes House.

6. **Enhanced Energy Plan - Tasha Wallis, LCPC**
   The Lamoille County Planning Commission Board of Directors adopted an energy amendment to the Lamoille County Regional Plan on July 23rd 2024. The amendment incorporates into the Lamoille County Regional Plan an Enhanced Energy component designed as a guide for the Region to help meet the statewide goal of 90% renewable energy production by 2050. Seth Jensen and Megan Rodier came before the board to offer the LCPC's assistance in helping the town with the application. With LCPC's certification, local municipalities that develop enhanced energy plans will be able to submit their requests for determination of energy compliance directly to the Regional Planning Commission. With a positive determination, the municipality's plan will also receive substantial deference in Public Utility Commission proceedings. Brent Raymond asked for a suggestion of an organization that the town can use as a model for our town plan. He was told that Johnson has a plan on its website.

6:45PM - OLD BUSINESS

1. **Consideration of Morristown Conservation Commission article for the Town Meeting March 2025**
   Ron Stancliff, Chair of the Conservation Commission announced that he would not be continuing in this role after the end of his term in March 2025. The committee thanked Mr. Stancliff for his dedication to the commission. He also shared that he and his wife Judy, gave their land near Molly's Bog to the UVM Forestry Department.

   Jerry Throne, Vice Chair, explained that the commission was back at the selectboard meeting to reduce the amount previously requested of the taxes from 1/2 cent to 1/4 cent on the grand list dedicated to the Conservation Commission. After a discussion, four of the five-member selectboard agreed to the Conservation Commission's request be given to the taxpayers to decide.

6:55PM - APPROVE WARRANTS

Motion made by Chris Palermo to approve the warrants. Motion seconded by Richard Craig . Motion carried. (5/0)

7:00PM - COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The proposed Library funding being reduced by $80K will affect the personnel that work there.

7:15PM - SCHEDULE

1. **Monday, January 13, 2025 - SB Special Meeting - 5:30PM**
   Tuesday, January 21, 2025 - SB Meeting - 5:30PM
   Monday, January 27, 2025 - SB Special Meeting - 5:30PM
   Monday, February 3, 2025 - SB Meeting - 5:30PM
   Tuesday, February 18, 2025 - SB Meeting - 5:30PM

7:20PM - OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Executive Session - Personnel**
   Motion made by Chris Palermo to go into Executive Session because I find that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved, at a substantial disadvantage. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

   Motion made by Chris Palermo to move to go into Executive Session to discuss the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee subject to T1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(3). To include Town Manager, Brent Raymond, Executive Assistant, Judi Alberi and Finance Director, Tina Sweet. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried (5/0).

   Motion made by Chris Palermo to come out of Executive Session at 8:48PM. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (5/0)

7:50PM - ADJOURN

Motion made by Chris Palermo to adjourn. Motion seconded by Richard Craig. Motion carried. (5/0)

Meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm
Submitted and filed this 1/9/2025.
Bonnie McDermott, Scribe

Please note all minutes are in Draft form and are subject to approval at the next Selectboard meeting.