

**Minutes of November 28, 2023 Meeting**  
**Warren Select Board**  
**Streamed on MRVTV**  
**6:30 PM**  
**-draft-**

**Members Present:** Luke Youmell, Chair; Andrew Cunningham, Vice Chair; Bob Ackland, Camilla Behn, Devin Klein Corrigan

**Staff Present:** Jeff Campbell, Fire Chief; Rebecca Campbell, Town Administrator

**Others Present:** Perry Bigelow, Tracy Brannstrom (Valley Reporter), Alice Cheney, Wrenn Compere, Gannon Osborne (VT FPR), Rob Perry (MRVTV), Rob Schonder (Sugarbush Golf), Kate Wanner (Conservation Commission)

**Public Comment**

Nobody present requested time to address the Board.

**Agenda Changes**

An Executive Session was added to the agenda.

**MRVTV Funding Request**

Rob Perry was present to request the same support be provided to MRVTV as last year (\$3400). There was some discussion of the gradually diminishing funds received through an agreement that provides MRVTV with a percentage of Waitsfield Telecom's cable subscriptions, and Mr. Perry noted that he is working with state officials to adjust funding models to ensure continued support for public access organizations. He also explained that Fayston provides a lesser amount of support than Warren and Waitsfield do, and that Moretown provides some funding as well, as they work with ORCA in the summer months and MRVTV only in the winter.

Board members thanked Mr. Perry for the work he and the station do to provide public access for the Valley.

**Sugarbush Golf Club Traffic Calming**

Rob Schonder was present to request implementation of potential measures to alleviate traffic speed in the area of the maintenance shed and club house on the Golf Course Road. He indicated that the road is narrow; the road is regularly used by pedestrians, both those using the golf course and others; and that the traffic in that stretch often travels at 45-50 mph in both directions. Mr. Schonder requested that seasonal speed bumps be placed at the location of the club house, explaining that currently cones are set out, but that this narrows the road even further. The Resort has alleviated some of the crossroad pedestrian and golf cart traffic through some reconfiguration of access locations, but it is felt that a more impactful solution is needed. Some striping of a crosswalk was also suggested by Mr. Schonder. It was agreed that the Town would supply the speed bumps as requested, and that Mr. Schonder would research what firm was recently used by Sugarbush to complete some pavement striping. Necessary signage warning of the speed bumps and pedestrian crossing was also discussed.

**MOTION:** *Ms. Klein Corrigan made a motion to approve two season speed bumps as proposed/depicted by Mr. Schonder and coordinate pedestrian line striping, both aspects of the traffic control to include appropriate signage. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cunningham. All voted in favor.*

**Warren Fire House Project**

Jeff Campbell explained that the Fire Department was completing some renovation work on the lower level of the firehouse, creating a fully enclosed room separate from the trucks and equipment to serve

as a clean space for members to keep their clothing and gear. This space will need a dehumidifier and some other items; the labor is being completed by Department members and has been partially covered by donated funds. The amount being requested is between \$5K and \$7K. The Board advised Mr. Cambell to provide invoices for the items being requested, and noted that the timing will determine whether funds from the current year's budget may be used or if this will be considered a capital expense.

Mr. Campbell also reported that phone system quotes had been provided for all three buildings (Fire Station, Town Garage, and Town Offices), and that he will send the documentation to Ms. Campbell. He noted that the biggest decision regarding this change will be whether to lease or purchase the phones.

### **Kate Wanner/Gannon Osborne – Roxbury Mountain**

Wrenn Compere, Gannon Osborne, and Kate Wanner were present and provided information regarding the Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation's (FPR) Land Conservation Program's acquisition of a parcel of land currently owned by Ms. Compere and others.

Ms. Compere provided some history of her family's ownership of this parcel, explaining that there is currently a one-third owner of the parcel who is requesting that their portion be purchased rather than offering to donate it, as Ms. Compere and her brother have decided to do with their portion (two-thirds) of the land. The details of this agreement are currently being negotiated, but it is anticipated that amount agreed upon will be between \$50K and \$100K.

Ms. Wanner spoke of the nature of the property, explaining that it contains stream corridors, a beaver pond, both primary and secondary conservation values, and is a high priority wildlife crossing. She noted that the parcel contains some ridgeline area, which is important for its visual impact and wildlife connectivity. Ms. Wanner indicated that the Conservation Commission fully supports the State's acquisition of the parcel, as well as the use of funds from the Town's Conservation Fund for this purpose. She provided an appraised value for the parcel of \$400K.

Ms. Wanner and Mr. Osborne explained the PILOT program implications of State ownership, noting that the amount provided to the Town in lieu of taxes would be a semi-fixed amount, originally based upon the value of the land in the year acquired, with future reassessments based on several factors other than current value.

Board members expressed their support for moving forward with this transfer, and offered suggestions for determining tax rates for years prior to 1997, which is information Ms. Compere is seeking as she finalizes negotiations with the additional owner of the parcel.

### **IT RFPs**

Mr. Ackland explained some of the details of the two proposals being considered, one from North Branch Tech and one from Butternut Systems (the current provider). The amount quoted by North Branch was calculated to be \$18,050, which includes all the services requested. The amount quoted by Butternut for a base contract (\$9000) was looked at in conjunction with Mr. Ackland's review of the actual expenses over the past two years, as Butternut includes an hourly rate for many of their services. It was determined that a continued contract with Butternut would likely result in expenses of approximately \$22,000 in the coming year. The other two firms who submitted quotes both provided higher bids than North Branch and Butternut. It was noted that there is potential for a contract with North Branch to be at a lower cost in future years, as this quote covers some initial setup work. Mr. Youmell confirmed that transitioning to further use of Google for document and email management can be included in a contract with North Branch if this is the direction approved by the Board.

**MOTION:** *Mr. Ackland made a motion to contract with North Branch Tech as the Town's IT service provider, beginning January 1, 2024. The motion was seconded by Ms. Behn. All voted in favor.*

## **2024 Budget Assumptions**

A budget meeting with all department heads was scheduled for December 5; at that meeting it will be communicated that it is understood that many costs are increasing, but that managers should bring all information necessary to enable an accurate budget forecast, including any areas that may need some additional funding in the coming year. This will also be an opportunity for departments to ask questions related to budgeting needs, and to have a preliminary discussion regarding staff, salaries, and any impending issues.

## **Other and Ongoing Business**

### Audit conversation

This item was postponed.

### Town Hall policy

This item was postponed.

### MOU with HUUSD

Ms. Klein Corrigan reported that she will be meeting with Superintendent Mike Liechlitter, a member of the HUUSD Board, and Ms. Campbell, in order to work toward drafting a final MOU between the Town and the School District. She indicated that she does not have full, clear information regarding existing easements and what additional documentation may be necessary; Board members advised that she bring back information from the meeting for their further discussion. It was also agreed that the Recreation Committee and PTO will be participants in future conversations about the agreement.

## **Administrative Items**

**MOTION:** *A motion to approve the accounts payable warrant in the amount of \$60,867.76 passed unanimously.*

**MOTION:** *A motion to approve the payroll warrant in the amount of \$11,878.21 passed unanimously.*

**MOTION:** *A motion to approve the minutes of November 14 and November 15, 2023 passed unanimously.*

**MOTION:** *A motion to approve the Education Fund transfer to the Vermont State Treasury in the amount of \$4,518,792.00 passed unanimously.*

**MOTION:** *A motion to approve the payroll warrant in the amount of \$14,601.77 passed unanimously.*

There was a question regarding an entry in an additional accounts payable warrant, so it was not approved at this time.

## **Executive Session**

*A motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel passed unanimously.*

The meeting entered Executive Session at 8:27 pm and returned to open session at 8:45 pm.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Carol Chamberlin

The Warren Selectboard

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Luke Youmell, Chair

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Andy Cunningham, Vice Chair

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Bob Ackland

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Camilla Behn

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Devin Klein Corrigan