

**TOWN OF RUTLAND SELECTBOARD OPEN MEETING  
RUTLAND TOWN MUNICIPAL TOWN HALL  
181 BUSINESS ROUTE 4, CENTER RUTLAND, VT 05736  
NOVEMBER 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021**

This meeting had a virtual attendance option available for anyone to join.

- Meeting opened at 6:00 P.M. with the pledge of allegiance
- Board members present Mary Ashcroft, Joe Denardo, Sharon Russell, John Paul Faignant and Don Chioffi
- Members of the public present: Lydia FyInn, Jason Bathalon, Lyle Jepson, Kim Rupe, Michael Delehanty, Keith Whitcomb, Larry Dell Veneri

Approval of Orders

The Board approved the orders.

Approval of Selectboard Minutes for November 9<sup>th</sup>.

- Selectman Chioffi moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Faignant seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

Approval of Selectboard Minutes for November 16<sup>th</sup>.

- Selectman Chioffi moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Faignant seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.

New Business Board to meet with Lyle Jepson from CEDRR

1. Lyle Jepson and Kim Rupe from the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region discussed the efforts to attract resident and businesses to the region.
2. The town appropriation request in the past has been based on \$1 per resident.
3. They discussed the efforts to attract individuals and families moving into the area.
4. Information on the programs and initiatives they have were provided for board members.
5. The amount approved by voters last year was \$4054 and they are asking for the same amount this year.

6. Selectman Chioffi asked if they have investigated the possibility of being able to use ARPA recovery funds for their services. Mr. Jepson said they have not, but the towns could suggest using them individually.
7. A letter with the appropriation request will be sent to Town Hall.

New Business: Board to meet with Town Emergency Management Director Marty Wasserman

1. Discussed a change to the state emergency management team structure.
  - a. The Regional Planning Commission is asking for two voting representatives from the town be appointed to the new group. Meetings will be held quarterly.
  - b. After some discussion, Selectman Faignant moved to appoint Marty Wasserman, and Town Fire Chief Chris Clark. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The appointment would be through May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, to coincide with the Local Emergency Management Plan update.
2. Discussed changing the designation of the Center Rutland Fire station as the Emergency Operation Center to the Town Hall.
  - a. Mr. Wasserman felt this was better to allow the board, treasurer, and others to be together away from the activity of the fire station in a large-scale emergency.
  - b. Selectman Faignant said the board can bring this up for discussion at a future meeting.
  - c. Selectman Denardo said part of the long-term planning when it came time to replace the McKinley Avenue Fire Station, was the new facility would have accommodations for the EOC. This would save duplication of radio equipment being needed for Town Hall.

Selectwoman Mary Ashcroft issued the oath of office to Michael Delehanty who was appointed to the position of 1<sup>st</sup> Constable for the Town of Rutland at a Special Selectboard meeting held on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This appointment will stand until the March 2022 election.

Town Lister Howard Burgess was present to discuss a 911 numbering issue.

1. An issue was discovered on Prospect Hill Road where a house was assigned a wrong number.
2. Recently, there was a fire call to this house and due to the numbering issue, there was a delay in the fire department finding the address.
3. The current number is 517 and it should be 647.
4. The homeowner is not in favor of changing the number.
5. Selectman Faignant moved to have Mr. Burgess update the number to the correct number and notify the homeowner. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Byron Hathaway Rutland Town Road Commissioner:

1. Updated the board on who will be on call to cover highway department needs
  - a. Jason Bathalon will be the person on call for this coming weekend.
  - b. The board discussed if there should be a supplemental pay rate for being on call. No decision was made.
  - c. Walter Tripp will be on call for the month of December.
2. Commissioner Hathaway provided them with a list of tasks to complete over the next 5 weeks.
3. Commissioner Hathaway provided a list of priorities for next year to be considered. A packet was left with the board which contains timesheets, vendor contacts and other paperwork.
4. Commissioner Hathaway said the bills and invoices are current, but ones coming on over the next several weeks need to be reviewed and coded. Jason and Walt have access to the computer to check for new invoices.
5. The scale for the loader has failed. A replacement unit is \$8745 installed, with training. This cost is not included in the budget but could be taken from depreciation. Selectman Faignant moved to approve the purchase with funds to be taken from the highway depreciation account. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0. Commissioner Hathaway said Jason Bathalon can handle placing the order for the new scale.
6. The large dump truck is out of service. There is a problem with the transmission. It is Milton awaiting repair. It is not known when it will be returned.

7. Bids are due by December 1<sup>st</sup> for anyone interested in purchasing the older small town truck.
8. This being Commissioner Hathaways last meeting before going on vacation leading up to his retirement date, Selectwoman Ashcroft thanked Commissioner Hathaway for his many years of service to the town.

Mike Rowe Rutland Town Recreation Director:

Director Rowe was not present for the meeting but passed along a reminder that the next senior luncheon is December 7<sup>th</sup>. Please let Mike or Jim Hall know if you would like to attend.

Barbara Pulling Rutland Town Planning Commission Chair:

1. Discussed a recent meeting at the Regional Planning Commission where a proposed wind turbine project in Castleton was presented. For the first time, it was communicated that there would be visual impacts for Rutland Town, from the Boardman Hill Road.
  - a. The blades would be visible, but not the tower.
  - b. The developer has been invited to attend the Planning Commission meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>. All board members are invited to attend.
2. Discussed the impact on our town given the recent Vermont Supreme court ruling on the Snowstone decision with our Town Attorney. He gave guidance for the Commission if a similarly sized project scenario was brought before the town.
3. The budget needs for the coming year was discussed at the recent meeting and the only change was to the legal consulting costs due to the expected ordinance reviews which will be needed.
4. The work on the archeological survey in the area of the proposed Pocket Park is nearly done.
  - a. Discussed future meetings which will need to be had between the board and GMP regarding land use agreements.
  - b. A final plan will be shared with the Selectboard once the ideas and drafts have gone through the public meeting process.

Kari Clark Rutland Town Clerk and Treasurer:

1. Reviewed the local option tax money received.
  - a. An installment was received recently, and it was above expectations.
  - b. The town received \$384,801.47. The last installment was \$362,000. The budget for the entire year is \$1,100,000 so it is expected to exceed this easily with 2 more installments left.
  - c. The target number per quarter is \$275,000.
2. ARPA replacement revenue calculations were done, and copies are available for board members. Based on initial calculations we appear to be down approximately 8% in revenue.
  - a. A staff member from the RRPC has been invited to come and speak to the board on December 21<sup>st</sup> to help guide the board on uses for the ARPA funds.
3. The annual audit is complete and a preliminary report is available. A meeting with the auditor and the board will be planned soon.
4. Discussed compensation and reimbursement for the board members.
  - a. Clarification is needed.
  - b. There was no decision made during a previous discussion on travel for meetings. Selectman Faignant said the time should be door to door.
    - i. Discussed the travel time for other town employees. Their time starts when they arrive at work and not when they leave home.
    - ii. Most board members do not put in for travel time.
5. The Vermont Bond bank sent a notice regarding a balance left on the bond from the Center Rutland Fire Station. This will be copied to include in the board packet for the next meeting to discuss.

Ed Dumas Rutland Town Police Chief:

1. Chief Dumas was not able to attend the meeting, recent calls for service were provided to board members by Deputy Chief Washburn.
2. A report was sent to board members summarizing numbers received of people being housed at the Holiday Inn on the state voucher program.

Chris Clark Rutland Town Fire Chief:

1. Chief Clark was not present and did send a to report.

Bill Sweet Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard:

1. Provided a copy of a letter sent to residents on Post Road identified at a recent Water and Sewer Committee regarding extending a municipal water line.
2. A copy of the payment request from Masterson Excavating for the final balance on the Ranbury Road water line project was reviewed. Selectman Denardo moved to approve the payment. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
3. Reviewed a response from Town Counsel based on his review of a contract sent to the Town because of an invoice sent to DCF seeking reimbursement for Police services. Town Counsel is advising against signing this contract. Selectman Chioffi moved to decline signing the contract. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
4. Provided notices regarding Act 250 information for Orin Thomas and Sons.
5. All the budget sheets are up to date based on the recent committee meetings.
  - a. Selectwoman Ashcroft discussed the cost-of-living adjustments. Social Security general benefit adjustments this year are up 5.9%. Compensation rates across departments are on hold based on the decision of the board on any adjustments.
  - b. Selectman Faignant said there has typically been an increase over COLA paid to town employees, but could not support an increase over 5.9%
  - c. Selectman Chioffi moved to approve a compensation increase for Town employees of 5.9%. Selectman Faignant seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
  - d. Budget sheets will be updated to reflect this number and made available for the next board meeting.
  - e. A special meeting to discuss the budget will be planned for Tuesday December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6PM.
6. Provided a follow up document from Randal Smathers regarding the previous discussion on the Rutland Free Library.

Selectman Chioffi moved to recess the board meeting to convene as the Board of Health. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Selectman Faignant said Rutland County is leading the state in new Covid-19 cases. The State Legislation has recently passed a law allowing local municipalities to enact a mask rule for all inside spaces accessible to the public. There is concern of the holiday shopping over the weekend. A separate meeting would have to be warned to enact this mandate. If it were to be passed, there is a specific timeline governing renewing with an ultimate expiration in April of 2022.

Selectman Faignant moved to hold an emergency meeting on November 24<sup>th</sup> at 9AM to discuss enacting this rule. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Informed the board of some environmental work at the Sunoco station on US Route 7 South. They are doing some work to investigate possible contamination.

Selectwoman Russell left the meeting at 7:58PM.

Selectman Chioffi moved to resume the regular Selectboard meeting. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 4 – 0.

Reviewed the Water and Sewer Committee minutes. There were no additional action items.

Reviewed the Highway Committee minutes. A budget was reviewed and there are some issues which still need to be discussed. Labor rates for the new Road Commissioner and winter maintenance contractors need to be set. Reviewed the discussion had on the Service Road project, which was proposed to connect Randbury Road by a new road to the light at the intersection by Aldis.

Reviewed the Fire Committee minutes. Discussed the possibility of paying a special rate to reimburse the members for weekday / daytime calls. Additionally, thanking employers who allow their employees to respond to calls.

Discussed the Regional Planning Commission appointment vacancies. An advertisement will be placed in the upcoming edition of The Circle.

11/23/2021

Selectman Chioffi said he would like to put an alternative funding option on the ballot for the Rutland Free Library. Selectman Chioffi is asking permission from the board to have the item reviewed by Town Counsel. Selectman Chioffi moved to have Town Counsel review his proposed ballot item. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. Selectman Chioffi and Denardo voted in favor of the motion. Selectwoman Ashcroft voted against the motion. Selectman Faignant abstained from the vote. The motion failed to pass.

Commissioner Hathaway said there was a request to bring Tom Gallipo back on part time to help with Highway crew work until a new Road Commissioner is selected. This will be referred to the Highway Committee.

Selectman Denardo moved to adjourn. Selectman Faignant seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Mr. Bill Sweet

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Mary Ashcroft, Chair

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Joseph Denardo, Clerk

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John Paul Faignant

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Sharon Russell

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Don Chioffi

Center Rutland, VT.