

**TOWN OF RUTLAND SELECTBOARD OPEN MEETING  
RUTLAND TOWN MUNICIPAL TOWN HALL  
181 BUSINESS ROUTE 4, CENTER RUTLAND, VT 05736  
JANUARY 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

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, John Paul Faignant, Sharon Russell, and Don Chioffi
- Members of the public present Fred Nicholson, Jim Scholtz, Burt McMahon, Lydia Flynn, Howard Burgess, Keith Whitcomb, Byron Hathaway, Larry Dell Veneri

Approval of Orders

The Board approved the orders.

Approval of Selectboard Minutes for January 4<sup>th</sup>:

Selectman Faignant moved to approve the minutes. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5-0.

Questions from the floor / public comment:

- Howard Burgess, representing Fire District #1, was present and asked the board to appoint a prudential committee member to their membership, due to an unexpected resignation. They have a 3-member board. Rob Del Bianco is the person they would like appointed. State statute and their by-laws allow the Selectboard to make the appointment. There is a short timeline due to meetings that need to take place very soon. Selectwoman Russell moved to approve the request and to appoint Mr. Del Bianco. Selectman Chioffi seconded the motion. Mr. Del Bianco was the only one who expressed interest in the position. Selectman Chioffi asked the motion be amended to have the appointment stand until the

next regular meeting of the Fire District. Selectwoman Russell seconded the amended motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Walter Tripp and Jason Bathalon Rutland Town Road Crew:

1. Selectwoman Ashcroft thanked them for their efforts during the recent storm. Mr. Tripp said it went well, having no major issues.
2. The board reviewed the proposed contract with Central Vermont Communications to enter into a lease agreement for radios for the Highway Department.
  - a. Selectman Faignant moved to approve the agreement and to authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the board. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
3. The invoice from Rutland City was received for the repair work to a water main on Seward Road. The bill was approximately \$9300. After some discussion, the invoice was approved for payment.
4. Discussed the waste oil furnace at the highway garage. It has not been running consistently and shuts off. It is believed its due to issues with the waste oil fuel. Discussed if this is the correct size for the building. Many of the parts previously ordered have been installed. Some additional people with experience on the use and maintenance of this type of boiler will be contacted for assistance with troubleshooting.

Barbara Pulling Rutland Town Planning Commission Chair:

1. Barbara Pulling was not present for the meeting but sent along items to report.
2. A meeting with Green Mountain power regarding drafting a memorandum of understanding for land use of the property for the pocket park project is planned soon.
3. Information from Watershed Consulting was provided regarding the Wynnmere storm water project. The project end date of March 31<sup>st</sup> is soon and there are some items which need to be done.

4. The Planning Commission is continuing to work on possible ordinance revisions and creations of new ones.
5. A survey is being worked on to be sent to town residents regarding energy priorities.
6. New viewshed simulations for the Grandpas knob wind project have been received.

Ed Dumas Rutland Town Police Chief and Ted Washburn Rutland Town Deputy Police Chief:

1. Recent calls for service were provided and discussed.
2. Discussed installing a notification system in the office to alert Town Police officers that may be in the building of a potential issue in the building. Selectman Faignant moved to approve the request. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
3. The dispatch centers run by the state are on the verge of not having enough staff to be able to continue dispatching at the level they are now. If the situation does not improve, they will discontinue dispatching for our police. Chief Dumas has reached out to other Chiefs in the area and none of them, that do not already have their own dispatch, have an alternate plan. A long-term solution would be to develop a Rutland County dispatch system, which would service Fire and EMS as well as Police. The state is offering some funds to be able to start a center. The two local agencies with their own dispatch services are unable to take on dispatching for other agencies. Chief Dumas would like to investigate what it would take to establish a dispatch center in Rutland. Selectman Faignant moved to approve the request. Selectwoman Russel seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Chris Clark Rutland Town Fire Chief:

1. Chief Clark reported on the recent annual meeting, where officers are elected. There was one change from last year. Aaron Bates stepped down as Lieutenant for Center Rutland. Jorge Mada was elected in his place.
2. We were awarded a grant for almost \$28,000 to be able to purchase 30 new portable radios. The grant will not require a match.

3. We were informed today that the body for our new truck has been started. We may be able to take delivery in March.

Kari Clark Rutland Town Clerk and Treasurer:

1. The second installment of taxes was due recently. We received 93% of payments on time.
2. Dog registration started January 1<sup>st</sup> and ends April 1<sup>st</sup>.
3. Discussed the upcoming election. Petitions will not be needed for this year. The deadline for consent forms is January 24<sup>th</sup>.
4. Discussed the cash to open funds and usage for the beginning of each fiscal year. A report was provided to the board covering the last 3 years. Reviewed the differences between the high expenditure amounts and lower amounts. One of the years reviewed was during the height of the pandemic so spending was drastically reduced.
  - a. When asked if a reduction to the \$1.5 million cash to open amount was a good idea, Ms. Clark said she would like to keep it where it is.
  - b. Discussed how the carry over funds for the highway department were used to cover some of the larger up-front costs, mainly due to paving. The money for all departments is together in one account.
  - c. Selectman Faignant stated that we are in a fortunate position even having this money available as most towns do not. Discussed the ballot item to ask the voters to approve taking some of these funds and reallocating them to put toward the fire station bond. Moving over \$500,000 to cover bond payments will cover approximately 4 years of future payments.

Bill Sweet Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard:

1. The town report is very close to being completed. Once the last few documents needed are received it will be ready to send to the printer. We will be able to meet the deadline.
2. Perk Cards have been received. If any town employee would like one, please see him.

John Paul Fagnant Town Health Officer:

1. Discussed the next Town Meeting, scheduled for February 28<sup>th</sup>. This meeting needs to be remote, like the previous one.
2. The recommendation comes from the Vt Department of Health.
3. Selectman Fagnant moved to have the February 28<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting be done by a remote option only. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

The deadline for articles to be included in the next edition of The Circle, is February 1<sup>st</sup>. This will be the last one before Town Meeting Day. Department heads should keep this in mind when writing their articles.

New Business: Board to affirm where to apply the fire station lawsuit settlement and where to apply the remaining funds from the Center Rutland Fire Station bond.

1. The amount received from the settlement is \$30,000.
2. The amount left in the fire station bond account is approximately \$54,000.
3. Selectman Fagnant moved to apply all these funds to the new Public Safety Building project. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

New Business: Board to discuss writing articles for The Circle for budgetary items

1. Selectman Fagnant will write an article regarding the new Public Safety Building.
2. The ballot items regarding approving sales of cannabis were discussed. Selectman Fagnant moved to amend the ballot question to add “in established commercial areas” to the end of ballot item 21 and 22. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
3. Discussed who would write the articles regarding these ballot items. After some discussion, Selectman Chioffi will write the articles.
4. Selectwoman Ashcroft will write the article on the cash to open question.

5. Selectman Denardo will write the article on the Road Commissioner question.
6. Selectwoman Russell will write the article on the recreation depreciation amount.

New Business: Board to approve the warning for Town Meeting

1. Discussed the general budget question. The amount needs to reflect the addition of \$2500 to the fireworks line. The new general total is \$1,073,627.
2. Discussed the highway budget. Some updates need to be done.
  - a. \$2500 needs to be added for the cost of the new radios.
  - b. Discussed the past practice of having individual lines for each piece of equipment, and its maintenance. A single line will be added to the budget, pulling together all the individual items under one equipment maintenance line. The lines previously used will not be funded going forward. Selectman Denardo suggested funding this line at \$25,000. Selectman Faignant moved to approve the change. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
  - c. The new total for the Highway budget will be \$1,021,011.
3. There are no changes to Police, Fire or Recreation budgets.
4. A slight change for clarification was made to the recreation depreciation ballot question. The term “infrastructure” was added to ensure the funds could be used for its intended purpose.
5. Discussed the use of the capital improvement funds towards the costs of the new Public Safety Building. The ballot item lists the entire balance of the fund, including the sweep over from the last fiscal year. At a previous meeting, \$80,000 was allocated to recreation for planned park improvements. The available balance after accounting for the allocation to recreation is \$771,231. Selectman Faignant moved to apply the total of \$84,000 recovered in the fire station settlement, and the remaining money from the Center Rutland station

bond to be used towards soft costs of the Public Safety Building. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

6. \$2,154,550.28 is the anticipated money which would need to be borrowed to complete the construction project.
7. Selectman Chioffi moved to approve ballot question which would reduce the cash to open balance by \$500,000 to allow those funds to be used toward the Center Rutland Fire Station bond. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
8. One addition to the elected officials was made, which was to elect a First Constable for a two-year term.
9. Selectman Faignant moved to approve all of the changes made to the ballot questions. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Selectman Faignant moved to enter executive session for a personnel matter. Selectman Denardo seconded motion. The motion passed 5 – 0. The board entered executive session at 7:26 PM.

Upon leaving executive session, with no action being taken, Selectman Faignant moved to adjourn. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Mr. Bill Sweet

1/18/2022

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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.