

**TOWN OF RUTLAND SELECTBOARD OPEN MEETING
RUTLAND TOWN MUNICIPAL TOWN HALL
181 BUSINESS ROUTE 4, CENTER RUTLAND, VT 05736
JANUARY 14th, 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, Sharon Russell, John Paul Faignant and Don Chioffi

Members of the public present: Keith Whitcomb, Howard Burgess, Sawyer Hathaway, Kirsten Hathaway, Byron Hathaway, Larry Dell Veneri, Jim Scholtz

Approval of Orders

The Board approved the orders.

Approval of Selectboard Minutes for December 21st:

Selectman Chioffi moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Faignant seconded the motion. The motion passed 4 – 0 with Selectman Denardo abstaining.

Questions from the Floor / Public Comment:

Sawyer Hathaway read a letter sent to now retired Road Commissioner Byron Hathaway from Vermont Governor Phil Scott. Selectman Chioffi requested a copy of the letter so it could be put up at Town Hall. The request was denied. Sawyer Hathaway requested an exception be made in payroll processing for the final check to be issued to Byron Hathaway this week instead of 2 weeks from now. The board declined the request. Selectwoman Russell cited the recent Highway Committee meeting where this was discussed, and Commissioner Hathaway had stated he did not mind waiting.

New Business Board to meet with Andrew from A.M. Peisch to discuss the audit

1. Mr. Peisch reviewed the recent audit report.
2. The audit report date is December 27th, 2021, and the audit covers July 1st, 2020, through June 30th, 2021.
3. The town received an unqualified, or clean, opinion which was the same as last year.
4. The \$1.5 million cash to open balance was able to be maintained.

5. Discussed the long-term dept repayment funds. This was set aside to cover bond payments for the Center Rutland Fire Station. This will be depleted during this fiscal year.
6. Discussed the receipt of the ARPA funds and discussed scenarios where the town would be subject to a single audit.
7. Discussed lowering the cash to open balance from \$1.5 million on \$1.0 million. An analysis of funds used in the fiscal year opening period over the last 3 years is being done but is not yet complete.
8. Town Counsel Kevin Brown was present and discussed the possible reduction in the cash to open balance. A ballot item was put before the voters to establish this balance.
9. Discussed what to do with the approximately \$54,000 in remaining funds from the Center Rutland Fire Station construction bond and the \$30,000 recently received from the fire station lawsuit settlement. The Selectboard would like to use the funds towards costs of the new public safety facility.
10. Discussed the option to use ARPA funds to replace lost revenue, based on calculations. These calculations are under way and a total which could be moved to the General Fund should be available in the near future.
11. Selectwoman Ashcroft credited the current and past Town Clerk and Treasurers for the consistently good audit results year after year.

New Business Board to meet with Town Counsel Kevin Brown

1. Selectwoman Ashcroft reviewed the ballot questions for the March ballot.
 - a. A question to ask for approval to change the Road Commissioner position from elected to appointed.
 - b. A question to allow cannabis sales in Rutland Town.
 - c. A question to modify cash to open balances.
2. Selectwoman Russell moved to enter executive session to receive legal advice from Town Counsel. Selectman Faignant seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0 and the board entered executive session at 6:40 PM.
3. Upon leaving executive session at 7:15 PM Selectman Faignant moved to approve the 2 ballot items drafted by Town Counsel, to allow cannabis sales in Rutland Town. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Rutland Town Road Crew Walter Tripp and Jason Bathalon:

1. Mr. Tripp reported on the recent storms. Everything went smoothly.

2. Selectman Denardo discussed a proposal received from Center Vermont Communications to establish 2-way radio service for our highway crew. The proposal is to lease radios for \$29 per month per radio. Selectman Denardo moved to approve the proposal. Selectman Faignant seconded the motion. Discussed the source for the funding. The initial cost will be taken from miscellaneous and add the annual cost to future budgets. The motion passed 5 – 0.
3. There was a request from a resident about modifying the culvert at his driveway. After a brief discussion, a letter will be sent to the resident about his request, notifying him that no changes will be considered until after winter.
4. Flory Heights meter readings have been done.
5. No information regarding the water main break on Seward Road has been received from the City of Rutland.
6. The annual mileage certificate from VTrans was received. It is for certifying the length of road in Town. Walt will review it and follow up with the board at the next meeting.

Barbara Pulling Rutland Town Planning Commission Chair:

1. Work on new ordinances continue and addressing what concerns can be covered in an ordinance and what cannot.
2. Discussed having the Planning Commission and Selectboard Energy Committee work together on the action items identified in the Town Energy Plan and to compile a survey for town residents based on those action items. Selectman Faignant, who chairs the Energy Committee, will meet with them on this project in the future.

Ed Dumas Rutland Town Police Chief:

1. A summary of the calls for 2021 was provided listing the 1337 complaints the department responded to, the top locations of incidents and types of issues.
2. Chief Dumas met recently with the Director of VT Department of Children and Families. They plan to have people on site at the Holiday Inn 24 hours a day 7 days a week while homeless are being housed there.

Chris Clark Rutland Town Fire Chief:

1. The department responded to a structure fire in the last 2 weeks, and we also responded to a house fire in Shrewsbury. There have not been other calls lately.
2. The annual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday January 5th.

Mike Rowe Rutland Town Recreation Director:

1. Rec department basketball will be starting soon.
2. The ice-skating rink at the school is prepared but just need some consistent cold weather.
3. The Rec Committee met recently and discussed increasing the amount of the contribution to the Rec department in order to plan for the future replacement of the pool.
 - a. The current rate is \$.0075, and the requested rate is \$.0125.
 - b. It is anticipated there would be a very minimal impact on town taxpayers on the tax bill, estimating a \$3 to \$4 increase annually.
 - c. The current rate adds approximately \$67,000 annually to the depreciation account with 2/3 being set aside for future pool replacement needs and the remaining 1/3 for all other rec needs.
 - d. Selectman Faignant moved to approve the request of adding this to the ballot. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
4. The Rec Committee discussed adding KSA Built as a preferred vendor. Selectwoman Russell moved to approve the recommendation. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
5. An application for a grant for a water bottle filling station was submitted and we were recently notified that our application was approved. This will be installed at Northwood Park, likely in the pool area. It will be available for anyone to use.

Kari Clark Rutland Town Clerk and Treasurer:

1. Ms. Clark was not present but did send a reminder to all Town residents that taxes are due by close of business on January 10th.

Bill Sweet Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard:

1. Northstar Fireworks sent their annual offer for pre-paying for the July 4th display. Due to changes in their supply chain, they have told us our regular display, held on July 4th, will cost \$10,000 this year up from \$7500.
 - a. After some discussion, the money not spent for the Town Wide Celebration will be added to the budget for fireworks to pay for the display.
 - b. Discussed the date for the display. Traditionally, it has always been on July 4th. Discussed the option of having it on Sunday, July 3rd with a rain date of July 4th.
 - c. Selectman Denardo moved to approve the display for \$10,000 with Sunday July 3rd as the primary date, and Monday July 4th as the rain date. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
2. VLCT will be offering information security training this coming year as part of our policy. Information on this training will be coming out soon.
3. Our Safety Grant application to VLCT was approved. We should have the reimbursement check soon and each department will be credited with their appropriate amounts.
4. Discussed pre-town meeting plans for January 11th.
5. Contributions to the Town Report are needed as soon as possible. The timeline this year is very short and in order to meet the deadlines to be included please get them in soon.
6. The Natural Resource Conservation group has asked permission to use a bay at the Highway garage as they have in years past to distribute trees and bushes from April 25th to April 29th. Selectman Chioffi moved to approve the request. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

John Paul Faignant Town Health Officer

1. Selectman Faignant moved to continue the mask order for an additional 30 days based on current case counts. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 4 – 1 with Selectman Chioffi voting against the motion.

Committee meeting updates:

Personnel / Highway Committee

Selectman Denardo reviewed the meeting where the benefit time payout request was discussed for Road Commissioner Byron Hathaway. Selectman Denardo moved to pay the requests as originally submitted. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0. The

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board agreed the personnel policy needs some clarification; this will be added to their agenda. A section of the policy addressing separation should be added as well.

New Business Board to designate point person for Public Safety Building project

Discussed appointing Selectman Faignant as the point person for the project. Selectwoman Russell moved to approve the recommendation. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

New Business Board to discuss pre-town meeting budget presentation assignments

Discussed which board member would present each department budget.

1. Selectwoman Ashcroft will present the General Budget.
2. Selectwoman Russell will present the Police Budget.
3. Selectman Faignant will present the Fire Budget.
4. Selectman Denardo will present the Highway Budget
5. Selectman Chioffi will present the Recreation Budget.
6. Selectman Faignant will discuss the fire station bond and cannabis sale ballot questions.
7. Selectwoman Ashcroft will discuss the cash to open shift of funds ballot question.
8. Selectwoman Russell will discuss the Recreation depreciation change ballot question.
9. Selectman Denardo will discuss the change from elected to appointed Road Commissioner ballot question.

Selectman Faignant moved to adjourn. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Mr. Bill Sweet

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Mary Ashcroft, Chair

Joseph Denardo, Clerk

John Paul Faignant

Sharon Russell

Don Chioffi

Center Rutland, VT.