

**TOWN OF RUTLAND SELECT BOARD OPEN MEETING
RUTLAND TOWN MUNICIPAL TOWN HALL
181 BUSINESS ROUTE 4, CENTER RUTLAND, VT 05736
MAY 21st, 2024**

- The meeting opened at 6:00 P.M. with the pledge of allegiance.
- Board members present Mary Ashcroft, Joe Denardo, Sharon Russell, Kurt Hathaway, and Matt Getty

Approval of Orders

The Board approved the orders.

Approval of Select Board Minutes for May 7th:

Selectman Getty moved to approve the minutes. Selectman Hathaway seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Board to meet with State representatives from the Agency of Human Services.

1. The Department of Children and Families Commissioner Chris Winters, the Agency of Human Services Deputy Secretary Todd Daloz, the Agency of Human Services Rutland District Field Director Adam Sancic, the Economic Services Deputy Commissioner Miranda Gray, and the Office of Economic Opportunity Interim Director Lily Sojourner were present to discuss ongoing issues at The Cortina Inn.
2. Discussed some of the rumors circulating about the facility and the plans the State may have.
3. Discussed the need for long term permanent housing and not relying on hotels and motels.
4. The new State budget caps the hotel rooms allowed statewide at 1100. Commissioner Winters acknowledged they need to reduce the number of rooms being used. Rutland has the largest room utilization number in the State, around 400. The new rules will limit an individual to 80 days per year to use housing services.
5. Commissioner Winters said discussions with The Cortina Inn around a long-term lease have happened, but nothing has been finalized. Deputy Commissioner Gray said a letter of intent has been given to The Cortina Inn, but the lease has not been finalized yet.
6. Board Chair Ashcroft reviewed some of the major details included in the agreement between The Town of Rutland and The Cortina Inn. A copy was provided to Commissioner Winters.
7. Selectman Denardo expressed his concern about the facility and the ability for services to effectively reach those who are in need of them.

8. Field Director Sancic said his team is doing their best to reach the people but admits there are challenges.
9. Selectwoman Russell discussed safety concerns she has and those which have been brought to her by people in the community.
10. Selectman Getty asked for more details on the new 80-day rule. Deputy Commissioner Grey said people can choose when to use this time throughout the year, and it is on a rolling calendar. The winter months (Dec 1 to Apr 1) are exempt from the 80-day limit.
11. Discussed the impact on future town budget planning processes. The program is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.
12. Police Chief Ed Dumas discussed the challenges his department has faced and the dramatic increase in calls they have experienced over the last several years.

Board to meet with Dhruv Kumar, owner of The Cortina Inn

1. Discussed a recent sewer issue which caused a backup into their parking lot, and some of the possible causes. Board Chair Ashcroft asked for a copy of the report from their contractor.
2. Discussed the trend of calls for service by the Police Department. Mr. Kumar asked if calls are trending up or down. Chief Dumas said calls are up significantly.
3. Discussed what happens when people are removed, or their voucher is not renewed. Deputy Commissioner Grey reviewed their period of ineligibility process. The State cannot share previous issues with anyone being moved between facilities.
4. Work is continuing to establish play places for children there. Door security is being upgraded and doors are being replaced. Mr. Kumar said everyone on staff has a valid work permit and is authorized by the State.

Board Chair Ashcroft thanked everyone for coming in to talk with the Board. Discussed setting up additional meetings. Commissioner Winters said it would likely be within 1 to 2 months.

Marcia Chioffi Rutland Town Head Lister

1. An extension for lodging the Grand List is needed. A form requesting a 30-day extension was provided. Selectman Denardo moved to approve the request and to authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the Board. Selectman Hathaway seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
2. The Board discussed the resignation letter received from Jack McCamley. It is effective immediately. Discussed options for having someone fill this position. No action was taken.

Chris Clark Rutland Town Fire Chief:

1. The department will be participating in some parades for Memorial Day.
2. Board Chair Ashcroft said a Fire Committee meeting should be held soon.

Kari Clark Rutland Town Clerk and Treasurer:

1. The Clerk and Treasurers office will be closed Thursday and Friday of this week. Town Hall will be closed Monday May 27th in observance of Memorial Day.
2. The third installment of taxes was due recently. Final numbers are not yet available, but it looks like most were received on time. There will be approximately 250 delinquent taxes turned over to the Delinquent Tax Collector, but this number is not yet final.
3. Another vote for the school budget is planned for Thursday, May 30th.
 - a. Ballots are not being mailed out.
 - b. Early voting can be done at Town Hall when the office is open.
 - c. Example flyers are being sent out from the school, including some tax calculations. These calculations only relate to the school budget and do not include the municipal taxes.
4. Discussed a liquor license request for an outside catering event for May 31st. Selectman Hathaway moved to approve the request. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
5. Reviewed the current budget status sheets.
6. Discussed the fund balance for The Cortina Inn settlement funds.
 - a. Discussed all the calculations and considerations which go into applying expenses.
 - b. Discussed how excess funds are handled crossing over fiscal years, how anticipated expenses are applied, and how qualified expenses are calculated.
 - c. This topic will be discussed at the next Board meeting
7. Discussed the new Child Care Contribution amount being required by the State.
 - a. The rate is 0.44% of an individuals' wage.
 - b. There are options for employers to cover a portion, or all of, this obligation.
 - c. The exact obligation for Town employees is not known. This will be calculated and made available at the next Board meeting. The lifeguards will be the only ones exempt.
8. Discussed progress towards determining the capital improvements fund balance.
 - a. Reviewed past approvals, and the need for documentation to go along with it to track the obligated expenses.
 - b. The Select Board asked for all Town officials involved in requesting and spending money from capital improvements to assist in researching requests.
 - c. Discussed a pending request from the Rec Department to purchase a sprayer using Capital Improvement funds. Selectman Denardo moved to table approval of this until the

- fund balance can be determined. Selectman Hathaway seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion passed 4 – 1. Selectwoman Russell voted against the motion.
9. Discussed a pay change request made by Clerk and Treasurer Clark at a recent Personnel Committee meeting.
 - a. Reviewed some of the factors leading to this request.
 - b. Clerk and Treasurer Clark gave the Board a variety of possible future scenarios.
 - i. Once she has worked 40 hours in a week, she will leave for the week and whatever unfinished work is left will start the next week. This would likely cause the backlog of work to grow.
 - ii. Add an overtime component to her compensation. Selectman Denardo asked what the hourly rate would be. This was not available. Discussed labor laws around exempt and non-exempt employees and getting input from the Town Attorney.
 - iii. Make an adjustment to the salary line.
 - c. Discussed where any additional funds could come from.
 - d. No action was taken.

Discussed the draft comp time policy.

1. There is no comp time policy currently in the Town.
2. Reviewed what the policy would do for employees, and that it would only apply to non-exempt employees.
3. The current draft will be given to department heads to get their feedback.
4. This will be discussed at a future meeting.

Mike Delehanty Town 1st Constable

1. Nothing new to report.

Ed Dumas Rutland Town Police Chief:

1. Brought the request from the Board for additional information to CFAC. They are in the process of hiring a new director, so they were not able to address the question. Chief Dumas will let the Board know when they are able to discuss it.
2. Board Chair Ashcroft brought up a recent commendation from a State trooper for Officer Plakas and K9 Rooster who assisted in locating a lost item.
3. Discussed a resolution in the complaint filed by The Town of Rutland, through JP Faignant, with the State Attorney. This was filed because of dangerous conditions at the then Holiday Inn which resulted in an explosion putting the lives of town firefighters in danger. The

States Attorney did not prosecute the case, and has expunged the record, as if nothing was ever filed.

4. Discussed the progress being made toward hiring an additional officer for the department.
 - a. Planned changes to the Personnel Policy need to be made before this can be done.
 - b. Selectman Hathaway moved to go forward with hiring an additional officer now. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. After discussion the motion failed 2 – 3. Selectman Hathaway and Selectwoman Russell voted in favor of the motion. Select Board Chair Ashcroft, Selectman Denardo, and Selectman Getty voted against the motion.
5. Discussed how the School Resource Officers position could be funded if the school budget fails again and the funding for her position is cut from the school budget. No decision was made.

Barbara Pulling Rutland Town Planning Commission Chair:

1. The Board discussed having the Planning Commission apply for a Municipal Planning grant to help study housing needs in the Town.
 - a. The grant would be up to \$30,000 and would require a 10% local match, for a total of \$33,000 to work with.
 - b. The City of Rutland is conducting some studies which we may benefit from as well.
 - c. Selectman Denardo moved to approve giving the Planning Commission permission to pursue the grant. Selectman Getty seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Mike Rowe Rutland Town Recreation Director:

1. June 5th and 6th are the days to purchase pool passes early and to sign up for swimming lessons. Swim lessons start June 17th.
2. The pool will open for the season on June 14th.
3. Total budget expenses are not expected to exceed the budget for the year.

David Sears Rutland Town Road Commissioner:

1. The panhandler signs were installed at the Green Mountain Plaza.
2. Plow damage repair from the winter has been wrapped up over the past week.
3. Met with Watershed Consulting and discussed various Town projects. A variety of topics were discussed and some tasks were given to the Highway Department.
4. Paving has started. Connor Drive, Karen Drive, Linda Drive and the dead-end of Blue Ridge Drive have been done.
5. The vehicle monitors and truck cameras have been installed in the highway trucks.

6. A culvert project on Annette terrace is planned for next week. Once this is done, work will continue on the Post Road Sidewalk.
7. A Dodge Ram key fob was found in Northwood Park. The owner has not been located yet. If someone lost theirs, see the Highway department.
8. Discussed roadside mowing for the season. It will start soon.
9. While the budget is over the total for the year, carryover will cover the overage, as anticipated.
10. Timber Lane, Forest Way, Meadow Way and Post Road from US Route 4 to the intersection of Post Road Extension will be paved this week. These funds are coming from the FY 25 budget.

Bill Sweet Town Administrator:

1. The ground penetrating radar survey of the Town Hall cemetery was done recently. 17 unmarked graves were located. The map will be referenced to determine if they can be identified.
2. The work to upgrade the electrical distribution in Town Hall has started. There will be 2 days when power will be shut off to the building. This will happen on June 6th and 7th. Town Hall will be closed on those days.
3. Reviewed the unpublished list of town scholarship award recipients. There are 5 Rutland High School students, an MSJ and a Long Trail School recipient. Selectman Denardo moved to approve the list. Selectman Hathaway seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 - 0.
 - a. Awards for the Rutland High School class night is planned. Presenting awards to the students from MSJ and Long Trail School need to be planned. Selectwoman Russell will handle the MSJ award.
 - b. The recipient from the Long Trail School will be invited to the June 18th Board meeting so they can be presented with their award.
4. The steering committee for the Route 7 north sidewalk project needs to get their recommendations on a qualified consultant into our Municipal Project Manager by the end of the week.
5. Discussed the Town Wide Celebration flyers. They need to get printed soon so they can be given out at the Town school.
6. The energy audit results for Town Hall were received today. They have not been reviewed.
7. Discussed the maintenance of the transfer station generator. It is not included in our maintenance plan. After discussion, the highway department will do the routine maintenance as they have been. Transfer Station Manager Larry Dell Veneri will be invited to the June 4th meeting for a follow-up discussion.

8. Reviewed the change orders for the public safety building. There is one, related to having to deal with additional ledge, which needs approval. It is \$33,750. The cost would come from the contingency fund. Selectman Denardo moved to approve the change order and to authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the Board. Selectman Getty seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.
9. Provided the amendment to the Road Name and Road Location Ordinance. This would add Partridge Place as a new Town non-public road.
 - a. Selectman Denardo moved to amend the ordinance to add Partridge Place as a new non-public town road. Selectman Hathaway seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Reviewed an engagement letter from A.M. Peisch to conduct the annual town audit. The cost is \$18,000. This is separate from the anticipated single audit. After discussion Selectman Hathaway moved to approve the audit letter and to authorize the Chair to sign on behalf of the Board. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 – 0.

Selectman Hathaway moved to adjourn. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Bill Sweet, Town Administrator.

Mary Ashcroft, Chair

Joseph Denardo, Clerk

Sharon Russell

Kurt Hathaway

Matt Getty

Center Rutland, VT.