

**TOWN OF RUTLAND SELECTBOARD OPEN MEETING
RUTLAND TOWN MUNICIPAL TOWN HALL
181 BUSINESS ROUTE 4, CENTER RUTLAND, VT 05736
DECEMBER 9th, 2025**

- The meeting opened at 5:30 P.M. with the pledge of allegiance.
- Board members present Mary Ashcroft, Joe Denardo, Sharon Russell, Kurt Hathaway, and Matt Getty
- Members of the public present Lisa Knickerbocker, Shelley Dumas, Chris Howe, Jason Bathlon

Update from the Selectboard Chair

- With the personnel changes coming to the Treasurer's office, a third signatory is recommended for the TD Back accounts. Discussed adding Town Administrator, Bill Sweet, as this third. Selectwoman Russell moved to approve this arrangement and to authorize the Chair to sign the documents on behalf of the Board. Selectmen Denardo seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0.

The Board began reviewing draft budget proposals.

Highway – Commissioner Dave Sears

- Reviewed the projected income. It includes \$200,000 for a state grant program to fund a culvert replacement.
- Reviewed projected expenses
 - Deicer, which is mainly salt, is up slightly due to market costs.
 - New equipment includes a proposal to add 5 remotely monitored weather stations around town at a cost of \$14,503. This would be a 3-year agreement.
 - Culvert replacement has a large increase due to the specific culvert replacement project planned for this summer. A portion of this is offset by State grant income.
- The total proposed budget is \$1,531,866 with \$1,211,866 to be raised by taxes.
- After discussion, Selectman Getty moved to approve the Highway budget as presented. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 - 0.

Discussed the pre-town meeting window. The meeting can be held after January 20th. After discussion, January 27th is the tentative date. Any ballot items need to be approved by the Board no later than January 13th. but earlier is preferred. A discussion on any depreciation account changes needs to be included in this. Depreciation adjustments will be added to the next Board agenda.

Recreation – Director Mike Rowe

- Reviewed the anticipated income lines. An increase in the non-resident rate is planned for this coming season.
- Reviewed projected expenses
 - A new aquatics director's position is proposed, and funding is included in the pool staff line.
 - Some adjustment to miscellaneous and plumbing lines were made to combine some redundant accounts.

- Discussed how to fund the health insurance benefit line. Mr. Rowe does not take town insurance now, but is eligible for it, and is also eligible for the buyout program. An amount to cover a potential buyout will be added.
- The total budget is \$232,970 with an amount to be raised by taxes of \$197,570.
- After discussion, Selectwoman Russell moved to approve the Rec budget as presented. Selectman Hathaway seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 - 0.

Discussed budget presentations at Town meeting, and whether the department heads should do it rather than Board members. Most Board members are in favor of trying this. After discussion, it will be tried at pre-town meeting in January.

Fire – Chief Chris Clark

- Reviewed projected expenses
 - There are no significant changes to the budget lines.
- The total budget and amount to be raised by taxes is \$266,444.
- Selectwoman Russell moved to approve the Fire budget as presented. Selectman Getty seconded the motion. After discussion, a small increase was made to the social security line. The motion carried 5 – 0.

Police – Chief Ed Dumas

- Reviewed anticipated income lines.
 - Work being done by the K9 officer is expected to bring some money in forfeitures but the exact amount is not known now.
 - An anticipated increase in the reimbursement for the school resource officer was included.
- Reviewed projected expenses.
 - Adjustments were made to the Chief and Deputy Chief lines in anticipation of the new staffing structure after Chief Dumas retires. Some funds will remain in the Deputy Chief line to allow for additional compensation to be paid to officers taking on a supervisor role if the Chief is on vacation.
 - The compensation lines for the patrol officers was increased to \$34 per hour to remain competitive.
 - A line for a fourth officer was added in anticipation of hiring a new officer during the next budget year.
- The total budget is \$826,806 with \$763,786 to be raised by taxes.
- Selectman Denardo moved to approve the Police budget as presented. Selectman Getty seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0.

2nd Constable and Health Officer budget – John Paul Faignant

- Reviewed the proposed budget with the 2nd Constable / Health officer.
- Reviewed the compensation line for the 2nd constable. This new figure is calculated on the same \$34 per hour rate being paid to the Police Officers. After discussion, Selectwoman Russell moved to approve the new rate for the 2nd Constable line. Selectman Getty seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0.
- Reviewed the proposed expenses. Vehicle hours and mileage had not been budgeted separately in the past, but the individual expenses were billed to the individual lines. Adjustments to the lines were made to reflect this.

- Discussed the vehicle reimbursement rates, which have typically followed the FEMA rate. The enforcement rate, \$19.89 per hour, used in the past has been eliminated. This is what the proposed budget number is based on. The Board agreed to maintain this rate.

1st Constable budget – Mike Delehanty

- Reviewed the proposed expenses. Selectman Denardo moved to set the 1st Constable rate at \$34 per hour. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0.
- Some adjustments were made to the draft based on the discussion with the 1st Constable.

Planning Commission – Chair Barbara Pulling

- Reviewed the proposed budget with the Planning Commission Chair.
- No adjustments were made to the draft.

Transfer Station – Larry Dell Veneri

- Reviewed the proposed budget with the Transfer Station Manager
- The compensation reflects the approved increase, and an expected increase in hours.
- Discussed proposed rate changes to the bag rate, and pickup load fees. The proposed new per bag fee would be \$4. This would apply to the punch card and individual bag fee. The new small pickup charge is proposed to be \$30 and the large pickup charge would be \$40. A \$1 per 5-gallon bucket and \$3 per wood pallet fee would be added. The transfer station committee has met and discussed this change. They were in favor of it. Selectman Denardo moved to approve the proposed new rates. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0.

Listers Office – Marcia Chioffi

- Reviewed the anticipated income figures.
- Reviewed the proposed expenses.
 - Ms. Chioffi will not be seeking reelection in 2026. Ms. Chioffi suggests only having a part-time lister next time, making 3 in total and not having any full-time listers. The compensation rate reflects this suggestion.
 - Discussed including funds to purchase a new software suite to replace what they use in NEMRC. This new software, the patriot system, is what most of the state uses. The lack of this resource contributed to why we did not receive any bids for our reappraisal. The total cost is \$6200, and this was added to the software line.
 - Discussed the reappraisal maintenance. Funds are received from the State and then transferred to a money market. No corresponding expense was listed. This was added.

General Budget

- Budget projections were not received from the Delinquent Tax Collector. The same numbers from last year were used.
- Projections to the balance of income lines were added.
- Discussed what to set for the local option tax income. \$1.4M was set.
- Reviewed the balance of compensation and salary lines for accuracy. The assistant clerk and treasurer line and the office help line were adjusted to reflect the staffing arrangement next year.

- Discussed any anticipated expenses which would be included in professional services and legal fees. Adjustments were made to both lines.
- Discussed the budget for fireworks. A cost estimate from our vendor was requested but has not been received. The budget will remain the same until we hear from them. Discussed collaborating with another municipality to share in the cost of the event.
- Discussed the contribution to publish The Circle. A request was made from the editor to increase the stipend as well as an increase to cover costs. Selectman Getty moved to approve the requests. Selectman Hathaway seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0.
- Discussed the anticipated expenses for the public safety building. The projections are expected to be accurate.
- Discussed how to handle accounting for bond payments.
- Discussed adding funds to cover hiring a payroll service versus keeping funding for a third person in the Clerk and Treasurer office. Based on the discussion, an increase was made to professional services and to Clerk training. A new line for admin training was added as well.
- The total general budget is \$1,433,718. This amount is completely covered by anticipated income.
- Selectman Denardo moved to approve the General budget. Selectwoman Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried 5 – 0.

Selectman Denardo discussed an issue with the radio system at the Public Safety Building where the police and fire departments were using the radios at the same time. Only 1 channel can be set on each radio per band at a time. Several options were discussed, no specific resolution was identified.

Selectman Hathaway moved to adjourn. Selectman Denardo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Bill Sweet, Town Administrator.

Mary Ashcroft, Chair

Joseph Denardo, Clerk

Sharon Russell

Kurt Hathaway

Matt Getty

Center Rutland, VT.