

Town of Mendon

Selectboard

July 26, 2021

Members of Selectboard present: Richard Wilcox, Larry Courcelle, Val Taylor

Town Officers and employees present: Sara Tully, Town Administrator & Health Officer, Nancy Gondella, Town Clerk & Treasurer, Phil Douglas, Constable

Visitors present: Rutland County Deputy Sheriff Bossong, Justin Lindholm, Dennis Charles, Oliver Olsen, Bret Yates (partial attendance), Brian Gates (partial attendance), Carol Gates (partial attendance), Hal Rosenzweig (partial attendance)

The Selectboard Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM at the Town Office.

Agenda:

Motion by R. Wilcox to approve the agenda with additions of ARPA Funds, Green Mountain Power Access Permit for Meadowlake Drive, Dry Hydrants, Irene Recognition Committee Update. Motion seconded by L. Courcelle. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Selectboard Rules of Procedure The Selectboard annually adopts Rules of Procedure for the operation of public meetings. The current policy was adopted March 10, 2021. S. Tully presented an updated version with verbiage taken from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns Model Policy that clearly defines the opportunity for public participation at meetings along with expectations of order and decorum. The discussion was disrupted by B. Gates who insisted the Selectboard did not have the authority to adopt such a policy. The Chair directed B. Gates that interruptions of the meeting would not be tolerated. Deputy Bossong requested B. Gates step outside the meeting. Constable Douglas accompanied Deputy Bossong.

Motion by R. Wilcox to adopt the Selectboard Rules of Procedure dated July 26, 2021. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion. N. Gondella distributed copies of the policy to members of the public present.

Announcement

SAVE the DATE Mendon Town Picnic Remembering Irene September 18, 2021 Noon to 3 PM at the Mendon Recreation Area with a rain date of September 19, 2021.

Administrative Matters

Selectmen's Orders were reviewed.

Motion by R. Wilcox to approve pay orders for 7/26/21 for \$9,876.35 and \$71.72. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Motion by R. Wilcox to approve payroll for period ending 7/24/21 for \$10,829.17. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: R. Wilcox moved to approve the minutes of 7/12/21. Motion seconded by L. Courcelle. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

Fiscal Year 2021 End Update N. Gondella provided a year end analysis to the Selectboard and reported the year end surplus is about \$258,000 due to various reasons, but the main factors are salaries & benefits were low due to a vacant position, COVID expenses incurred in FY20 were reimbursed in FY21 from the CARES Act, State Aid to Highways received additional funding, recording revenue was up and Nancy Merrill did a great job collecting delinquent taxes.

Public Comment

Oliver Olsen attended the Selectboard meeting to discuss the unfortunate timing of the reappraisal in an increasing market. Mr. Olsen discussed the history of Mendon's Common Level of Appraisal and Coefficient of Dispersion being within the state's definition of acceptable levels. The Selectboard responded that in 2017 the state mandated the Town to reappraise by 2020 and then received a one year extension due to COVID. N. Gondella provided additional information regarding the reappraisal process. The Town agreed with O. Olsen and will monitor the annual Equalization Studies and will evaluate options available to the Town depending on what the future data shows.

C. Gates accused the Selectboard of violating the Open Meeting Law and accused S. Tully of not providing public documents. S. Tully reported to the Selectboard that she had responded to all public information requests submitted by C. Gates. C. Gates demanded who she could report these violations to and S. Tully responded that she can contact an attorney.

Justin Lindholm addressed the Selectboard with a suggestion to change the wording in the current draft of the Declaration of Inclusion to read "The Town of Mendon condemns racism and welcomes all persons to our community who possess the spirit of inclusion". J. Lindholm stated he does not support the town welcoming people to Mendon that did not support inclusion. R. Wilcox informed the public that the Declaration of Inclusion is currently tabled until September, but thanked J. Lindholm for his suggestion.

Business

Town Office Security Measures N. Gondella reported the old office had a panic button that could be used in an emergency to dispatch law enforcement. The panic button has not been operational in the new office. N. Gondella continued by stating she will not stand for being called names or being yelled at by members of the public. She requested the Town look at options for security systems. S. Tully supported N. Gondella's statements and requests. S. Tully further requested locking doors on offices. Motion by R. Wilcox to purchase two door locks and directed staff to look into security systems for the town office. Motion seconded by L. Courcelle. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion. The Selectboard will seek advice from legal counsel.

Setting the 2021-2022 Tax Rate N. Gondella calculated the municipal tax rate using various cash carry forward amounts. The FY21 year end surplus is \$258, 000. There is \$25,000 offsetting the amount to be raised in taxes from FY20 as approved by the voters. N. Gondella discussed the effects the surplus has on stabilizing the fluctuation of the municipal tax rate for upcoming years. The Selectboard is authorized to retain surplus highway funds to be used on highway expenses. The surplus of highway funds totals \$60,000. The Selectboard discussed the effects of rolling over \$100,000 of the FY21 surplus to offset the amount to be collected in taxes. S. Tully reported that making this decision will save taxpayers \$41.60 per \$100,000 property value. The Selectboard will determine a proposal of what to do with the remaining surplus funds and present it for voter approval in March 2022.

Motion by L. Courcelle to set the 2021-2022 Tax Rates:

2021/2022 Tax Rate:

(reappraisal completed April 1, 2021)

Homestead = \$1.5377
 (\$.3793+\$1.1578+\$0.0006)

Non-Residential = \$1.6040
 (\$.3793+\$1.2241+\$0.0006)

Municipal Tax Rate: \$.3793

2021-2022 Amount to be raised by taxes (FY21) \$911,866(carry over \$25000 FY20 and \$100,000)

2021-2022 Municipal Grand List \$2,404,229

Education Tax Rate:

Homestead = \$1.1578

Non-Residential = \$1.2241

2021-2022 Summary:

Municipal Tax Rate= \$.1642 decrease or 30.2% decrease

Education Tax Rate:

Homestead = \$1.1578 a \$.3514 decrease or 23.3% decrease

Non-Residential = \$1.2241 a \$.4747 decrease or 28% decrease

Total Homestead = \$.5168 decrease or 25.2% decrease

Total Non-Residential = \$.6401 decrease or 28.5% decrease

Local Agreement Tax: \$.0006

Eligible properties (4)

Voter approved Property Assessment Exemption \$40,000 = 160,000/100

Total Exemption \$1,600-\$211 from the state =\$1389

2021-2022 Municipal Grand List \$2,404,229

Motion seconded by R. Wilcox. The Selectboard unanimously approved the motion.

N. Gondella reported the tax bills will be prepared and mailed by Monday August 2nd.

Grants in Aid Equipment Grant S. Tully submitted the final documentation for the Grants in Aid Equipment Grant. The Town purchased a Buffalo Turbine Cyclone Debris Blower for \$8,504. The grant funds total \$5,600 and the Town will incur a cost of \$2,904. The Selectboard approved the expenses and signed the final documentation.

American Rescue Plan Act Funds S. Tully reported the ARPA funds have been release to the State of Vermont and the estimate for Mendon is to receive \$105,839 in two installments.

Green Mountain Power Access Permit for Meadowlake Drive S. Tully reported that Green Mountain Power (GMP) submitted an Access Permit in May 2020 to install utilities in the right of way. The project included burying lines along and under Meadowlake Drive near the addresses of 571 and 639 Meadowlake Drive. The Selectboard had requested to try and tunnel underneath the road rather than dig it up and have to resurface the roadway. GMP attempted to tunnel under the roadway and met rock or ledge in the middle of the roadway. The Town will request a replacement access permit be submitted with a new scope of work outlining how they will dig up the roadway and reconstruct and resurface to the Town of Mendon Highway Specification Ordinance. Bill Ellis will approve the Access Permit to authorize the start of the project. The goal is to complete this road work before school starts at Barstow.

Dry Hydrants P. Douglas recommended the Town complete a grant applications for multiple dry hydrants in Mendon. The first application would be for reconstruction and possible relocation of the dry hydrant on Woodward Road. Additional applications could be for dry hydrants in water sources located at 6677 US Route 4. The Selectboard agreed and directed S. Tully and P. Douglas to work on submitting applications to the Rural Fire Protection Grant.

Irene Recognition Grant L. Courcelle reported the committee will send a postcard to all property owners with details about the Town Picnic Remembering Irene September 18, 2021 Noon to 3 PM at the Mendon Recreation Area with a rain date of September 19, 2021.

There being no further business, R. Wilcox moved to adjourn at 6 PM. Motion seconded by V. Taylor. The Selectboard approved the motion.

Date Approved _____

Richard Wilcox

Sara Tully - Clerk of the Board

Larry Courcelle

Val Taylor