

**Select Board Meeting, Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 at 6:00pm**  
**Location: Town Office Meeting Room: 37 High Street Cavendish Vermont**

**Present:** Bob Glidden (Chairman), George Timko, Mike Ripley, Sandra Russo, Stephen Plunkard, Brendan McNamara (Town Manager), Jen Leak (Recording Secretary), Diane McNamara (Town Clerk/Treasurer) and citizens as listed on the attached sheet.

**1. Call the meeting to order**

Bob Glidden, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. Adjust agenda**

Brendan said that he had no adjustments. Brendan said that he had corrected the typos on his contract for the Board to sign tonight.

**3. Work on FY '22-'23 Budget.**

Brendan handed out updated copies of the proposed budget.

Under the section **Appropriations - Local Town Entities & Activities**, Brendan said that the Recreation department budget was not ready for tonight's discussion. He said that the librarian was present to discuss the Library budget.

Kata Welch was present and updated the Board on Library activities during the previous year as well as upcoming events.

Brendan said that the Library Board is asking for an appropriation of \$86,300 which would cover the full cost of the librarian salaries and associated tax expenses. Brendan noted that if this and other proposed increases were approved the proposed Selectman's budget would show a 12% increase over last year.

Sandra said that she has gathered information from other libraries in the State and most municipal libraries get 90% of their budgets funded by the Town but this has not been the case in Cavendish. She said that the Library Board wants to put money aside for future expenses and for building upkeep.

Mike asked how much money the Library will be receiving from the Green Mountain Unified School District and the Library Trust Fund. Sandra said that the Library will receive \$40,000 from the School and about \$45,000 from their Trust Fund.

Mike clarified that the Library budget is \$120,000 so the appropriations from the School and Town would more than cover that, plus they will receive money from the Trust fund. Sandra said that was correct.

George asked Kata how much time the Library is exclusively devoted to the School. Kata said that the Library is used by the School exclusively and not open to the public 2 days per week, but she does sometimes do basic non-school chores on those days such as reshelving books. She said that there is after school programming on other days when the Library is open to the public, which is open to any children who want to attend.

George asked why the School wasn't paying the Town to reimburse part of the costs of salaries. Sandra said that the School is not paying the librarian's salaries rather they are giving money to the library for services provided. George said that the other libraries in the State are totally town libraries but ours is also a school library. Sandra agreed that it was unique but said it was built with the intent to serve both Town and School functions.

Mike said that he thought part of the money from the School District should go towards salaries and part to Library operations expenses. George asked how the librarians are currently paid. Diane said that the Town pays the librarians and bills the Library quarterly for salary expenses above the annual appropriation. Diane commented that in her opinion the Library was not strictly a municipal library but a combination school and town library. Sandra said that there are not many other town libraries in schools like ours is. George suggested paying 90% of the amount of salaries when the librarians are working for the Town.

Stephen said that he thought the question was whether the library is an expense or an investment, and he thought it was an investment for the community. Sandra said that the Library is a community center for the Town and added that Kata puts a lot of effort into community events.

Mike said that he thought using half of the school appropriation to offset salaries would be appropriate and suggested an appropriation of \$66,000 rather than \$86,000. George suggested that increases could be phased in over the next several years.

Jen asked for clarification whether the Board is considering an increased appropriation to the Library or suggesting that the Town pay the employees salaries and expenses directly. The Board said they are considering an appropriation.

***Mike Ripley moved/Bob Glidden seconded a motion to amend the Library Appropriation to \$56,000.*** Jen said that, speaking as a citizen and not a Town employee, she felt this was a big change in how the library is being funded. She said that all other big decisions regarding the library had been voted upon and this was not being decided by the voters. Jen said that it had not been warned as an agenda item at a regular Select Board meeting and would not be discussed for a floor vote at Town Meeting this year and it did not feel appropriate for the Board to make this decision at a budget meeting. George said that he felt it was just an increase in the Library appropriation so was not significantly different. ***Stephen Plunkard, George Timko, Mike Ripley and Bob Glidden voted in favor. Sandra Russo abstained. The motion was approved.***

Kata thanked the Board and left the meeting at 6:35 pm

Brendan said that the proposed Cemetery budget is level funded.

Brendan suggested moving the Ambulance Service into an expense category rather than an appropriation. The Board agreed. He said that the Ludlow Ambulance has increased their request to \$73,150 this year and anticipate asking for \$98,000 next year. He said that they are billing the Town a flat fee per 911 address. Brendan reminded the Board that they had asked for a quote from Golden Cross Ambulance in the past which was less but they are further away in Claremont which would significantly delay their response time. The Board agreed that having Ludlow Ambulance provide services for Cavendish was important.

Mike said that he is a member of the Ludlow Ambulance service. He said that they had few volunteers and have now moved to all paid staff. He said that they always have 2 people on duty and it is very expensive to cover both shifts 24 hours a day. He added that fire department personnel and other ambulance staff who are available will also show up for calls which is

crucial on urgent calls as doing CPR for 30-45 minutes is exhausting.

Brendan said that he needed to verify some details with Terry O'Brien, Recreation Director, before presenting the proposed Recreation budget. He said that Terry has asked for an increase in salary as a full-time director. Brendan said that he and Terry have discussed the declining number of students at the school and the other budget increases this year. Brendan added that he has nothing but praise for Terry, who puts in so much effort maintaining the fields and coaching teams, but he felt that the numbers of students participating did not seem to warrant a full-time recreation director.

Sandra asked if the Covid pandemic had impacted the numbers of students. Brendan said that school enrollment has been dropping for awhile unrelated to Covid and the teams have had difficulty getting enough kids to play. He said that Chester and Ludlow are bigger and have full-time municipal recreation directors for elementary-aged sports. Sandra asked how much more Terry was asking for. Brendan said that he thought about \$10,000 more but he needed to check with Terry before finalizing that number. George asked if that would make him eligible for the Town health insurance policy. Brendan said that it might.

Under the category of **Summer Roads**, Brendan said that last year the budget did not contain any money for the paving fund and he suggested adding \$35,000 to the paving fund this year. Stephen asked if Brendan had added a sidewalk fund. Brendan said that he hadn't but he thought that ARPA funds could be put into general funds as "loss of revenue" and some of that money could be put towards sidewalk repairs.

Stephen asked if the expense for a digital speed sign was included. Brendan said that he needed clarification on where it could be placed on Route 131 because he was just made aware that it needs to be placed on a town road and not on the state highway. He said that in Chester and Ludlow the towns are responsible for those portions of the highways inside the village areas, but he thought that all of Route 131 in Cavendish was state highway. He said that he was working with someone at VTrans to determine where it could be placed. Sandra asked if one could be placed on Depot Street. Brendan said that it could because Depot Street is a town road.

George asked about the school zone sign which has been blinking all the time recently. Brendan said that there have been issues with it.

Brendan added that the Windsor County sheriff told him a judge in Windsor County Court is throwing out traffic tickets in towns where the highway ordinance doesn't list roads individually by name. He thought that the Board might need to re-do that ordinance which would involve holding a public hearing.

***Bob Glidden moved/Mike Ripley seconded a motion to accept the section as proposed in the amount of \$235,471. All voted in favor.***

Under the category of **Winter Roads**, Brendan said that the proposed budget is decreased a little bit as he suggested putting a little less towards salt. ***George Timko moved/Mike Ripley seconded a motion to accept the section as proposed in the amount of \$203,648. All voted in favor.***

Under the category of **Insurance & Retirement**, Brendan said that the proposed budget is less due to lower health insurance costs. ***Mike Ripley moved/Bob Glidden seconded a motion to accept the section as proposed in the amount of \$244,806. All voted in favor.***

Brendan said that he had a few more items to work on but he would like to finish the budget next week. He proposed that the Board meet next Wednesday, February 9, 2022, to review the final budget sections and the first draft of the Town Meeting warning. The Board agreed. Brendan added that there is surplus of about \$21,000 from last year which the Board needs to discuss.

**4. Executive Session (Personnel)**

*Bob Glidden moved/Mike Ripley seconded a motion to enter executive session at 7:08 pm. All voted in favor.*

*Mike Ripley moved/George Timko seconded a motion to exit executive session at 7:15 pm. All voted in favor.*

**5. Adjourn**

*George Timko moved/Mike Ripley seconded a motion to adjourn at 7:16 pm. All voted in favor.*

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_