

Approved as written: _____
Approved as corrected: _____

**VERNON SELECTBOARD
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2015
SPECIAL MEETING/BUDGET
6:00PM
DRAFT MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Christiane Howe, Chair
Michael Courtemanche, Vice Chair
Josh Unruh
Sandra Harris
Emily Vergobbe, Clerk (late)

OTHERS PRESENT:

Rich Vesper
Janet Rasmussen
Bob Spencer
David Webb
Janis Perra
Kevin Turnley
Bronna Zlochiver
Jean Carr
Nancy Gasset
Barbara Moseley
Marylynn Scherlin
Dawn Petrowsky
Kris Berberian – Library Director
Aina Lindquist – Assistant Town Clerk
Bronna Zlochiver

MEDIA

None

MEMBERS ABSENT

Catrina Lawley, Secretary

CALL TO ORDER SPECIAL MEETING/WELCOME/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Christiane Howe, called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA/APPROVAL WITH OR WITHOUT ADDITIONS

Howe asked to Add the Assistant Town Clerk's hours, keys for the downstairs door to the Town Clerk's portion of the Agenda. Howe also asked to add the Transco agreement to the Agenda under old business.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SANDRA HARRIS TO ADD THE EXTENSION OF THE ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK'S HOURS, KEYS, AND TAX STABILIZATION AGREEMENT WITH TRANSCO. MOTION SECONDED BY JOSH UNRUH. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

DEPARTMENTS/COMMITTEES

Library Budget Presentation

Kris Berberian presented the Vernon Free Library budget to the Board for their review. Berberian gave a brief history of what the Library has done and accomplished since 2007. One of the projects that the Library would like to do is to move the children's section into the back of the Library. They have received a quote of \$14,000 to cover the cost of building additional shelving, etc. Berberian stated that they had a surplus of about \$10,000 for the 2014/2015 fiscal year due to the insurance that was budgeted but then not used. Berberian asked if

they could carry it over instead of putting it in their budget. The Board of Trustees will put in a formal request. Howe commented that she was not sure because June 30th was the deadline for any of those requests. Howe suggested that Berberian speak to the Treasurer, Cindy Turnley prior to making a formal request to the Selectboard. Berberian responded that she will do that. The Library feels that they can raise the additional amount on their own. They do not want to put it in the Capital Plan and wait an additional 1 or 2 to do the project as they need that room.

Berberian handed out a Programs, Activities and Services sheet for everyone to review. It included a detail of all of the programs, activities and services that the Library provides to the Town. An average of 173 people/week visited the library between January-August 2015.

The Library proposed budget is \$122,090 which is an increase of \$5,538 over last year's budget. The increase is basically because of salaries, a third person was added. All other expenses have been reduced or moved around to help balance out the additional expense under salaries.

Harris asked about the book budget for 2014/15. Berberian explained that it was because of the contract and so that year a surplus was requested and used to cover that additional expense. Courtemanche clarified that the figure is contractual every year.

Howe asked about loaning the books and the cost of \$3.22 to mail. When the receiving Library sends it back it costs them. Donations are suggested.

Berberian said in 2014/2015 they got a computer virus which made their repairs and maintenance go over budget. They do have virus protection on their computers currently.

Courtemanche asked about donations. Berberian said they receive about \$100-\$125 per month including the book sales.

Unruh asked about serving 1198 people in the last two years and how that is calculated. Berberian said that every patron is assigned a number; it is not based on how many times they come to the Library. Unruh asked if it was safe to assume that there are about 600 people a year and Berberian stated it is a different calculation. Not everyone that uses the Library has a card. Those people are not counted but the registered patrons are. Carry over per Trustees line item was questioned. Berberian writes the budget and presents it and the Trustees control the budget. The \$3,000 was part of a surplus of their budget from a previous year. When they released that they had to have additional funds in the book acquisition line item, the Library Board of Trustees put in a formal request to the Selectboard to carry over those funds.

Unruh stated that Statute 22 VSA section 142 states that the Selectboard sets the municipal Library budget and does not mention a Board of Trustees. Unruh was unclear why the Board of Trustees has control of the budget when the Selectboard should. Howe replied that the Board does control the budget. The Board of Trustees has to come before the Selectboard for approval. This is the chance to do that and then the people at Town Meeting have another opportunity to do so by a separate vote. Berberian also stated that if the Selectboard does decide to decrease the budget, the Board of Trustees can obtain 5% of the voters signatures on a petition to ask for an article to increase the budget back to what was presented.

The Board of Trustees are elected.

Vergobbe asked if there were nonresidents that access the Library and if they pay a fee for that. Berberian said that they have about 30 nonresidents that pay \$25 for a family, individual is \$15 and student is \$5. Vergobbe felt that those were low. Berberian said that could be considered. No advertising is really done for nonresident members.

Unruh stated that his concern is that one day soon, the Library is going to be forced to cut significantly. Unruh was not stating that he felt the Library services did not warrant a budget, but rather that when all the money is gone from the school tax break and continue to lose our money from VY that sitting in Town Meeting is going to be hard for the taxpayers to accept. Not just the Library, it is all of the budgets.

Berberian said that Libraries are often like Art Departments, cut first but that she hopes that she is gone a long long time before the Library is gone. Unruh agreed. Vergobbe said that the departments that are concerned about being eliminated are being proactive in trying to prevent that which is why she suggested charging higher amounts for nonresidents.

Town Clerk's Budget Presentation

Aina Lindquist is Acting Town Clerk, but is still the Assistant Town Clerk as Susan Miller is on medical leave. Lindquist provided a description from the Vermont Statutes of their Statutory duties and their Non-Statutory duties which include the James Cusick Scholarship, selling of town trash bags, selling of bus passes, and the sale of cemetery plots.

Lindquist also gave a history of the number of hours paid versus volunteer.

Presidential primary and the general election are going to require a new Election Equipment Tabulator and additional personnel so Lindquist is requesting a minimum of 80 hours.

Lindquist asked Nancy Gassett to speak about the training that she went to regarding the new election equipment and about the cemeteries.

Lindquist read an email from the Director of Elections regarding the cost of the voting tabulator for each year.

Gassett clarified that she went to training for the statewide election system, the tabulator is separate. Everyone will have a my voter page where you can update information, register to vote. The Town Clerk's Office will have a dashboard that they will have to check every day and take care of things that need to be addressed to make the records match. The Tabulator is separate and will be a training to take place in each Town Clerk's Office. Everyone that is a registered voter will have a number. There is a bar code system.

Lindquist directed the Board to the proposed budget with a request for 80 hours in their office. This is not so that two people can work 40 hours each, rather that they can hire someone to train. That is an increase of 11 hours which would be effective July 1st. No ballot clerks line item in this proposed budget and a decrease in the NewRepl Office Equipment (down to zero) for a total savings of \$1,200. The Tabulator will be an increase to the Ballots line of \$1,700, postage increase of \$150 (for a total of \$300), Travel and Conferences and Miscellaneous are both increased by \$500 (for a total of \$1,000 for each line item). The miscellaneous line is for food. No workers were paid at the elections but we provided lunch/suppers.

Recordings have not come down but there has been no time to train Gassett on how to do them yet and no time for Lindquist to learn about the new checklist training that Gassett attended. Harris asked about scanning to protect the records. Nothing further has been done on them according to Lindquist.

Howe stated that Lindquist has requested that the Board keep Gassett at 39 hours. Harris asked if that enabled Gassett to get the insurance. Gassett said no, because she is still temporary or until she gets to 6 months.

Harris said that she is concerned that they don't have time to do the scanning.

Courtemanche questioned whether the problem of scanning would be addressed within these hours. Gasset stated if Harris would come in and teach them what they needed to do, it could be. Everything is still there. Vergobbe asked what the volunteers are working on. Lindquist said that their currently working in the cemeteries. Scanning needs to be scanned and converted the same day.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MICHAEL COURTEMANCHE TO CONTINUE TO ALLOW THE ACTING ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK TO WORK 39 HOURS PER WEEK. MOTION SECONDED BY EMILY VERGOBBE. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Courtemanche told Lindquist to ask Turnley to put in the additional hours for budgeting purposes. Howe stated that it could change as the Board continues the budget process.

Historians Budget Presentation

Dale Gasset presented the budget for the Historians.

Gasset explained that most of their budget is pretty set. In their building repairs and maintenance they decreased by \$475 (for a total line item of \$500); Grounds remained at \$1,500 with a thank you to Heather Frost for an amazing job; and historic records, preservation & supplies remains at \$1,000. For a total budget of \$3,500 for the FY 16/17.

Gasset explained that one of the Town residents has donated the portable bathroom each year and the painting is almost done. The carry over cannot be calculated yet as there is still bills that need to be recorded.

Nancy Gasset was asked to join the discussion regarding fundraising. Nancy Gasset stated that the fundraising that they do mainly goes to the Chapel as the Historians own the Chapel and the property. The Town owns the South School and helps with maintaining the building and the contents are owned by the Historians. Gasset thanked the Recreation department as they do all of the mowing and has for several years and they are really thankful for that. The Chapel is undergoing painting still. Two sides were painted and this year the other two sides are being done. Gasset reported that they have raised approximately \$10,000. It gets costly because of the lead paint requirements.

Dale Gasset said that some clapboards were replaced at the museum but still maintained the historical value.

The bulk of the fundraisers was to keep the Chapel up and running and in good repair. Unruh said not to hesitate to ask Leader Home Center for donations as everyone in Town does. Materials are often donated.

Robert Spencer asked how many paid members of the Historians do we have currently. Gasset said about 40. Spencer said that following up on what Vergobbe suggested with the Library, marketing and promoting might work. Gasset said good point. Unruh volunteered the Recs facebook page as an area to advertise for new members as there is a huge following and they have posted for others before. Zlochiver has been posting for all of their activities and fundraising. There are 9 Trustees and a Treasurer. They could use someone to organize a membership drive. Barbara Moseley said the Historians are important to this Town.

Planning Commission

Robert Spencer and Janet Rasmussen presented the budget for the Planning Commission. This Selectboard expanded the Planning Commission to seven members last year. Currently looking for another member. The budget presented was level funded. Most of their budget goes to the Windham Regional Commission which they joined years ago. Howe asked if that amount was set in stone. Rasmussen stated that she tried to figure that out once and it was really complicated and she was not successful. Nancy Gasset said that every Town needs to belong to a Commission.

Spencer is anticipating more involvement with the Municipal Planning Grant. Under the new Municipal Planning

Grant we might need to use some of the travel. A new item that they would like to have is a local match of \$2,333 if we get the Grant; we are required to match that amount. The Town would be required to administer the Grant. Howe stated that we need to place it in now regardless of if we get it or not. The Town Plan needs to be updated again as well. The new line item needs to be called MPG Local Match.

Harris said that if it is in the budget then the townspeople can reject that and as a grant giver's point of view it might not be stable enough. Harris suggested putting it in their budget, but on the application make it known that if it is kicked back out, the Board will use the Emergency line to come up with the matching funds.

Courtemanche clarified that we are going to add \$2,333 to the Planning Commission's budget as a new line item called MPG Local Match and on the grant application will write in that it is available through the Selectboard's budget.

Zlochiver questioned whether the amount for travel could be used. Howe stated that she would like it to remain as is.

Vergobbe asked about the line item for FICA. That was for a person that was doing the minutes.

Municipal Planning Grant

Spencer stated that the grant application is due tomorrow. The Town is applying to the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development. That is who provides this planning money. Four years ago we applied for money to help update the Town Plan. That money was very helpful and did yield a Town Plan. We applied for another grant last year, but because our Town Plan was not officially adopted by the Selectboard, we did not get it. There are new mandatory State requirements for flood hazard. Given all of the issues in Vernon and for securing any funding, they often require an updated Town Plan. They also looked at the other needs that the Town has for a Town Plan. Fiber Optics has to be in the Town Plan in order to obtain any funding. Public involvement, written update of Plan, Map Update, river access, recreational trails, flood resilience, and a designated Town Center would be all included in the update.

The Grant would be \$12,667 with a match amount of \$2,333 for a total of \$15,000. Most of this work could be done by Windham Regional Commission. The rate is \$60 per hour. The formula has already been established by them which is how we arrived at \$15,000 for a total. We also have to administer this with no funding provided for that. Robert Spencer and Cindy Turnley will be the grant administrator.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SANDRA HARRIS TO ALLOW MICHAEL COURTEMANCHE AND CHRISTIANE HOWE TO SIGN THE RESOLUTION FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION. MOTION SECONDED BY JOSH UNRUH. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Spencer said that each Selectboard member needs to sign and Courtemanche will scan it and upload it to the application tomorrow.

Dale Gassett commented that there was an up side and a down side to calling it a Town Center. He is not sure how that was going to plan out. Spencer said it is the planning process to answer those questions but he is not sure where the Town Center would be.

Howe asked about junk that was close to the river and wondered if that was ever discussed or resolved. There is a flood officer (Michael Courtemanche).

Transco Tax Stabilization Agreement

Howe said she needs approval from the Board to call the attorney to authorize him to move forward.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SANDRA HARRIS TO AUTHORIZE CHRISTIANE HOWE TO CALL THE TOWN ATTORNEY LARRY SLASON AND AUTHORIZE HIM TO MOVE FORWARD ON THE TRANSCO TAX STABILIZATION AGREEMENT. MOTION SECONDED BY MICHAEL COURTEMANCHE. MOTION CARRIED 4-0-1 WITH EMILY VERGOBBE ABSTAINING.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Agenda items only)

None

Howe commented that Mike Herbert is not well. So please send positive thoughts and prayers to him and his family.

Zlochiver asked about the next meeting date – set for Tuesday, October 6, 2015. The next school board meeting is October 15th.

Keys for Town Clerk

Courtemanche explained that the Town Clerk's Office is looking to have a key for the bottom door so that they can access the vault downstairs.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY SANDRA HARRIS TO ALLOW THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE TO HAVE KEYS FOR THE DOWNSTAIRS DOOR TO ALLOW THEM ACCESS TO THEIR VAULT. MOTION SECONDED BY EMILY VERGOBBE. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY EMILY VERGOBBE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SANDRA HARRIS. MOTION CARRIED 5-0

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:30p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Catrina L. Lawley

Catrina Lawley, Secretary