

Selectboard Minutes
10/5/2020

Members Present by Zoom: Christine Werneke, Katie Mather, David Sander, Roger Brown, Bard Hill

Absent:

Others Present by Zoom: Josh Arneson, Town Manager; Kathy Daub-Stearns, Admin. Assist.; Kyle Kapitansky, acting Police Chief; Ravi Venkataraman, Planner; Kendall Chamberlain, Water & Sewer Superintendent; Pete Gosselin, Highway Foreman; Connie Bona, Financial Dir.; the meeting was recorded for MMCTV Channel 15, also present: Teri Martineau (Hickok & Boardman), Martha Nye, Ruairi Hutchison, Rebecca Rouiller, Sau, Stefani Hartsfield, Ian Bender, Greg Elias, Wright Preston, Jay Furr, Ashley Hanlon, Jim Monahan, and Steve Bower.

Called to Order: 7:03 PM

Welcome by David.

Comments from the public: none

I, Additions or Deletions to Agenda: none

II. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a) Discussion of health insurance plan options for Town staff

Josh reported:

- that Teri Martineau, from Hickok and Boardman, was present to answer questions on health care options for employees.
- that 4 scenarios had been outlined:

Scenario 1: Keep the same plans as last year: Platinum and Gold with the platinum paid at 100 % and the gold plan having a town contribution of \$3200 the cost to town would be \$223,481. Josh added that both plans have employees paying more out of pocket.

Scenario 2: Gold plan only (not police officers unless they want to switch) Cost to the town: \$223766. -slightly more than option 1.

Scenario 3: 10% of insurance premium to be paid by the employee would cost the town \$210,415., a 3.31% decrease from last year.

Scenario 4: providing a defined amount of funding (the Platinum premium) with the employee deciding on a choice of plans. The cost to the town would be \$22,610., a 2.29% increase over last year.

Discussion included:

- Roger saying, he liked scenario 4 with the Town providing a specified amount of money and then letting the employee decide which plan. Connie said she liked the 4th scenario. Teri Martineau said scenario 4 is a better benefit for the employee. Connie added that employees could still contribute to their HAS if they chose to
- Bard asking if Teri has seen any plans or themes from other towns. Teri said this would be her first year managing the plan without VLCT. She said offerings are

trending toward scenario 4. Christine said she liked 4 also and supported this as a managed benefit.

- that Christine wondered if employees could choose a plan that was not offered by the Town. Teri M. said she did not advise that. The town may want to offer another plan for young healthy employees who may want a low premium and higher deductible.
- that Roger said, if we are paying the platinum, there is no reason to offer another one if we are paying for it. He thought having Teri work with Connie and the employees would be helpful. Teri M. replied that is her role, and she would be happy to do that.
- Roger thought having 3 or 4 plans and rely on Teri M. to explain to employees would be best. Connie said that with budget season she really does not have time to explain too many plans to employees. Roger said he did not want her to, that Teri should, that is what we are paying her for. Connie said, when we hire new employees throughout the year then it's me. Teri M. said she could be relied on even then.
- Christine asked if anyone utilized the wellbeing rewards (\$600) currently. Teri did not know. Christine would like to educate employees on utilizing the wellbeing rewards. Josh asked how the employee gets the \$600. Teri said it is spread out in 3 increments adding that this benefit is for the Gold plan only.
- Christine asked Teri for examples of Wellness reward activities: Teri responded: signing on and doing personal health assessment, gym reimbursement, greens fees, logging steps etc.
- Roger said we do not need to make a decision now, but do we want to move forward with plan 4. Josh said let's come back with a silver or bronze option as well. Christine agreed.
- Connie would like to have a decision at the next meeting. Bard said he liked the ideas of incentives and would like to see a third option and move forward at the next meeting.
- Christine thought the presentation was well done and appreciated all the work that went into putting it together.

b) Update on Data Across Sectors for Health grant work

Ashley Hanlon said that she and Stefani Hartsfield are going to co-present to the Selectboard and turned the presentation over to Stefani.

Stefani reported:

- that this is a midpoint presentation on the DASH work adding that the grant ends Dec. 31, 2020.
- historical information on how we have gotten to where we are today
- that there are vision and action plans in the Town Plan
- that there is a clear lack of coordination between organizations
- that we have many volunteers, but that what we have been doing is not sustainable
- that DASH is a way of identifying how to move forward and communicate between organizations.

Stefani turned the presentation over to Ashley who reported:

- significant challenges due to COVID but that she had reached out and started to connect organizations
- that she has been looking at doing a gap analysis and at this point and is looking for feedback from the board.
- that beginning with the vision contained in the Town Plan she has created a spreadsheet that is beginning to show where the gaps are in what we are doing adding that by filling those gaps we could build stronger access for the community.

- that there needs to be more data connection adding that there is a next phase DASH grant that is \$25,000 and some of the additional work could be done utilizing that grant.
- that improving our town website would have far reaching benefits adding that it would have it be user friendly
- that there may be a way to use Recreation Committee to help with filling the gaps in information

Discussion included:

- that Stefani said they wanted to get to the SB before the budgeting season.
- that Ravi has been an incredible help with communication.
- that Stephani thought there should be a paid position that could work on a new website.
- that Katie asked about grants for town website upgrades. Stefani said that a lot of grants are getting left on the table, but someone would need to have the capacity to apply for them. Katie wondered if we got a Communications Committee together they could work on it first.
- that Stefani said there is \$3000 left in the grant. The most immediate need is having a way of communicating all the things going on. Bard observed that it is not just getting it up and running, it's maintaining the information too. Ashley responded that this is a problem for other communities and there could be a way to set up the website for people to update their own information and would eliminate having a person to update things adding that it would not replace what is currently done, it would be an add on.
- that Stefani said Jericho has a nice website. The plan is to show a few options at a future board meeting.
- Stefani mentioned how to have a paid position.
- Christine was curious about self-serve things like renewing your dog license. She asked if they could provide any information. Stefani said there are opportunities for revenue generation, but it will take a lot of upfront work.
- Christine asked for a copy of the spreadsheet Ashley shared thinking it would be helpful. Ashley said she has it as an excel spreadsheet and will share it with Josh and Ravi for distribution.
- that Roger said he appreciates the work and pointed out there are several websites in town that are very good, like soccer and baseball. Ashley said having links on the Town website would make it easier for people to find youth sports and all the unique things and opportunities Richmond has.
- that Bard said, with COVID things have changed and we are evolving with how we expect to find things.

David thanked them for their work.

c) Consideration of request from the Andrews Community Forest Committee to place proceeds from logging into the Andrews Community Forest Fund

David asked Wright Preston if he wanted to speak, Preston agreed saying:

- that having the funds come to the committee would help with invasive plants and trail work that is needed now and in the future.
- that logging in the future will be a minimum of 10 years away
- that logging would bring in about \$20,000 and requested that the money be put in the Andrews Community Forest Fund

Discussion include:

- that Roger is concerned about not funding the program going forward asking, what is the right amount of money. Wright said that being able to leverage the funds in the account with grant money is to the benefit of the Town. Not to use for everyday expenses, but the bigger projects that need funding.
- Wright reminded everyone that any money the Committee wanted to spend would have to go through the Selectboard.
- that Christine thought we had addressed this already and there are pros and cons. We have these pockets of funds that are expected, but not specific, and it becomes concerning that when somebody needs something it is hard to get what is needed. She asked if this is the way we want to manage how revenue is used or do we want to use the budgeting process?
- Katie said that we may want to review our general practices, but if we can get grants using this money then she thought it would be worthwhile.
- Bard said that there are places we do not have a choice since some funds are restricted. The question is how much money is needed for leverage? Do we need to create a fund? and how do we fund it? Connie said that we live off the reserve money at times when we are waiting for taxes to come in for example.
- Christine asked how much is in the account now, Wright said about \$25,000 and we are expecting another \$15-25,000 in the next year or year and a half. Christine asked if Preston was thinking of this like an endowment? What dollar amount he was looking to attain? Preston said they were looking to go out to RFP for trail design adding he is looking to grow the funds, not deplete them.
- Jim Monahan added that long term there is \$2-4000 that is needed for basic repairs and having the money is a way to leverage grants and sustain the forest.
- Bard asked if there is standard of practice, what do other towns do? Wright said that Ethan said his most recent logging project for another town went into a fund for the forest. Jim said the fund would be used for capital projects for the Andrews Community Forest.
- Christine asked what amount they are looking to have. She is thinking of the town resources is there a way to support other resources? Christine wondered if funds for Conservation could be shared if one resource has more money than is needed to support other natural resources. Connie said it is up to the public to vote, you could not have the Selectboard decide where the money is going to go. Christine said she knew that but was thinking about this specific request.
- Jim M. said he thought there is not going to be excess revenue. He said that using the logging funds to build trails and deal with invasive species was the plan.
- Bard observed that it is policy decision being made by the Selectboard and that a future Selectboard could make a different decision. Connie said even the reserve accounts can be undone at Town Meeting. Bard replied that in this case, since it didn't get voted on it would not require a town vote.

Christine moved to allocate the revenue from logging in the Andrews Forest to the Andrews Forest Fund thru March of 2022; Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, David, Christine, Katie, and Roger voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

d) Consideration of approving a company to install EVSE charging station

Josh reported:

- that this is the second round of bidding for the same project.

- that Steve Bower put most of the work done into this.
- that Steve looked into the companies that bid vetting the recommended company
- that 90% of the funding will come from a grant, with the Towns share being 10%
- that the funds were collected over a year ago for this project.

Josh turned the meeting over to Steve Bower who reported:

- that the low bid got good references.
- that the low bid was below what was estimated.
- that work could be completed 6 weeks after approval
- that he had a good sense they would be good to work with

Discussion included:

- that David asked if Steve was comfortable with the low bid even though the other bids were \$7000 more. Steve responded that the references he checked were excellent and he had no doubt.
- Pete asked if we move forward with this contractor some of the excavation is through asphalt and sidewalk, can this contractor move that quickly? Steve said it would take a week or two to get the unit and the grant is good thru June of 2021 so work could be done in the spring if necessary.
- that the contractor would need to be asked about holding the price until spring, the bid is good for 90 days.
- Steve volunteered to continue working with the Town to get this accomplished. Pete's opinion was that at this time of year getting the work done was questionable temperature wise. If the price could be held until spring, then that would be preferable or get serious time frames from the contractor.
- that restriping the parking lot was weather dependent
- Katie asked if we could make a motion to empower Josh to move forward once the questions are answered

Katie moved to move forward with approving Pratt and Smith to install the EV Station for \$19,960 pending the investigation on doing the work this fall and whether pricing would stay the same into 2021; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Bard, Katie, Christine, Roger and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

e) Update on agreement regarding curation of artwork on Town Center windows

Josh turned it over to Bard and Katie:

- Bard reported that there is a draft being reviewed tomorrow and Thursday adding that he hoped to have an agreement put together by the end of the week.

f) Follow up on transportation topics

Josh reported:

- that there was discussion on parking for Cochrane Rd., speed studies & route 2 paving and was looking for guidance on what issues the Board wanted to address and in what order.

Discussion:

- Christine said that using the winter to figure out recreational parking for next summer would be the thing to do and asked that it be a priority. Bard agreed that we need to anticipate that COVID may extend into next summer and should be planned for.

- Christine said she would like the transportation committee or someone else to look at the issue and say what could be done adding that there were ideas brought up in the moment that require time to investigate.
- David said he doesn't want to lose sight of the speed limit issues and enforcement. Roger said we should move forward with the speed studies and ask the police department to do the enforcement aspect of keeping speeds down.

g) Discuss Rt. 2 paving project

Josh said they would be meeting next week and there would be more information coming. Christine asked about the sign coming into town indicating road work in the next week. Josh and Pete did not have any details.

h) Update on first tax installment of FY21

Josh reported:

- that Connie looked deeper into the payment of taxes and that there was an increase of .25% of overdue taxes from last year adding that overall it is not a large amount but worth keeping an eye on. Katie thanked Connie and Josh. Connie added that there were only 28 properties delinquent and that the tax collector said it was the lowest she has ever seen.

i) Discussion of FY22 Budget process

- David said he is open to having the first budget meeting Oct. 20th or the 26th. Josh said Oct. 20th seemed to be the best date for everyone even though it would mean two meetings in a row.
- Connie said she is looking for guidance as the new minimum wage comes into effect Jan. 1, at \$11.65. She said that is more than our current step one rate. She wondered if we should look at the entire pay grid and update it since the amount goes up again next year. Bard replied that he was not aware of anyone lifting their entire pay grid because of minimum wage going up adding we have to lift minimum wage, but not the entire grid. Connie added that if minimum wage goes to \$15 then there are many employees it would affect. Roger thought we should deal with it when we need to. –
- Christine thought we should run the numbers and run it through for budgeting discussions adding that affordability is an issue that we need to look at. Connie said we are budgeting at 1.5 CPI and we only did .8 adding that we need to budget properly. Bard said its not what you want to do but what you can afford to do.
- Connie asked if we are changing this year's pay grid before doing next years. Roger thought that since we do not have anyone in that lower wage bracket we should wait. Connie will leave the grid for this year and increase it for the budget by 1.5%.
- Roger asked if VLCT has any insight and advise on what to do. Josh will contact them.

j) Review of FY21 revenue and expense report

Josh reported:

- that he did not see anything out of whack but if anyone on the board has any questions they could be explored.

Discussion included:

- Christine noted local fines are up.
- Kyle noted that some numbers are down due to COVID and staffing

k) Discussion return to in person meetings

Josh reported:

- that at the last meeting the question came up about what other towns are doing for Selectboard meetings so he looked into it and found that some have returned to in person, some have hybrid, some are not returning to in person until the order is lifted.

Discussion included:

- that David was not in favor of having in person meetings at this point. Katie and Bard agreed that we should be cautious and distance meetings make sense.
- Bard wondered about the legality of not returning to in person once the COVID restrictions are lifted. Josh said he will check to see if the Town can continue if the order is lifted.
- Roger thought just leaving it on the agenda for a while would work. Bard added that state and federal emergencies have been extended until the end of December and may be extended beyond that.
- that Christine said she would be willing to be the representative Selectboard member if it was needed. David said that without a vaccine it will be months away before returning to in person meetings.

l) Update on Police Chief Hiring Process

Josh thanked the public and committees that have sent in recommendations on who the next police chief is going to be.

m) Update on Dugway Rd. project

Josh reported:

- that the site where the construction came back with no concerns but the staging area for materials needs to be looked at. We are moving forward with that study.

III. Approval of Minutes, Warrants and Purchase Orders

Minutes:

Bard moved to approve the Minutes of 9/15/2020, Roger seconded. Roll Call Vote: Roger, Katie, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Invoices and warrants:

Roger moved to approve warrants as presented, Bard seconded. Roll call vote: Roger, Katie, Christine, Bard and David voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Josh will send the warrant out for signatures using DocuSign.

Purchase Orders:

Roger moved to approve PO #3970 to MMUSD for corrected school taxes owed in the amount of \$91,913.88; Christine seconded. Roll call vote: David, Katie, Roger, Bard and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

Roger moved to approve PO #4049 to US Bank to make a loan payment in the amount of \$122,684.95; Bard seconded. Roll call vote: David, Katie, Roger, Bard and Christine voted affirmatively. Motion passed.

IV. Discuss Items for Next Agenda

Howard Center experiences update
budget check-in

V. Executive Session if necessary

VI. Adjourn

Bard moved to adjourn; Roger seconded. Roll call vote: Christine, Bard, Roger, Katie, and David voted affirmatively. The meeting ended at 10:25PM.