

## Moretown VT Select Board Meeting

January 20, 2025

### Minutes

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**Members Present:** Mike Brown, Robin Campbell, Tom Martin (Chair), Don Wexler

**Guests Present:** Carol Chamberlin, MRVTV

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Tom at 6:00 pm. The meeting was held in person in the John Hogenboom Meeting Room and online via Zoom.

**Public Comment:** Nobody requested time to address the Board.

#### **Budget and Articles Wrap Up:**

**Budget:**

Employee Compensation – It was discussed that research has indicated that the 5% proposed increase in pay rates will put Moretown's employees in competitive salary ranges, including the Highway Department employees. There was agreement that the salaries included in the draft Budget are fair for both the employees and the Town. Tom will reach out to the Highway Crew and confirm this.

Building Maintenance – Don provided information he had received regarding washing the Town's buildings (including windows) as well as other maintenance issues. It was agreed to:

- Leave the proposed maintenance budget unchanged for the Town Office building, as both the washing and potential removal of the center stair railing would be covered.
- Increase the Maintenance budget for the Town Hall by \$1000 to cover the two washings suggested as well as items suggested by Corey Stephenson such as a dehumidifier and rug.
- Increase the budgeted amount for the Fire Station Maintenance line to \$5000 in order to cover building washing, some electrical work, and some gutter/vent repairs. Don noted that he will be seeking a second quote on some of this repair work.
- Leave the proposed maintenance budget for the Town Garage unchanged; washing will be scheduled, and Don will work with an engineer to review building needs when one is on site at the Town Hall to discuss related design plans.

Tom noted that the budget, including the changes above, reflects an increase of just under 13%; most of this is related to Highway Department vehicle needs and other Highway Department supplies; approximately \$60K is due to health insurance increases and general inflationary impacts.

There was some discussion regarding the purchase of a new bucket for the Highway Department's loader; it was agreed to hold off on this – Tom will confirm with Martin.

It was noted that 98% of the expenses related to the July 2023 flooding will be reimbursed. (December 2023 flooding did not result in a disaster declaration.)

The current loan for road repair work, established due to expenses incurred following the July 2024 flooding, will likely be paid by May 2025. However, an additional \$6M of additional road work is anticipated; related discussions regarding additional loans will be taking place. Tom noted that some of this work is mitigation work, and so may be spread over several years.

**MOTION:** Tom made a motion to approve the FY25 Budget in the amount of \$1,859,294.49. The motion was seconded by Mike, and passed unanimously.

Articles:

Don reported that he had discussed special allocations with Steve McGill, and suggested that requests from several organizations be rolled into one Article, keeping the total amount for each Article under \$5K. Don also suggested raising the total that requires a separate vote to \$10K in order to streamline this process. Tom indicated that he will look into these possibilities.

Waterbury Senior Center –

**MOTION:** Tom made a motion to approve language for a Town Meeting Article as follows: “Shall the voters of the Town of Moretown appropriate the sum of \$6,250.00 to support the work of the Waterbury Area Senior Center?’ Voting to be by Australian ballot.” The motion was seconded by Robin, and passed unanimously.

Mad River Valley Recreation District (RD)-

Tom explained that he had been notified that the RD needs to receive a vote of approval from each of the three current Town members in order to amend the current Agreement between the RD and its member towns. It was suggested that Moretown warn a vote as if that step has been completed, with any adjustments made, if necessary, following the other Towns’ votes.

**MOTION:** Don made a motion to approve language for a Town Meeting Article as follows: “Shall the Town of Moretown become a 50% member of the Mad River Valley Recreation District, accept the District Agreement (as amended), and appropriate \$20,000 as its assessed share of this District’s January 1 through December 31, 2026 budget?’ The Mad River Valley Recreation District Agreement (as amended) is posted on the Town Website at [www.moretownvt.org](http://www.moretownvt.org) and available for viewing at the Moretown Town Office and polling location. Voting to be by Australian ballot.” The motion was seconded by Robin, and passed unanimously.

Don will reach out to Laura Arnesen of the RD regarding her attending an upcoming meeting to discuss communication regarding this proposal.

#### **Finance Review Committee (FRC) Letters of Interest:**

Three letters of interest had been received regarding open positions on the FRC, from Steve Reissig, Mike DeBonis, and Martin Cameron. It was agreed to have the Committee schedule initial interviews, and then provide a recommendation to the Board. Mike volunteered to serve as the Select Board representative on the FRC.

#### **Reports and Communications:**

Fire Department Tanker Purchase –

**MOTION:** Tom made a motion to approve transferring \$200K from the Capital Reserve to the General Fund for the purchase of a Fire Department tanker truck. The motion was seconded by Robin, and passed unanimously.

Jones Brook Culvert Replacement -

The previously approved contract with Avery Excavation for Jones Brook culvert replacement in the amount of \$642,130.66 was signed.

Leave Time Rollover Request -

It was explained that Martin Cameron had not been able to use his total annual leave time due to the extra work hours required due to the July 2024 flooding; Martin has requested that 126.5 hours of leave be approved to be rolled over to 2025. This would be in addition to the rollover of 24 hours that is allowed by the Personnel Policy.

**MOTION:** *Tom made a motion to allow Martin's unused 2024 leave time of 126.5 hours to be rolled over for use in 2025. The motion was seconded by Mike, and passed unanimously.*

Select Board Roundtable -

Mike reported that he had spoken with Stefan Pratt regarding the installation of dry hydrants, who had indicated that he was not interested in tying up Town funds in this effort at this point, even though there would potentially be a reimbursement at some point.

Mike indicated that he is continuing to investigate the South Hill parcel that has been offered to the Town.

Don offered a reminder that the Board had not yet acted upon the report provided by the Class 4 Roads/Legal Trail Committee; Tom noted that he has asked Paula Woods, who chaired the Committee to attend an upcoming meeting.

Don provided some updates on Town Meeting preparations: Child care is in place; he has met with Kate Liptak and the School is all set to host both the Pre-Town Meeting on February 18 as well as Town Meeting on March 4. Australian Ballot voting will take place at the Town Office. Don will reach out to various committees regarding setting up informational/recruitment tables at Town Meeting. He has secured the use of a PA system.

Don indicated that the North Moretown sidewalk project should stay on the Board's radar. This led to some discussion of the north side Village sidewalk, which has been delayed due to the Post Office needing to sign off on the work. Tom has received notification that this approval has been sent; once received, an update on the timing of the work will be possible. Mike asked that burying of the utilities along the sidewalk route be explored, as well as the planting of street trees that this would allow. Tom noted he will look into previous discussions that have taken place regarding utility lines/trees along the route. Tom also indicated that the committee working on these projects is looking into grant opportunities for development of the sidewalk in North Moretown.

Tom reported that the Friends of the Library had reached out directly to Ron Shems regarding changing the name of the Library. He asked Don to remind the Friends group that the Board had previously approved changing the name, but had required that they consult with the Historical Society before doing so. He also offered a reminder that any contact with Ron should take place through the Select Board.

Tom also noted that the Library is seeking clarification regarding \$1000 that was in their account when the Library became a Town entity; Cherilyn is looking into this.

#### **Administrative Matters:**

Road Maintenance Permits were signed.

Overload Permits were signed.

Warrants: The following warrants were signed and approved: AP 25003 checks #26005-26029; AP 25001 checks #25987-26003; Payroll 25002 e-checks #4735-4743.

Minutes: The minutes of January 6, 2025 were approved.

**Old Business:**

No business was addressed during this portion of the meeting.

**New Business:**

No business was addressed during this portion of the meeting.

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Chamberlin