

TOWN OF WOODFORD, VT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
WOODFORD TOWN HALL  
January 19, 2022- Unapproved

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ryan Thurber, Steve Wright, Wayne Tiff  
ALSO PRESENT: Susan Wright (clerk), Gail Rutkowski (treasurer)

1. Ryan called the meeting to order at 7:20pm.

**2. Public Comments**

No Public Comments

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Motion** made by Ryan to approve December's minutes as presented and posted, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Wayne. There being no further discussion; all were in favor, **Motion Carries.**

**4. Treasurer's Report**

Ryan asked Gail if there were any discrepancies for the month. Gail responded that there were and explained that BCA members' pay were not listed on last month's outstanding bills but are included on this month's warrants for a total of 47.00 (attached).

A. Outstanding Bills

**Motion** made by Ryan to approve the outstanding bills as presented for \$15,999.01 (attached), 2<sup>nd</sup> by Wayne. Discussion followed concerning the continuous high usage of fuel. The board agreed to have someone come in to service the furnace and inspect it to see if there is any reason for the high usage and recommendations on what can be done, if anything, to lower the usage. Susan will contact the service provider. There being no further discussion; all were in favor, **Motion Carries.** Steve abstained where appropriate.

B. Warrants

**Motion** made by Ryan to approve Payroll PR-12 warrant for \$5097.13 as presented (attached), 2<sup>nd</sup> by Steve. Steve and Ryan abstained where appropriate. There being no further discussion; all were in favor, **Motion Carries.**

**Motion** made by Steve to approve Highway HW-12 warrant for \$4260.00 as presented (attached), 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ryan. There being no further discussion; all were in favor, **Motion Carries.**

**Motion** made by Ryan to approve Accounts Payable (general) AP-12 warrant for \$1259.66 as presented (attached), 2<sup>nd</sup> by Steve. This warrant included the discrepancy of \$47.00 previously discussed. There being no further discussion; all were in favor, **Motion Carries.**

**Motion** made by Ryan to approve Tax Account TX-12 warrant for \$130,137.19 as presented (attached), 2<sup>nd</sup> by Wayne. There being no further discussion; all were in favor, **Motion Carries.**

**5. Budget Final Review**

Gail presented the 2022 proposed budget with all approved adjustments from last month's meeting discussions. Susan stated that a request from Pave for \$100 had been received after last month's meeting but before the deadline for appropriations. This request increased the total amount for appropriations by \$100.

Motion made by Ryan to approve the General Fund Budget for 2022 to be approved by the voters for \$154,320.00, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Steve (attached). There being no further discussion; all were in favor, **Motion Carries.**  
**Motion** by Steve to approve the Highway Fund Budget for 2022 to be approved by the voters for \$30,000.00, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Wayne (attached). There being no further discussion; all were in favor, **Motion Carries.**

#### **6. Certificate of Highway Miles**

Susan presented the Certificate of Highway Mileage from the VT. Dept. of Transportation due by February 10, 2022. Ryan stated that the Town will continue to file this form the same as they have done in the past since the Ancient Roads Act was passed. The Town has claimed ownership of several roads but the State Agency of Transportation (AOT) does not recognize them as being owned by the Town. All available documentation has been sent to the State. However, the State claims that what the Town has submitted is not sufficient evidence of ownership. Proof of ownership has been made very difficult due to records being destroyed by fire many years ago. Since the State does not support the Town's claim and has not placed the roads on the highway map, Green Mountain National Forest has taken the liberty of placing gates and signs and therefore claiming jurisdiction without proving ownership. All agreed that the gates and the signs should be removed until National Forest proves they have the right of way or ownership in these areas. Wayne asked if there was someone they could get who could help the Town with this issue. Ryan responded that there have been meetings with AOT but the results were the same. Wayne continued to say that maybe it's time to try again and perhaps include someone that may have more authority. The Town should not give up any claim to ownership of roads that have been used since the Town existed. The board agreed to start with the local representative, Nelson Brownell, and the VTran mapping section representative, Jonathan Croft, and request them both to attend the same meeting with the board in order that both hear the Town's issues concerning this problem.

#### **7. 2021 Audit- Letter of Commitment**

Susan presented the letter of commitment from Batchelder Associates, PC authorizing them to conduct the 2021 audit. The price for the audit will be \$9850. All agreed and the commitment letter was signed.

#### **8. Other Business**

A. The board reviewed the Green Mountain National Forest's first quarter schedule of proposed action. The only action proposed for Woodford is the construction of new Nordic ski trail segments, the widening of existing trails and the installation of culverts in order to increase skier safety. Sucker Pond Trail action was also discussed but that activity will be taking place in Stamford.

B. Susan presented the 2021 Equalization Study Results for the Town of Woodford (attached). This study is used to determine the education tax rate. A Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) below 85% or over 15% will necessitate a town wide reappraisal. According to this recent study, Woodford is at 98.9%.

C. Susan presented notification from the VT. Dept. of Health regarding changes in state law that affects the authority of the Town Health Officer. As of July 1, 2021, the Town Health Officers are no longer allowed to perform animal cruelty investigations unless the required training is completed. Any complaints will now need to be investigated by certain types of law enforcement, humane society employees or animal control officers who have received specialized animal cruelty investigation training.

D. Notification from Vt. Affordable Housing was presented concerning Bill S.79 that was vetoed by the Governor. The goal of this bill was to transfer the responsibility of rental housing safety inspections from municipal offices to the State Dept. of Fire and Safety, the purpose being that the State would have more authority than what is currently allotted to a municipality in order to effectively respond to the issues that are

found during an investigation. This year advocates for this bill will be trying again to get something through the legislature that addresses safety concerns for rental housing.

E. Ryan showed the board a deed for a 99 year lease for the Advent Christian Church. This is the Church that is currently the Town Meeting Building and attached to the Town Office. Attached to the lease is a recorded document appointing trustees to the Church that may possibly be the same trustees as the Union Christian Church located on top of the mountain. He noted that currently we are 50 years into the lease and is unsure what happens once the lease expires. However, the trustees may not even be aware that they are trustees or know what to do at the end of this lease but the Town should be aware.

F. Gail expressed her desire to open a separate escrow account for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money that the Town has received. This would make it much easier to track what this money will be used for. This is particularly important when it comes to reporting spending to the government as is required. In order to open this account an additional signer will be needed. In addition, since Charlene Foster is the 2<sup>nd</sup> signer on other Town accounts and has recently moved out of town, it is also necessary to replace her as the second signer on these accounts. The board agreed that a separate account should be opened and that the 2<sup>nd</sup> signer for this and all other accounts needing a 2<sup>nd</sup> signer would be the Town Clerk.

#### **9. Executive Session if Necessary**

No executive session needed.

#### **10. Adjournment**

**Motion** made by Ryan to adjourn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Steve. There being no further discussion; all were in favor, **Motion Carries.** Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

**NEXT MEETING FEBRUARY 23, 2022 at 7 pm.** at the Woodford Town Hall.

Susan Wright - Clerk