

## Selectboard Memo

### August 5, 2019 SB Meeting

#### Additions (or otherwise) to Agenda:

- **Deletion: DRB appointment**

#### Presentation of EM Conservation Commission Proposal

- Conservation Fund Advisory Committee members Charles Johnson and Bruce Howlett have developed a proposal for the establishment of a town conservation commission, which would then take over the management of a variety of committees focused on natural resource type issues; this proposal might also lead to the independent EM Trails Association either dissolving or splitting off part of its responsibilities (specifically the trails maintenance) in favor of town management
- Establishment of a conservation commission is by town vote or through a charter provision

#### Review of Proposed Fairmont Dairy/VT Land Trust Conservation Project

- The second Fairmont Dairy/VT Land Trust conservation project of the old Lylehaven Farm property, this one of the main farm area, is moving toward a late-September VHCB funding review; VLT is requesting a letter from the Selectboard (and also the Planning Commission) detailing its stance on the project; there is also a trails easement component to the conservation project, but that is not yet before the board
- The requested letter is due prior to the September 24<sup>th</sup> VHCB meeting; this first SB review is to determine if we need further information from VLT

#### Setting of the 2019/2020 Property Tax Rates

- See tax worksheet and Listers Form 411 document
- Grand list is set at \$3,045,000.00; up \$11,000 (0.4%) from the figure used last year
  - The current Form 411 municipal grand list figure is \$3,055,798; that figure is expected to fall somewhat between now and the end of the year when the final numbers are generated
  - Last year the actual municipal grand list dropped to \$3,026,910 from \$3,034,595 (we used \$3,034,000 to set the tax rate); essentially this means we “lost” \$4,315 in anticipated tax revenue
- Resident (homestead) tax rate: 2.4564; down 0.0765 (3.0%) from last year
- Non-resident tax rate: 2.2905; up 0.0306 (1.4%) from last year
- Need motion to set the 2019/20 property tax rates

#### Consideration of Homestead Filing Penalty Waiver

- 32 VSA §5410 sets a penalty for late filing of homestead declaration (i.e., after April 15<sup>th</sup>); we are a town with a higher homestead rate, so the standard penalty is 8% if late in declaring homestead & 3% if incorrect in declaring homestead when should be non-residential
- Selectboard can decline to charge the penalty if so chooses; at this point we don’t know how many properties are affected by the penalty for this upcoming tax year due to the ongoing confusion with the state’s homestead reporting
- Board can also abate the penalty in cases of hardship under the following circumstances:
  - Full-time active military duty of declarant outside state
  - Serious illness or disability of declarant
  - Serious illness, disability, or death of immediate family member of declarant
  - Fire, flood, or other disaster
- Need to determine (by motion) if will/won’t charge penalty

#### Discussion on Future Capital Projects Questionnaire

The Capital Improvement Committee annually requests town entities to list potential projects to allow the committee to properly plan for the projects; possible projects for the board to include:

- **Potential Town Garage Upgrades**
  - A committee has been set up to study the situation and determine a potential project scope
- **Potential Town Office Upgrades**
  - The town office is on borrowed time – the last major work was done in the mid-1980s; at the time it was expected that the town would gain 15 years of usage before having to consider a new office concept; 35 years later ...

### **Consideration of Engagement Letter for Tax Sales Handled by Attorney Jim Barlow**

- The town is moving forward with the four tax sales authorized by the Selectboard in June; Attorney Barlow, who has handled the town's last three tax sale rounds, is available and willing to do the job; the engagement letter is his standard agreement
- If comfortable, the board should authorize TA Johnson to sign the agreement

### **Presentation of Feedback for PC Zoning Update Project**

- Kirby Scarborough and Madeleine Mongan have submitted comment letters to the Planning Commission regarding the PC's zoning update project; they've requested that the letters also be presented to the SB

### **Appointments Update:**

- Loring Starr has declined appointment to the DRB to replace Alice Dworkin; advertisement for the post is in the Monday FPF
- Art Chickering has resigned his slot on the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee

### **Town Administrator Report**

- Update on FY2020 Better Roads Grant:
  - Grant agreement has been received and fully executed by the town; we are now waiting for a final VTrans sign-off
- Future Agendas Issue:
  - How many update discussions with PC Chair Julie Potter are desired?
- Meeting Schedule:
  - August 8, 2019            7:00 p.m.            EMFD budget status presentation at ESF
  - August 19, 2019        6:30 p.m.            Selectboard regular meeting
  - September 9, 2019     6:30 p.m.            Selectboard special meeting
  - September 23, 2019   6:30 p.m.            Selectboard special meeting

### **Zoning Administrator Report**

- 1 new application since July 22<sup>nd</sup> SB meeting; 38 applications so far in 2019
- There will be no August DRB meeting; likely next meeting is September 3, 2019