

**Selectboard Memo**  
**August 3, 2020 SB Meeting**

**Additions to Agenda**

- **Grant Application Under Coronavirus Municipal Records Digitization Grant Program**
  - The state has opened a short window in which to apply for land records digitization funding, up to \$20,000; application deadline is September 1, 2020; funds are disbursed on a first-come, first-served basis; see program guidelines
  - If board is comfortable, it should authorize TA Johnson to submit a grant application

**Setting of the 2020/2021 Property Tax Rates**

- See tax worksheet and Listers Form 411 document
- Grand list is set at \$3,075,000; up \$30,000 (0.99% increase) from last year's figure
  - The current Form 411 municipal grand list figure is \$3,077,438 compared to \$3,055,798 at this time last year; that figure is expected to fall somewhat by the end of 2020 when the final numbers are generated
- Need motion to set the 2020/21 property tax rates:
  - Homestead rate: \$2.5381, up 0.0817 from FY2020 (3.3% increase)
  - Non-homestead rate: \$2.3804, up 0.0899 from FY2020 (3.9% increase)
- The state has notified us that there will be a substantial download of homestead income sensitivity information on September 1, 2020. It may make sense to send out our tax bills after that date to limit the number of revised bills we'd need to process. Most towns can't delay tax bills like that, but with our relatively late first installment date (mid-November), we can safely hold off sending bills until early September.

**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> normally, July 15<sup>th</sup> this year); 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

**Consideration of Notice of Intent to Participate in the FY2021 Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program**

- This is the fourth year of the grants-in-aid program; this year it appears that the program will be split, with the equipment purchase element run through ANR and the stormwater infrastructure aspect that the town has utilized all three previous years now run through VTrans; no information yet on the VTrans element, but the ANR program is in gear
- For the first time East Montpelier is eligible for an equipment grant (80/20 grant); of the equipment options available, Road Foreman Perry is most interested in the tractor-mounted shoulder disc attachment to help cut down berms and pull material back onto the roads; like previous years, the first step is to submit a letter of intent to participate in the program; later this year we will be notified if we are approved to purchase the item

- If board members are in favor, Chair Gardner should be authorized to sign the letter on behalf of the board

### **Consideration of VLCT PACIF Equipment Grant Application**

- The town is putting together a small application for the 50/50 VLCT PACIF program; two quotes have not yet been received; the current request is \$1,593.95, of which 50% would be covered by VLCT (up to a max of \$3,000); final cost should be under \$2,000
- If comfortable, board should authorize TA Johnson to submit application when complete

### **Discussion on Town Management in Light of Covid-19**

- There have been no changes since the board's July 13<sup>th</sup> meeting; the town office remains closed to the public, with researchers/attorneys allowed to access vault materials under the terms originally set up before all in-person actions were banned – one at a time and only by appointment from Town Clerk Laquerre; mandated protocols (masks; health survey; etc.) are in effect for such appointments
- Absentee balloting for the primary election remains brisk; as of today the town has sent out 910 ballots (41% of the checklist) and received back 450, of which 367 have been tabulated, with a week to go

### **Warrants**

- **July 23, 2020 Special Warrant for Review**
  - This was a between-meeting warrant for the town credit card bills that came just after the last warrant and were due today; no board action necessary
- **August 3, 2020 Regular Warrant for Approval**
  - Just like other recent warrants, this evening's regular warrant needs to be approved as normal, which generally is shown by a quorum of board member signatures; given our current limitations, the board should once again approve the warrant and authorize Chair Gardner to sign to that effect

### **Town Administrator Report**

- Concern with Dodge Road Trail:
  - EM Trails is concerned about ATV use on a portion of the trail; does not appear to be a regular thing – more like the abutting landowner used it to access a portion of his parcel
- Recreation Field Facility Use Issues:
  - EMES has requested to use the facility for recess and, potentially, for outdoor classroom “pods”; Recreation Board is comfortable with these uses
  - The Recreation Board is developing a variety of plans for soccer season, with the caveat that such plans may be waylaid by district or state mandates; does the Selectboard feel any need to be involved in this planning?; the Rec Board is cognizant of the fact that the Selectboard could close the facility if necessary
- The town's annual external audit, by Sullivan Powers, will be conducted August 10 & 11
- Meeting Schedule:
 

○ August 13, 2020	7:00 pm	EMFD budget & service update at ESF
○ August 24, 2020	6:30 pm	Selectboard “special” regular meeting
○ September 14, 2020	6:30 pm	Selectboard “special” regular meeting

### **Zoning Administrator Report**

- 6 new applications since the July 13<sup>th</sup> SB meeting; 34 total applications in 2020
- The next DRB meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2020; one hearing so far for a setback waiver for a garden shed at 219 Brazier Road