

## **Minutes of the East Montpelier Selectboard**

### **February 3, 2020 Selectboard Meeting**

**SB Attendance:** Chair Seth Gardner, Gene Troia, Amy Willis, Carl Etnier and Casey Northrup; Town Administrator Bruce Johnson

**Public Attendance:** Jamie Stewart (Central VT Economic Development Corporation); Renée Carpenter

Chair Gardner called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

#### **Additions to Agenda:**

- **2020 Town Lawn Maintenance Contract Process**
- Chair Gardner proposed adding a discussion item on how best to present to townspeople the realities surrounding the cost of providing ambulance service. The board decided to take this up under the town meeting work session agenda item.

#### **Minutes:**

Chair Gardner presented the draft minutes of the January 20, 2020 board meeting.

**Motion: To approve the January 20, 2020 minutes as amended.** Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Mr. Troia. Passed unanimously.

**Public Comment: None**

#### **Conversation with Central VT Economic Development Corporation's Executive Director Jamie Stewart**

Mr. Stewart provided board members with an entertaining update on CVEDC activities. At this time of year CVEDC, along with the state's other 11 regional economic development entities, spend a lot of time in Montpelier monitoring legislative initiatives. As a non-political, non-lobbying organization, CVEDC strives to provide legislators with access to real life scenarios and content expertise in an effort to ensure solid legislative understanding and avoid unintended consequences that often fall hardest on the small business community.

The two main areas of focus for CVEDC remain workforce development training in this era of employee scarcity and entrepreneurial development. Mr. Stewart described initiatives with the community high schools designed to expose students to the types of jobs available in the area along with providing access to the training programs necessary to enable the students to successfully and productively enter the work force. There are also partnerships with VTC and Norwich that give learning experiences to students while providing services of value to small businesses. At the other end of the age spectrum, CVEDC is working to provide the training and opportunities necessary to keep baby boomers in the work force.

CVEDC delivers a number of targeted services directly to the business community, including a loan fund designed to provide gap funding for areas, such as working capital, that bank loans don't tend

to cover. The organization is possibly most valuable in its ability to help businesses, especially smaller, younger companies, access the resources, whether state, federal or non-profit, available to help the businesses grow.

Mr. Stewart ended on an up-beat note, reporting that the Washington County region is experiencing population growth, second only to Chittenden County region and a clear contrast to most of Vermont. Most encouragingly, there is a net influx to central Vermont of those in the 25-to-34 age bracket.

### **Consideration of Options for Certificates of Deposits for Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund & General Fund**

Utilizing the funds from maturing certificates of deposit at Northfield Savings Bank, the board authorized the purchase of two cds in the amounts of \$160,000 (general fund) and \$75,475 (cemetery perpetual care) through NorthCountry Federal Credit Union at its January 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. As it turned out, the town could not purchase the two cds due to a \$250,000 limit on such accounts at NCFCU (the town already has two cds with a total value just over \$70,000 at NCFCU). In place of the original plan, Treasurer Welch is recommending an alternative approach:

- Putting the \$75,475 of perpetual care funds in a new cd at NCFCU (two years; 1.75%)
- Putting \$160,000 from the general fund back into a cd at Northfield Savings Bank (9 months; 1.50%)

Board members agreed that Treasurer Welch's recommendation is satisfactory given the current options and the short-term forecast of stable-to-declining rates.

**Motion: To invest in a \$75,475 two-year certificate of deposit at NorthCountry Federal Credit Union and a \$160,000 9-month certificate of deposit at Northfield Savings Bank.** Made by Mr. Etnier; second by Mr. Northrup. Passed unanimously.

### **Update on EM Village Sidewalk Project**

The construction bids for the sidewalk project along the US Rte. 2/VT Rte. 14 corridor are due on Thursday, February 6, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. with a public bid opening set to occur right after the deadline. The town's design engineering consultant, Dubois & King, will examine the bids for conformance and provide a contractor recommendation to the Selectboard for review at its February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Work Session for 2020 Town Forum & Meeting**

Board members focused on how to effectively present the challenging situation facing the town with regard to the rising cost of ambulance service. The East Montpelier portion of the EMFD ambulance service budget has nearly tripled since the service was initiated in July 2009 and the cost will continue to escalate as the town works with EMFD to complete the shift of the service from volunteer-based to full 24/7 professional staffing. TA Johnson will put together a chart of the town's expenditures on emergency services, including equipment and buildings, over the years since the East Montpelier Volunteer Fire Department came into existence in 1964.

The board will continue development of presentations for the 2020 town forum and meeting at its February 17, 2020 meeting.

### **Discussion on Upcoming Selectboard Meeting Schedule**

The board often reshuffles its regular meeting schedule to avoid the school system's spring break, which tends to fall on the third Monday of April. This year that means that the April 20<sup>th</sup> meeting date needs to be altered. The approved revised schedule is to meet on March 30<sup>th</sup> (a fifth Monday) in place of the April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting, April 13<sup>th</sup> in place of April 20<sup>th</sup>, and then revert to the standard 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays in May.

Board members postponed the setting of the summer meeting schedule to a later date.

### **2020 Town Lawn Maintenance Contract Process**

The town's 3-year contract for lawn mowing services with Creative Visions LLC ran out at the end of 2019. The firm has handled the town's lawn maintenance needs for the past decade, both as a result of open bid processes and through direct negotiation. The last time the lawn care service contract was put out to bid was in 2014. Board members are in agreement that the principles of fair and open governance dictate that the town go forward with an open call for proposals in 2020.

### **Warrants**

Board members signed the warrant.

### **Other Business**

#### **Town Administrator Report**

- Meeting Schedule:
  - February 6, 2020      2:00 p.m.    EM Sidewalk Project bid opening
  - February 17, 2020    6:30 p.m.    Selectboard regular meeting
  - February 29, 2020    9:30 a.m.    Town Forum at EMES
  - March 2, 2020        6:30 p.m.    Selectboard regular meeting
  - March 3, 2020        9:30 a.m.    Town Meeting at EMES

#### **Zoning Administrator Report**

- There have been no permit applications in 2020.
- There is currently no scheduled DRB meeting.

**Motion: To adjourn.** Made by Mr. Northrup; second by Ms. Willis. Passed unanimously.  
Meeting adjourned 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Bruce Johnson, Town Administrator

**Approved:    February 17, 2020 East Montpelier Selectboard meeting**