

Selectboard Memo
November 1, 2021 SB Meeting

Central VT Prevention Coalition: Impact in East Montpelier

Dr. Mark Depman, Olivia Leclerc, Eva Zaret

- This relatively new coalition of entities in the substance use arena (CVMC is the “foundational backbone”) has received a 3-year grant for “building safe harbor in Central VT”; the CVPC representatives will be here to explain what this means in general and in specific for EM

Central VT New Directions: Update on Retail Cannabis Topic

Ann Gilbert, Director of Central VT New Directions

- Ms. Gilbert will be here to provide the stated update and essentially jump start discussion on this issue

Review of CVFiber Annual Report & Draft 2022 Budget

Tom Fisher, EM Representative to CVFiber

- Mr. Fisher will be here to provide context to the annual report and draft budget, both of which are far more complex than previous iterations as CVFiber starts to make real progress

Conversation with East Montpelier Fire Department

➤ **Update on Emergency Services Agreement**

- EMFD has agreed to and signed the agreement proposed by the Towns of Calais and East Montpelier; the actual document was received this afternoon

➤ **Consideration of EMFD Request to Purchase Ambulance Power Cot Auto Loader Utilizing EMFD Capital Reserve Fund**

- In 2020 the two towns authorized the use of the EMFD capital reserve fund to purchase two power cots for the EMFD ambulances; at the time the auto loader feature was discussed (and was included in the then-current capital plan) but EMFD did not push for a purchase
- EMFD is requesting to add an auto loader to Rescue 3 (the newer ambulance); the exact cost is unknown but is estimated to be between \$27,000 and \$35,000; if comfortable, board should authorize the reserve fund use up to a maximum amount; if the board approves the request, the precise language will be passed along to Calais, which will take up the issue at its November 8th meeting

Review of East Montpelier Traffic Ordinance

- At its October 18th meeting the board decided to use the issue of potentially installing a stop sign at the north end of Kelton Road at its intersection with Snow Hill Road as an opportunity to conduct a general review of the town’s traffic ordinance, last updated in 2016

Review of Proposed House Reapportionment Statewide Map

- The BCA is holding a meeting on Monday, November 8, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss and potentially develop formal comments on the proposed reapportionment plan

- The current WAS-5 seat, held by Kimberly Jessup, is a two-town district made up of all of Middlesex and all of East Montpelier; the seat has a population (2010 Census) of 4,307, which gave it a positive deviation of 135 from the ideal 2012 district size of 4,172
- The 2020 Census shows EM up 22 to 2,598 and Middlesex up 48 to 1,779; the total population of 4,377 would, if WAS-5 was left alone, have a positive deviation of 90 from the ideal 2022 district size of 4,287
- The proposed WAS-3 seat would be comprised of all of Calais, Woodbury and Worcester plus the northeast sliver of EM (east of a line running along Tucker, Guyette, Snow Hill Kelton and VT Rte. 14 N from Kelton to US Rte. 2 and then north of US Rte. 2 from the VT Rte. 14 N intersection to the Plainfield line); based on the deviation figures shown on the proposed district maps, this “sliver” includes 404 EM residents; this seat will have a negative deviation of 330 (ideal 2022 district 4,287; proposed district 3,957)
- The proposed WAS-4 seat essentially replaces the current WAS-5 seat; it will comprise all of Middlesex and the bulk of East Montpelier (i.e., all but the part siphoned off for WAS-3); this seat will have a negative deviation of 314 (ideal 2022 district 4,287; proposed district 3,973)

Discussion on Town Management in Light of COVID-19

- **General Topic**
 - The municipal offices continue to operate under the August 12th update of the board order; mask use is mandatory when around others; no major pushback from employees or the public
- **Review of Vaccination Mandate for Town Employees**
 - The board adopted a vaccination mandate policy at its October 18th meeting; questions regarding the policy’s application have been raised:
 - Does the policy apply to stipend-paid town appointees (animal control officers, health officer, tree warden)?
 - How does the policy apply to seasonal, part-time workers?
 - Another issue of concern to some is whether the policy’s definition of “fully vaccinated” will shift over time to reflect booster shot expectations; not a question that requires an answer, but rather an indication of employee thought process
 - A brief executive session is recommended to provide an update on the employee response to the policy; this involves protected personnel information; if executive session is desired:
 - Move to go into executive session under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(6) – records exempt from the access to public records provisions of section 316 of this title; provided, however, that discussion of the exempt record shall not itself permit an extension of the executive session to the general subject to which the record pertains

Personnel Matters [Potential Executive Session]

- **Discussion on Existing Town Office Positions & Future Needs**
 - Both the town treasurer and municipal assistant (who is the appointed assistant treasurer) will be retiring next summer; the town office staff, both elected and appointed/hired, will almost certainly have an almost complete turnover in the next few years
 - Chart of Town Office Positions:
 - Elected officials (all can be eliminated or shifted to appointed by voters):

- Auditors (budget \$7,000): Statutory duties; town report
 - In past town has also utilized, with auditor agreement, individual auditors for warrant and reconciliation reviews; this has not worked effectively of late
 - Listers (budget \$23,000): Statutory duties; office hours
 - Constable (budget \$1,500): Statutory duties (as voted)
- Non-town office paid appointees:
 - Animal Control Officers (2; budget \$2,000): Statutory duties; ordinance enforcement
 - Tree Warden (budget \$1,000): Statutory duties; committee participation
 - Health Officer (budget \$1,500): Statutory duties
- Town office employees (budget \$224,500):
 - Town Clerk
 - Public facing – Statutory duties revolving around records management (land records, vital records, animal & liquor licenses) and election management (lead elections official; runs BCA & BTA); runs Mallory Brook lottery
 - Town Treasurer
 - Statutory duties revolving around town financial management; collector of current taxes; prime driver of capital budget process/capital improvement committee
 - Municipal Assistant
 - Public facing – Handles office mail, expense warrants, payroll & payroll vendors, zoning permit records; serves as assistant treasurer and assistant clerk
 - Recording Secretary
 - Takes minutes for PC & DRB
 - Town Administrator/Zoning Administrator
 - Zoning Administrator; statutory duties
 - Collector of Delinquent Taxes; statutory duties
 - E911 Coordinator; statutory duties
 - Support staff for SB, DRB, PC, Listers and all other boards/committees except BCA & BTA
 - Handles personnel management and human resources; facility maintenance; internal IT; website maintenance
- Non-town office employees:
 - Highway department (budget \$227,000)
 - Road foreman; road crew (3); part-time road crew (1)
 - Cemetery maintenance (budget variable; \$12,000 - \$16,000):
 - Sexton; assistant sexton; crew (1)
- Discussion on current situation and future expectations may touch on sensitive personnel topics, potentially necessitating executive session
- If executive session is desired:
 - Move to go into executive session under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) – the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that the public body shall make a final decision to hire or appoint

a public officer or employee in an open meeting and shall explain the reasons for its final decision during the open meeting

➤ **Discussion on Town Treasurer Transition**

- Job Expectations, Job Format & Job Description
 - See existing treasurer job description; will likely need tweaks depending on board's potentially altered expectations
 - One aspect of this discussion is how tightly to control the search – develop tight range on duties, hours, pay or allow the committee flexibility to search for both full and part-time possibilities
 - Mr. Jewett has supplied the town manager, business manager and payroll clerk job descriptions for Hardwick
- Process for Recruiting & Selecting New Treasurer
 - Note East Montpelier charter (VT Statutes Title 24 Appendix: Municipal Charters; Chapter 114E) provisions:
 - §114E-3 Town Treasurer
 - §114E-8 Selection Committee

➤ **Discussion on Town Employee Compensation Levels**

- There is a concern that the town may be losing its competitive advantage over other similarly situated towns; potential new hires in surrounding communities are being offered comparatively high wages and sign-on bonuses
- Discussion on our current situation will touch on sensitive personnel topics, executive session is recommended for this conversation
- If executive session is desired:
 - Move to go into executive session under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(3) – the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that the public body shall make a final decision to hire or appoint a public officer or employee in an open meeting and shall explain the reasons for its final decision during the open meeting

Warrants:

➤ **November 1, 2021 Regular Expense Warrant**

- Since we're back to in-person meetings, this warrant should be signed by all board members present; if an "in-person" quorum is lacking, the warrant should be approved with Chair Gardner authorized to sign warrant on behalf of the board

Town Administrator Report

- Update on PC & Lister Vacancies:
 - PC Vacancy:
 - One candidate to date – Spencer Hardy; the PC expects to meet with him and any other candidate at its November 4th meeting
 - Lister Vacancy:
 - One candidate to date – Deb Fillion
 - Does the board want to set a "conversation with candidates" agenda item on the November 15th agenda or simply review the situation at that meeting?
- Walbridge Road Issues:
 - Concerns have continued with actions at 180 Walbridge Road; a 16-site (mostly tent with some RV sites) campground is under development (further

improvements stopped and sites are supposedly no longer in use; currently under preliminary permit review both at state and town level; an Act 250 permit would be required); a parking lot for the campground was started on North Street (construction stopped; road foreman is managing issue); farm animals are still wandering onto neighboring properties

- Meeting Schedule:
 - November 8, 2021 6:30 pm BCA meeting
 - November 15, 2021 6:30 pm Selectboard regular meeting
 - December 2, 2021 7:00 pm Tentative EMFD budget meeting at ESF
 - December 6, 2021 6:30 pm Selectboard regular meeting
 - December 20, 2021 6:30 pm Selectboard regular meeting

Zoning Administrator Report

- 1 new application since the October 18th SB meeting; 61 total so far in 2021
- The next DRB meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2021; the biennial permit compliance review of the Casella transfer station is on the docket