

**Town of East Montpelier
Selectboard Memo
May 15, 2023 SB Meeting**

Additions to the Agenda

None

Consideration of Cemetery Sexton Position and Cemetery Maintenance Contract (6:40 p.m.)

- Elliot Morse is retiring as the Cemetery Sexton after many dedicated years of service. As such, we have an opening for Cemetery Sexton (it may be nice for the town to recognize Mr. Morse for his years of service in some way).
- Jon Boucher will be in attendance to update the Selectboard on the management of the cemeteries and the recent discussions/decisions made by the Cemetery Committee.

Consideration of Cemetery Fee Structure (6:55 p.m.)

- The Selectboard to reconsider the fee structure based on proposed cemetery maintenance contract.
- Current and Proposed Fee Structure is presented for Selectboard consideration.

Discussion with Listers (7:05 p.m.)

- The Selectboard requested a discussion with the Town Listers to review the FY2023 budget overrun.
- As of April 30, 2023, the Listers Payroll actual results is \$25,246.25 versus a budget of \$23,000 for a negative variance of \$2,246.25 (after the 5/11 payroll, the actual payroll is at \$26,414.75 versus a budget of \$23,000 for a negative variance of \$3,414.75).
- Trending the actual results for the fiscal year (\$2,525 per month), the Listers are tracking to a payroll of \$30K against a budget of 23K for a negative variance of \$7K/30%.
- The FY2023 (as of 5/11/23) hours worked by Lister is:
 - Deb Fillion: 628.25
 - Ross Hazel: 464.50
 - Chris Racanelli: 297.50

Consideration of Town Lawn Mowing Contract Renewal (7:20 p.m.)

- Tim Frazier with Creative Visions, LLC is proposing a renewal of his 3-year contract to provide lawn mowing and general maintenance of town-owned properties. The renewal cost is \$10,200 paid in six equal installments of \$1,700 per month from May through October. This is the same cost that has been presented over the last couple renewals with no change in the overall agreement structure.
- If the Selectboard is comfortable with the renewal as proposed, the Selectboard to approve the terms and authorize TA Jenkins to sign the contract.

Discuss Proposal to Add Streetlight to Towne Hill Rd & US Rte 2 Intersection (7:25 p.m.)

- Bruce Mekkelsen reached out with concerns about the Towne Hill Rd & US Rte 2 intersection darkness at night. He requested that the Selectboard contract with Green Mountain Power ("GMP") to install a streetlight on the existing power pole at the intersection.
- To add a streetlight would be \$126.36 to install the light with an ongoing cost of \$12.74/month for the light.
- TA Jenkins reached out to VTrans to discuss the option and ensure there were no issues or concerns on their side. VTrans has no issue with installing a light on the existing power pole.
- The Selectboard to discuss request and determine if they consider it a need for the town. If the Selectboard would like to move forward to add the streetlight on the existing power pole at the intersection of Towne Hill Rd and US Rte 2, the Selectboard to do so via motion.

Discuss Residential Trash Concern on US Rte 2 (7:35 p.m.)

- An issue has arisen with residential trash being accumulated around a residence at 4239 US Rte 2. This has been an ongoing issue over the past couple years. Ginny Burley, Town Health Officer, previously responded to the concern but was unable to directly communicate with the resident. The concerned resident that contacted the office lives in an adjacent property and also has been unable to directly communicate lately with the person residing at 4239.
- Zoning Administrator Brown took photos of the trash around the residence. Those photos were emailed to the Selectboard members prior to the meeting and are available for viewing at the in-person meeting.
- Per the EM Land Use & Development Regulations Section 3.13, “the outdoor storage of trash or recyclable materials which is incidental to a principal or accessory use shall be screened or hidden from public view and the view of neighboring residential properties.” This situation appears to be in violation of this regulation.
- TA Jenkins would like to discuss next steps with the Selectboard to address the concern.

Discuss Potential Changes to Town Office Telephone and Internet Service (7:50 p.m.)

- rbTechnologies has been working with Consolidated Communications to adjust the town office phone plan to accommodate the new phone system. In conjunction with altering the plan, rbTechnologies requested a quote to improve the internet service for the town office. The office is currently on a slow service at a reduced municipal rate.
- For the phone changes, the overall effect is a savings of \$47/month or \$567/year

Current Service	
5 Phone Lines	\$ 155.00
Taxes/Surcharges	\$ 72.85
Long Dist Surcharges	\$ 38.70
	\$ 266.55

Proposed Service	
4 SIP Trunks	\$ 148.81
1 Copper Line	\$ 33.00
Taxes/Surcharges on SIP	\$ 18.00
Taxes/Surcharges on Copper Line	\$ 19.43
	\$ 219.24

Variance/Month \$ 47.31
 Variance/Year \$ 567.72

- For the internet service, the town office is currently on a special Comcast plan that is 30/5 mbps for \$24.95 per month. Consolidated is proposing a 100/100 mbps fiber & static IP option for \$210 per month. TA Jenkins reached out to Comcast in early 2023 seeking an increase in speed based on the recommendation of a Comcast technician after a service call. The Comcast quote was similar to the Consolidated quote. The increase in speed would provide many benefits. The current speed is outdated and doesn’t efficiently support the office needs. Per, rbTechnologies, more bandwidth is better for many reasons. Some of the benefits the office would receive from an increased speed are:
 - Patches and security updates will download faster.
 - rbTechnologies’ access to the office systems will perform better.
 - Faster download times for staff while online means less waiting and better productivity.
 - Faster speeds mean less time for staff waiting for websites and such to load while online and again better productivity.
 - Offsite backups can be pushed out of the building faster and more reliably.
 - VPN connections will be more reliable as they won’t get choked out by usage on the local network while folks are remote.
 - Video conferencing will be better quality and more reliable for things such as Zoom meetings in the office.
- The total phone budget for the town is \$5,900 per year (\$3,200 for town office + \$2,700 for garage telephone). The proposed costs for the total town phone costs would be \$380 per month (\$219 office, \$121 garage, \$40 ZA cell phone allowance) or \$4,563 per year for a positive variance of \$1,337 per year. Please note that the town office phone costs are trending over budget because of a change in the posting methodology. All cell phones were previously posted as garage phone, including the TA/ZA cell phone. We revised the coding to include the ZA cell phone allowance in the town office costs.

- For internet, the budget is within the overall Computer Service/Maintenance budget line of \$16K per year. If the town moved forward with the fiber internet, the additional cost per year is \$2,220 as the budget assumed no changes in the structure. The reason no change was assumed in the FY2024 budget process was because TA Jenkins is still trying to get a handle on all the costs and how they have been recorded in the general ledger. If the town moved forward with the change, TA Jenkins would prefer to post all the town phone and internet costs to 100-3610-60.00 (Munc Bldg – Telephone) and rename that account Telephone/Internet as both components of office communications should be classified with the other building expenses.
- The Selectboard to consider the improved internet speed for the town office and authorize TA Jenkins to move forward with the change via motion if approved.

Appointments (8:00 p.m.)

- Development Review Board: Nik Khosla
 - Mr. Khosla is a member of the Planning Commission and would like to expand his involvement with the town by becoming a member of the DRB.
- Emergency Planning Committee – The following individuals submitted their names for consideration to be appointed to the committee:
 - Rachael Grossman – Ms. Grossman is the originator of the newly formed committee.
 - Patty Giavara
 - Renee Kievit-Kylar
 - Lydia Faesy
- Future Projects Committee (formerly known as ARPA). A few others have inquired about the committee but have not yet formally submitted for appointment.
 - Ginny Callan
 - Ed Deegan
- CV Fiber Town Representative
 - Tom Fisher would like to continue as the town’s representative.
 - The current alternate, Marshall Cottrell has not responded to email confirming interest in continuing. TA Jenkins will continue to follow up and report back to the Selectboard.
- Town Health Officer
 - Ginny Burley has requested that the town seek a new Town Health Officer. Ms. Burley has graciously served in this position for years but would like to give another resident the opportunity. Per Ms. Burley, the majority of the time is spent addressing housing violations (code violations and inspections) and reporting dog bites.
 - A print out from the state website provides a high level summary of the requirements for the Town Health Officer.

Preliminary Update on Property Tax Payments (8:15 p.m.)

- Payments are still coming into the office. The update based on payments received by around 2pm is as follows:
 - 22/23: \$567,490.48
 - 21/22: \$56,825.09
 - 20/21: \$34,103.94
 - 19/20: \$7,744.90
 - 18/19: \$7,501.35
 - Total: \$673,665.76

Warrants (8:20 p.m.)

- **May 15, 2023 Regular Expense Warrant**
 - The warrant should be signed by all Selectboard members present. If an “in-person” quorum is lacking, the warrant should be approved by one of the in-person Selectboard members authorized to sign the warrant on behalf of the Selectboard.

Town Administrator Report (8:25 p.m.)

- Matt Foster is finished removing the trees on Murray, Bliss & Barnes Rds. The Road Crew is continuing to pick up the trees and debris.
- 2024 Mack Truck is currently at a Tenco facility in New York being built. Road Foreman Perry has been in regular communication with Tenco to design the build and answer questions as they arise. We expect to take delivery of the truck in July.
- TA Jenkins attended the Municipal Equipment Show & Field Day with the Road Crew on Wednesday, May 10th. The show presented a good opportunity for TA Jenkins to spend time with the Road Crew, meet other town crews and meet with some of the town’s vendors. TA Jenkins thanks Road Foreman Perry for inviting her to the event and taking the time to show her equipment, answer all her questions, and introduce her to many people in attendance.
- TA Jenkins would like to discuss the potential purchase of an additional laptop for the town office to be used as a loaner for situations when the elected officials are in the office at the same time requiring 3 computers. With the new staffing structure, the flex desk space previously used by the elected auditors is now the Zoning Administrator’s desk. The desktop at that flex space was relocated to the researcher/copier space with the assumption that it would rarely be used or typically used outside of regular business hours based on historical use. Based on recent office activity, TA Jenkins would like to remove the desktop and maintain a loaner laptop that could be checked out for use in the office only in the event more than 2 elected officials require the use of a computer at one time. Someone working at the computer in the researcher/copier area prevents access to the copier and poses a potential safety risk navigating that portion of the office.
- The Financial Reporting Package is delayed partly due to the banking transition and this being the first year Treasurer Pallas is managing the tax payment process. Treasurer Pallas has experienced time constraints lately managing the financial activity among the 2 bank accounts. The temporary increase in work, coupled with the tax payment deadline, resulted in a delay in publishing the April 30th report.
- TA Jenkins would like to formally express her gratitude to Denise Sparrow for returning from retirement to help the town office until a permanent replacement for the Municipal Assistant position is identified. Denise brings a wealth of experience in managing the front desk and her return has helped in more ways that TA Jenkins could begin to list. Denise is a pleasure to work with and has helped TA Jenkins maintain her sanity in more ways than one over the past few months.
- Permit Applications Report
 - There have been 2 new permit applications since the last meeting.
 - 23-012: New Family Dwelling on Mays Way
 - 23-014: New Storage Barn
- Meeting Schedule:

June 5, 2023	6:30 p.m.	Regular meeting date
June 19, 2023	6:30 p.m.	Regular meeting date
July 24, 2023	6:30 p.m.	Special meeting date
August 7, 2023	6:30 p.m.	Regular meeting date
August 10, 2023	7:00 p.m.	EMFD meeting date
August 23, 2023	6:30 p.m.	Regular meeting date
September 11, 2023	6:30 p.m.	Special meeting date
September 18, 2023	6:30 p.m.	Special meeting date

Personnel Matters (8:35 p.m.)

If Executive Session 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.