

**Town of East Montpelier  
Selectboard Memo  
January 22, 2024 SB Meeting**

**Additions to the Agenda**

None

**Discussion with Town Attorney on Tax Appeal Hearing [Probable Executive Session]**

**If Executive Session Desired:** Move to go into executive session under 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1)(F) – confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body.

- The Selectboard to discuss appeal of Board of Civil Authority decision from October 3, 2023 with Town Attorney, Jim Barlow. The status hearing for the appeal is scheduled for January 29, 2024.
- Documents associated with the appeal have been provided for the Selectboard.

**Consideration of Annual Certificate of Highway Mileage**

- Presented for Selectboard review is the annual update of town road mileage requested by the VT Agency of Transportation.
  - No changes compared to prior year.
  - If comfortable with the information presented, the Selectboard to sign the certificate as presented.

**Discussion on Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Due to Expire December 3, 2024**

- The town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan ("LHMP") is due to expire on December 3, 2024. The state has secured grant resources available to fund the hiring of a consultant to update local plans. The first information session about the process and available funding was held on Thursday, January 18, 2024. TA Jenkins is seeking Selectboard approval and support to work with state contacts to begin the process of applying for grant funding and posting the required RFP to hire a consultant. The state indicated that updating the LHMP can take 12-18 months, so it is important for the town to get this process started as soon as possible.

**Update on Special Joint Meeting with the Calais Selectboard to Discuss EMFD Budget and Agreement**

- The East Montpelier and Calais Selectboards met with EMFD to discuss the FY2025 budget and agreement.
  - It was decided at the meeting that EMFD would adjust the FY2025 budget to include \$15,000 additional ambulance revenue in the Ambulance operating budget.
    - The impact of this decision is a reduction in the proposed FY2025 Ambulance budget of \$10,000 (2/3 of the \$15,000 total additional ambulance revenue).

**Finalization of FY2025 Budget Development**

- The proposed final budget is presented for Selectboard review.
- Below is the summary of the budget and preliminary tax estimate:

	FY2023 (7/1/22-	FY2024 (7/1/23-6/30/24)			FY2025 (7/1/24-6/30/25)		
	Budget	Budget			Budget		
<b>TAXES</b>							
			Variance			Variance	
			\$	%		\$	%
Total Selectboard Expenses	2,532,883	2,729,272	196,389	7.8%	2,823,595	94,323	3.5%
Less: Available Cash on Hand	(150,000)	(150,000)	-	0.0%	(100,000)	50,000	-33.3%
Less: Total Non-Tax Receipts	(382,756)	(383,218)	(462)	0.1%	(462,332)	(79,114)	20.6%
<b>Selectboard Budget</b>	<b>2,000,127</b>	<b>2,196,054</b>	<b>195,927</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>2,261,263</b>	<b>65,209</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
Other Money Articles	120,663	120,963	300	0.2%	127,909	6,946	5.7%
<b>Total Current Taxes</b>	<b>2,120,790</b>	<b>2,317,017</b>	<b>196,227</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>2,389,172</b>	<b>72,155</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
Adjustment	-	(34,400)	(34,400)	0.0%	-	34,400	-100.0%
<b>Net Current Taxes</b>	<b>2,120,790</b>	<b>2,282,617</b>	<b>161,827</b>	<b>7.6%</b>	<b>2,389,172</b>	<b>106,555</b>	<b>4.7%</b>
Grand List (estimated for FY2025)	3,121,000	3,156,000	35,000	1.1%	3,155,000	(1,000)	0.0%
Local Tax Rate (estimated for FY2025)	0.6796	0.7233	0.0437	6.4%	0.7573	0.0340	4.7%
<b>TOTAL TAXES</b>	<b>2,120,790</b>	<b>2,317,017</b>	<b>7,006,853</b>	<b>(4,689,836)</b>	<b>2,389,172</b>	<b>72,155</b>	<b>3.1%</b>

- The overall Selectboard budget increased \$65.2K / 3.0% with the primary drivers as follows:
  - +\$50.0K / +2.3% - Decrease in Available Cash on Hand per suggestion by External Auditor guidance. Based on notes from previous budgets, this amount was increased in prior years to “mitigate tax rate fluctuation” based on anticipated budget savings. As the budget is now more closely aligned to actual results, it is prudent to reduce this estimate.
  - +\$40.5K / +1.8% - Increase in salary costs based on current staffing plan and annual increases.
  - +\$30.1K / +1.4% - Increase in EMFD Fire & Ambulance budget.
  - +\$26.4K / 1.2% - Increase in highway operations costs on current prices.
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  - +\$12.0K / 0.5% - Increases to municipal operations and building budget to increase costs to match current market rates.
  - +\$10.0K / +0.5% - Increase in contribution to capital reserve fund.
  - \$45.4K / -2.1%: Increase in forecasted interest earned based on town’s updated investment plan.
  - \$21.5K / -1.0%: Anticipated net grant income from highway projects.
  - \$21.6K / -1.0% - Decrease based on current staff selections. This amount is dependent on staff selections during open enrollment.
  - 6.4K / -0.3% - Decrease in cemetery budget.
  - Remaining variance due to changes in revenues and expenses throughout budget based on latest information available.

#### **Finalization of 2024 Town Meeting Warning**

- The proposed final draft of the 2024 Town Meeting Warning is provided for Selectboard review.

#### **Finalization of Selectboard Report for 2023 Town Report**

- The proposed final Selectboard letter to be included in the 2023 Town Report is presented for Selectboard review.
  - Selectboard to provide comments and edits to TA Jenkins.

### **Consideration of Culvert Engineering Design RFP Responses**

- The town received 2 responses to the RFP for culvert engineering at Sanders Circle and Sodom Pond Rd. Both bids are based on the hourly rates for the respective firms.
  - DeWolfe Engineering Associates
  - Dubois & King, Inc.
- The Selectboard to review the bids and authorize TA Jenkins to proceed with the approved firms via motion.

### **Appointments**

- The Energy Committee voted unanimously to nominate Daniel Costin to the Energy Committee to fill the vacancy from Rick Barstow's departure. Mr. Costin has been attending the meetings and confirmed his interest in being appointed to the committee.
- Erin Borland has assumed leadership from Chris Racanelli of the town's Green Up activities. As such, it is requested that the Selectboard officially appoint Ms. Borland as the town's Green Up Coordinator.
- If the Selectboard approves of the nominations, the Selectboard to appoint positions as outlined.

### **Warrant**

- **January 22, 2024 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**

- There has been one permit issued since the last report:
  - 23-044: Bike Shed
- Meeting Schedule:

February 5, 2024	6:30 p.m.	Regular Meeting Date
February 26, 2024	6:30 p.m.	Special Meeting Date (February 19 <sup>th</sup> is President's Day)
March 4, 2024	6:30 p.m.	Regular Meeting Date / Town Meeting Forum
March 5, 2024	6:30 p.m.	Town Meeting
March 18, 2024	6:30 p.m.	Regular Meeting Date
April 1, 2024	6:30 p.m.	Regular Meeting Date
April 15, 2024	6:30 p.m.	Regular Meeting Date
May 6, 2024	6:30 p.m.	Regular Meeting Date
May 20, 2024	6:30 p.m.	Regular Meeting Date

### **Conversation with Selectboard Candidates**

- The Selectboard received 2 letters of interest for the vacant Selectboard seat.
  - Tom Brazier
  - Nik Khosla

### **Board Work Session to Discuss Selectboard Candidates [Probable Executive Session]**

**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.

- The Selectboard to discuss candidates and make a decision regarding the open seat on the Selectboard.

- If the Selectboard decides to appoint a candidate to the Selectboard, the Selectboard to appoint candidate through March 5, 2024 (Town Meeting Day) via motion after exiting Executive Session.

**Personnel Matter [Probable Executive Session]**

**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.

- Discussion on Town Office Staff