

**Minutes**  
**West Rutland Selectboard Meeting**  
**Monday, January 22nd, 2024**  
**6:00 pm**

**Present:** John Harvey, John Center, Dick Daley and Chet Brown

**Others Present:** Mary Ann Goulette, Seth Pietryka, Representatives from the Masonic Lodge: Bob Parkman, Dave Mason and Robert Bach.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by John Harvey with the pledge of allegiance.

**Agenda Approval:** Motion made by John Center seconded by Chet to approve the agenda with the addition of Action Item: Renewal of Village Designation. Motion approved.

**Public Concerns:** None

**Action Items:**

- a) **Masonic Lodge request for tax exempt** – The tax-exempt status of the Masonic Lodge expires every 10 years. During the meeting, several representatives from the Masonic Lodge were in attendance to formally request inclusion on the ballot for the renewal of their tax-exempt status. The assessed value of their property on Franklin Street is \$160,800. A motion was put forward by Chet and seconded by Dick to include the Masonic Lodge tax-exempt question on the ballot. The motion received unanimous approval.
- b) **Letter to PVR requesting a redetermination of CLA** – The listers discovered a minor typographical error on the part of PVR staff on the input for utility inventory. The result will change our CLA from 78.69 to 78.77. While this is a minor change, the listers feel it is warranted due to the impact of the CLA on the town tax rate, particularly given the projected increase in the tax base. Motion made by Chet seconded by John Center for John to sign the letter to PVR requesting a redetermination of CLA. Motion approved unanimously.
- c) **Statement of Qualifications for Engineering of the Wastewater Facility Upgrade** – The Town issued a request for qualifications for the engineering of the Wastewater Facility Upgrade. We received three proposals: Dubois & King, New England Consulting Engineers and MSK Engineers. The selection committee ranked the proposals and recommend MSK as the preferred consultant based on the familiarity of the Town's infrastructure and their engineer Craig Jewett, prepared the preliminary engineering report. Motion made by Chet seconded by John Harvey to award the bid to MSK Engineering. Motion approved unanimously.

- d) **Review Liquor and Tobacco Licenses** – The following licenses were submitted by the Town Clerk for renewal: Price Chopper/Market 32 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Liquor; Jiffy Mart – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Liquor and Tobacco; and Stewart's Shops – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Liquor, Tobacco and Tobacco Substitute. Motion made by Chet seconded by John Center to approve all the licenses as presented. Motion approved unanimously.
- e) **Overall Budget** – Mary Ann presented the proposed overall budget showing a 5.6% budget increase, no changes from the last meeting. Motion made by Chet seconded by John Center to approve the budget at \$1,962,318 a 5.6% increase. Motion approved unanimously.
- f) **Resolution ARPA Allocation** – The Vermont League of Cities and Town's (VLCT) is recommending a two-step process to preserve ARPA Funds and alleviate federal deadlines. First, the Selectboard should transfer the remaining ARPA funds into the municipal general account which creates a surplus in the current FY'24 budget year. The second step involves creating a West Rutland Asset Fund from this surplus, which will be utilized over the next few years for ARPA projects approved by the Selectboard. By transferring the funds, the Town can report to the federal government in April 2024 that ARPA funds have been spent, which will meet the federal deadline requirements. This eliminates the risk associated with the funds, and the Town is no longer bound by a deadline to spend the money, ensuring the completion of various projects. The resolution (attached) reads the Selectboard resolves to transfer the balance of \$627,690.98 in SLFRF funds to the municipal general account. Motion made by John Center and seconded by Chet to approve the Resolution to obligate and expend SLFRF funds in the amount of \$627,690.98 for the purpose of municipal workforce retention. Motion approved unanimously.
- g) **Review Articles and Sign Warning** – The funding requests and articles remain the same from last year. We need to seek voter approval to establish and fund the West Rutland Asset Fund with the ARPA surplus. Article 7, will ask the voters to establish the West Rutland Asset Fund, and Article 8, will seek voter approval to fund it with the Fiscal Year 2024 surplus resulting from this one-time influx of ARPA money into the general fund. Article 25 is the tax-exempt question for the Masonic Lodge. Motion made by Chet seconded by John Center to approve and sign the warning as presented. Motion approved unanimously.
- h) **Village Designation Renewal** – The Town of West Rutland village designation needs to be renewed every 8 years. The Town was initially granted its Village Designation in 2003, marking the beginning of a journey toward fostering a more robust and vibrant community. Over the past two decades, the Town has undertaken significant enhancements to its municipal infrastructure, introducing ADA modifications such as elevators and sprinkler systems in key locations like the library and Town Hall. Numerous property owners, including NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, have successfully qualified for income tax credits, supporting the substantial rehabilitation of their properties. The Town of West Rutland has consistently been a recipient of priority consideration for Municipal Planning Grants and funding through Vermont's Community

Development Program. In 2022, the Town of West Rutland secured approval for a boundary amendment to its Village Center Designation. This adjustment was a strategic move aimed at facilitating the redevelopment of several underutilized village parcels to a 24-unit housing development. Motion made by Chet seconded by Dick to authorize the renewal application for the Town of West Rutland's village center designation. The motion approved unanimously.

- i) **Water and Wastewater Budget** – Seth and Mary Ann presented the budget for the current year. The water budget reflects a 4.5% increase, totaling \$508,660, while the wastewater budget shows a 3.3% increase, reaching \$517,063. It's noted that the wastewater bond has been fully paid, and although the Center Rutland bond remains, it is offset from the new user fees. Most budget items have been maintained at level funding where possible. Notably, the fire district has not been included in this budget; however, as the merger approaches, revenue and expenses will be itemized separately. The wastewater plant has undergone several necessary improvements that couldn't be postponed until the upgrade, leading to a reduction in the capital account by \$250,000. To address this, we increased the contribution to \$70,000. A motion was proposed by Chet and seconded by John Center to approve the water budget at \$508,600 and the wastewater budget at \$517,063, as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

**Board Member Concerns:** None

**Adjournment:** Dick made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:43pm and John Center seconded. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Ann Goulette