



**Town of Berlin
Municipal Office Building
108 Shed Road**

**Berlin, VT. 05602
Regular Select Board Meetings
1st & 3rd Monday of Each Month**

**Monday, January 4, 2010
5:30 PM**

Selectboard Members: Brad Towne, Chair; Susan Gretkowski, Vice Chair; Roberta Haskin, Secretary; Jonathan Goddard, Nancy Driscoll. Present: Jeff Schulz, Town Administrator; Patti Lewis, Town Treasurer. All items are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

APPROVED MINUTES

FY 11 Budget

The Board reviewed the Highway budget with **Richard Tetreault**, Road Superintendent. The Board discussed level funding all items, if possible. The Board discussed the fuel costs for the summer months and agreed to leave that line item at \$22,472 as budgeted last fiscal year. **Susan Gretkowski** asked **Richard Tetreault** if he had included a cost of living increase in his proposed budget. **Richard** stated that he had included a 3% cost of living increase in wages. **Susan** stated that as the Board was level funding all wages, the same should be done with the Road Crew wages for winter and summer. The Board discussed sand and salt costs for FY11. **Patti Lewis** stated that the actual cost for sand was \$59,437, and salt was \$55,000 in FY10. **Susan Gretkowski** stated that the budgeted amount for sand and salt should be raised to \$59,437 for sand and \$55,000 for salt for FY11. **Richard Tetreault** stated that vehicle repairs will increase because most truck items are computerized now making it impossible for the Road Crew to work on the vehicles themselves. **Nancy Driscoll** stated that fuel costs for winter was much more than for summer. **Richard** stated that the higher budgeted amounts for fuel for winter was due to the scare of higher fuel prices and it is much easier to predict fuel uses in summer than in winter. **Jeff Schulz** stated that the amount for winter fuel could be decreased to \$30,000 for FY11. He stated that the Board may even be able to decrease winter fuel costs to approximately \$27,000. **Jeff** stated that some residents had been concerned about the road markings on Fisher Road and Paine Turnpike. **Richard** stated that those residents wanted the Town to mark the roads twice a year and that is not possible. **Jeff** stated that the actual costs for FY09 were approximately \$15,000. **Richard** stated that the \$15,000 did not take into account marking on Paine Turnpike due to the repaving of that road. **Jeff** asked if they could get by with budgeting \$22,291 for asphalt/markings/sealing for FY11, which would level fund this budget item. The Board discussed resurfacing and gravel costs. **Patti Lewis** stated that the budgeted for FY10 was \$92,700 and the actual costs were at \$51,200 which is approximately 61% of the budgeted amount. **Richard Tetreault** stated that he stockpiles about 4,000 yards of gravel and some of the money is held back for emergencies and stone for ditching. **Susan Gretkowski** stated that Bridge maintenance increased to \$15,500. **Richard** stated that the Board could level fund the Bridge maintenance for FY11. He stated that the Glinnis Road Bridge needs resurfacing and that is going to be expensive. **Robert Wernecke** stated that the Town could apply for State money through a grant to help resurface that bridge. The Board discussed the road signs line and decided to decrease the budgeted amount to \$800. **Patti Lewis** stated that there are reserved funds in the Guard Rail line of \$4,000, and \$4,000 in this year's budget, for a total of \$8,000. She recommends leaving that budget line at 0 for FY11. **Richard Tetreault** agreed with that recommendation. **Susan Gretkowski** asked if they could level fund the supplies budget line. **Patti** agreed with level funding supplies, telephone, trash removal, street lights line items. **Patti** stated that the miscellaneous line item was at 0 and **Richard Tetreault** asked for \$1,000 for that line item. **Richard** stated that he does not know what would be included in that line item. **Susan Gretkowski** asked for information on the miscellaneous line item before the Board agrees to an amount.

Review of Warrants

The Board reviewed the warrants.

Brad Towne called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Treasurer's Report

Patti Lewis stated that she received the results from one of the State appeals and the impact on revenues for the Town will be approximately \$8,000. She stated that she is still waiting for the results on approximately 5 – 9 properties.

Old Business

Emergency Medical Services RFP

Jeff Schulz stated that approximately 4 weeks ago the Board authorized him to advertise a Request for Proposals for Emergency Medical Services. He stated that he has received three responses to the RFP. **Jeff** stated that the proposals he received are lengthy and detailed in content and the Board may want to hold a special meeting in order to discuss the proposals. He stated that the proposals are from Barre Town, Barre City and Berlin Fire Department.

Nancy Driscoll read the proposal from **Barre City** for EMS services, which included a three year contract with a per capita rate of \$20.00 for the first year with an annual increase of 3.5% in the per capita rate for the following two years. She stated that the total cost is \$57,280 for the first year, \$59,285 for the second year and \$61,360 for the third year of the contract.

Roberta Haskin read the proposal from **Barre Town** for EMS services, which includes a three year contract and a per capita rate of \$23.00 for the first year, \$23.90 per capita for the second year and \$24.80 per capita for the third year.

Susan Gretkowski read the proposal from the **Berlin Fire Department** for EMS services for a five year contract and a per capita rate of \$30.40 for the first year with an annual increase of 10% in the per capita rate for the following four years to cover health insurance premiums, fuel costs, employee wage increases and operation expenses. She stated that the per capita rate would be \$33.44 for the second year, \$36.78 for the third year, \$40.46 for the fourth year and \$44.51 for the fifth year. **Brad Towne** asked if the EMS proposals could be sent as pdf files to put on the Town's website. Barre Town, Barre City and Berlin all stated that they could provide pdf files of their proposals. The Board tabled the EMS bid discussion until their next regularly scheduled meeting on January 18th.

Paine Turnpike Project RFP

Jeff Schulz stated that an RFP was sent out for the Paine Turnpike Paving Project. He stated that the project was to pave from Berlin four corners to the Fisher Road intersection. **Jeff** stated that this project would include removing approximately two inches of pavement and replacing it with two inches of hot mix and a half inch of top coat. He stated that he had received two proposals from **Pike Industries** and **Frank Whitcomb Construction**. **Nancy Driscoll** read the bid from **Pike Industries** with a total cost of \$234,247. **Jonathan Goddard** read the bid from **Frank Whitcomb Construction** with a total cost of \$297,011. **Jeff** stated that there are several requirements which should be included in the bid package and any motion by the Board should include that acceptance of the bid is contingent on the Town Administrator reviewing the bid packages to make sure they are complete. Motion by **Nancy Driscoll** accepting the bid from **Pike Industries** of \$234,247 as low bid contingent on review by the Town Administrator. Second by **Susan Gretkowski**. Motion carried 4-0.

Brad Towne thanked **Pike Industries** and **Frank Whitcomb Construction** for submitting their bid proposals for this project.

New Business

Grand List Errors and Omissions

Patti Lewis reviewed the Grand List Errors and Omissions. She stated that these changes had already been reviewed by the Board of Abatement and are before the Select Board for acceptance. **Patti** reviewed the changes in three properties, Winooski Hydroelectric has a change in the Grand List value of \$33,800 resulting in a tax decrease of \$131.71; U S Bank Corp has a change in the Grand List value of \$26,500 resulting in a tax revenue decrease of \$131.71; and Timko Mobile Home has a change in Grand List value of \$27,100 resulting in a tax revenue decrease of \$103.59. She stated that the total loss of tax revenue was approximately \$340.28. Motion by **Susan Gretkowski** to accept the Grand List changes as reviewed by **Patti Lewis** and approved by the Board of Abatement. Second by **Jonathan Goddard**.
Motion carried 4-0.

2009 Equalization Study

Jeff Schulz stated that each year Vermont Tax Department conducts an equalization study in order to get property tax as close to fair market value as possible. He reviewed the 2009 equalization study. **Jeff** stated that the coefficient of dispersion for Berlin is at 11.69% which is an increase from 10.75% in 2008. He stated that the higher the number the more disparity of assessment and this number is used to establish the education tax rate. **Jeff** stated that the Town has the option of appealing this number to the Vermont Department of Taxes. He stated that the Lister is not concerned with this number as it has not increased by a dramatic amount and he does not recommend an appeal of this number. **Jeff** stated that the other number of importance is the Common Level of Appraisal, and if this number drops below 80, the Town would need to conduct a reappraisal of all properties in Town. He stated that Berlin's Common Level of Appraisal is currently 102.5 which is a slight decrease from last year.

Delinquent Tax Collection Policy

Patti Lewis stated that the Town does not have a current Delinquent Tax Collection Policy to her knowledge. She stated that VLCT has a template that she used to draw up the delinquent tax collection policy for Berlin. **Patti** stated that this policy has been distributed with the delinquent tax notices. She stated that the Board does not have to approve this policy and she wanted the Board to be aware of the policy and why a policy was necessary.

Tax Stabilization Policy

Jeff Schulz stated that the Economic Development Council is asking the Board to consider adopting a tax stabilization policy. He stated that tax stabilization could be drafted in a couple of ways. He stated that the voters could elect to give the Selectboard authorization to enter into tax stabilization agreements with any individual requesting an agreement directly to the Board or the voters could elect to give the Selectboard authorization to enter into a tax stabilization agreement with a certain individual. **Jeff** stated that, in this case, the EDC is asking for the voters to authorized the Selectboard to enter into tax stabilization agreements with those individuals that directly request this from the Board. He stated that in order to enter into a stabilization agreement the individual would need to meet certain requirements. **Jeff** stated that the EDC is currently working on a tax stabilization policy which they will finalize on Wednesday night and then present that policy to the Selectboard. He stated that the policy would need to state a number of criteria to be met by any individual or business, such as the time frame of the agreement, the amount of tax to be agreed on, and the Board may want to add criteria such as the benefits this agreement would have to the community.

Annual Report Dedication

Jeff Schulz stated that the Annual Report is being put together and will be ready to go to print within the next few weeks. He stated that generally the report has been dedicated to someone in Town and last year the report was dedicated to **Moe Willard**. **Jeff** stated that during those discussions the Board had discussed dedicating the report to **Kitty Langlois** for her contribution to the Town. Motion by **Jonathan Goddard** to dedicate the Town Report for 2009 to **Kitty Langlois**. Second by **Nancy Driscoll**. Motion carried 4-0.

DRB Appointment – Kyle Faye Mooney

Jeff Schulz stated that **Kyle Faye Mooney** is currently an alternate on the Development Review Board and there is a vacancy on that Board for a permanent position. He stated that **Kyle** has expressed interest in this position and the Chair of the DRB, **Robert Wernecke** supports this appointment. Motion by **Susan**

Gretkowski to appoint **Kyle Faye Mooney** to a permanent position on the Development Review Board. Second by **Roberta Haskin**. Motion carried 4-0.

Brad Towne asked if the Town would need to advertise for another alternate on this Board. **Jeff** responded that they would need to advertise that vacancy.

Town Administrator Report

Jeff Schulz stated that next Monday at 7:00 PM will be the third public hearing on the proposed charter changes. He stated that the Board has asked how other communities handle assessing, time and effort that goes into this position and he is preparing a report on other communities.

Jeff stated that an article put out by **George Malek** announcing that the Chamber of Commerce would be sponsoring a forum for local officials and interested individuals to discuss the upcoming State budget on January 13th at 5:00 PM at the Chamber of Commerce on Stewart Road.

Jeff stated that the Selectboard generally submits an article for the Town Report and he is drafting an article for the Board and will send the article to the Board for their thoughts and inputs. He stated that the deadline for the Warning for Town Meeting is January 21st and the Board will be reviewing the warning on January 18th.

Approval of Licenses, Permits, Vouchers and Applications

Motion by **Nancy Driscoll** to approve the licenses, permits, vouchers and applications with one change for a check to come from a different account. Second by **Roberta Haskin**. Motion carried 4-0.

Approval of Minute(s) of Previous Meetings

Nancy Driscoll asked for an update on the Health Insurance discussion at the last Board meeting. **Jeff Schulz** stated that initially **Patti Lewis** had given numbers based on a worst case scenario and it appeared that the new value plan would be the least expensive of the three plans. He stated that after reviewing the numbers further, Patti found that our current plan would be the least expensive for the Town. After review of the minutes from December 21st, motion by **Susan Gretkowski** to approve the minutes as presented. Second by **Jonathan Goddard**. Motion carried 3-0 with 1 abstaining.

Roundtable

Jonathan Goddard thanked the Berlin Volunteer Fire Department for their presentation of EMS services.

Motion by **Susan Gretkowski** to adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 8:15 PM. Second by **Roberta Haskin**. Motion carried 4-0.

For the Select Board:

Rebecca Richardson, Administrative Assistant