

Woodstock Board of Selectmen Minutes

Thursday, October 20, 2022

7:00 pm

Regular Meeting

Town Hall, Room A

1. **Call to order:** First Selectman Jay Swan called meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
 - a. **Present:** First Selectman Jay Swan, Selectman Chandler Paquette, Selectwoman Charlene Perkins Cutler
 - b. **Others Present:** Board of Finance Chair Michael Dougherty, Roger Gale, Ray Morgan, Pam Minella, Diane Miller, Brian Victor, Jose Macho, Jared Morse, Megan Bard-Morse
2. **Approval of Minutes from October 6, 2022 Board of Selectmen's Meeting**
 - a. Charlene Perkins Cutler made a ***Motion** to approve the Minutes from of October 6, 2022 Board of Selectmen Meeting as presented. ***Seconded** by Chandler Paquette. ***Motion Passed Unanimously.**
3. **Tax Rebates**
 - a. None
4. **2023 Transfer Station Updates**
 - a. Jay Swan revisited the previous suggestion made by Chandler Paquette to increase Transfer Station sticker fees by \$10 each
 - i. Charlene Perkins Cutler agrees to the increase proposed
 - ii. Chandler Paquette note that the \$10 increase would cut the current annual transfer station deficit by approximately half.
 - b. Jay noted that there were previous agreements to increases for disposal of specific items and asked for clarification of what stickers and passes would increase. The selectmen agreed that this increase would be for all stickers and passes except for one day passes that would remain the same fee as current year.
5. **Tercentenary Marker Replacement Update**
 - a. Charlene Perkins Cutler shared that she is still waiting for a response from the monument company with breakdown of costs. Chandler Paquette noted that he did leave a message with the company as well. She noted that the stone used would have to be 42" wide and 36" wide in size to fit the text. John Navarro and Chandler Paquette will coordinate with the monument company about delivery and installation.
6. **Consider Property Tax Abatement for Licensed Child Care Centers**
 - a. Jay Swan reviewed that the Selectmen had received a copy of Section 13 of the State of Connecticut Public Act No. 22-81 to review.
 - b. Charlene Perkins Cutler previously stated that a process should be developed to approve such abatement before any abatement is given. Jay Swan has provided documents required by the State, Health Department and Fire Marshal for day care centers to review and discuss. Jay Swan feels that the documents submitted would satisfy any application requirements.
 - c. Jay Swan made a ***Motion** to grant Property Tax Abatement for Licensed Child Care Center as outlined in Section 13 of the State of Connecticut Public Act No. 22-81 to the qualified applicant- Northwood Childcare. ***Seconded** by Charlene Perkins Cutler. ***The motion passed unanimously.**
 - i. The motion above is for the full 100% of funds allowable over the full term allowable of 5 years.

Woodstock Board of Selectmen Minutes

7. Review First Draft of Land Disposition Ordinance

- a. Attorney Rich Roberts has taken a draft of another town's land disposition ordinance and revised it to best fit the needs of Woodstock. This revised draft has been distributed to the Selectmen for review.
- b. Both Chandler Paquette and Charlene Perkins Cutler agree with the draft submitted by Rich Roberts.
- c. Crystal Adams has submitted the following to the Board of Selectmen:
 - i. ORDINANCE CONCERNING FORCLOSED LAND EFFECTIVE: OCTOBER 1, 1956 RESOLVED that the Selectmen be authorized to dispose of, in their discretion, land acquired by the Town by foreclosure of tax liens, by deed in lieu of foreclosure of tax liens, or by abandonment of highways.
- d. Charlene Perkins Cutler also pointed out a highlighted section (Section 5, Item C) in the amendment of the ordinance creating the Woodstock Agricultural Land Preservation and Land Acquisition Fund that should be sent to Rich Roberts for review.
- e. The Board of Selectmen will continue to proceed with developing a Land Disposition Ordinance

8. Discuss Credit Card Policy

- a. A draft of the proposed Town of Woodstock Credit Card Use Policy was distributed to the Selectmen for review. The Town of Woodstock previously did not have a written policy in effect for credit/debit card use by employees. The current business climate requires online and credit card purchases to be conducted by the Town of Woodstock on a regular basis.
- b. There are now 5 credit cards issued for authorized use under the proposed policy to town employees (Swan, Fitzpatrick, Navarro, Toth & Thurlow) with a Town of Woodstock specific credit plan.
- c. Charlene Perkins Cutler noted that she had worked with these types of credit plans in the past and feels this plan is adequate for the Town of Woodstock.
- d. Chandler Paquette made a ***Motion** to approve the Town of Woodstock Credit Card Use Policy as presented. ***Seconded** by Charlene Perkins Cutler. ***The motion passed unanimously.**

9. Consider EMS Coverage Proposal

- a. A Proposal has been sent out to all selectmen for review. The EMS funding needs to be addressed to ensure EMS coverage. The numbers in the current proposal are competitive rates in hopes to attract part time coverage that does not include benefits. This proposal would require an additional \$255,000 in town funding for the next fiscal year. A decision needs to be made prior to January 2023. Without funding, the town would have to find a new service as of June 2023 as the current operation would go out of business. This information was all discussed at the previous Board of Selectmen Meeting.
- b. Jay Swan spoke with our local EMS team after the last meeting and told them to move ahead to try filling positions as outlined to provide adequate coverage to the Town of Woodstock.
- c. Jay Swan met with the collaborative group of Putnam/Thompson. They are having success but experiencing growth pains with their program. He will continue to attend their meetings and monitoring the status of the collaborative. Jay Swan plans to reach out to KB and ask for a proposal for the purpose of knowing what options are available.
- d. Jay Swan shared the fire tax structure used in Pomfret for reference as a possibility for the Town of Woodstock. This option would have to go to Town Meeting before enacted if desired by the Town of Woodstock.
- e. Charlene Perkins Cutler stated she is interested in how the financials of a fire tax would be monitored and operate. She also would like a better understanding of whether the current Fire/EMS would be able to handle increased financial responsibilities and shift capacity. She feels that the trial time between now and the end of the year will be a good indicator.
 - i. Michael Dougherty stated that data should show if and how this will work by the end of January allowing for adequate information for next year's budget discussion.

Woodstock Board of Selectmen Minutes

10. Correspondence and Announcements

- a. The State Police report the following in Woodstock for the month of September 2022
 - i. 4 Accidents
 - ii. 10 Investigations
 - iii. 0 Larceny
 - iv. 0 Burglary
 - v. 98 non-reported matters
 - vi. 0 DUI
 - vii. 2 Traffic Citation
 - viii. 3 Written Warning
- b. Rachel Ferreira, Assistant to the Assessor, has passed the required exams and is now state certified as an assessor. Christine Barroso has been hired as the Executive Assistant in the Office of the First Selectmen. Jennifer Perez has been hired as a Temp in the Tax Collector's Office as Linda's assistant is out on medical leave.
- c. The Northeast Probate Court informational event was held today in the Town Hall. A number of people did attend with questions about Probate at this event.
- d. TEEG Mobile Food Pantry was at the Town Hall today and will return on Tuesday, November 1, 2022.
- e. The Registrar of Voters will be holding a voter registration session on Monday, November 7, 2022 from 9 am to 5 pm in the lower level of the Town Hall.
- f. The 2023 Meeting Schedule for the Board of Selectmen was discussed and approved to be sent to Town Clerk as presented. The Board of Selectmen will work on scheduling a Special Meeting for Phase 2 of ARPA, date TBD.
- g. Firearm Suicide Prevention brochures with information about the Red Flag Law are available in the Town Hall Lobby.
- h. There will be a FOI Workshop with Tom Hennick at the Town Hall on November 16, 2022 at 7pm.
- i. The Last Green Valley Walktober Guide is still available at the Town Hall if anyone is interested.
- j. Tracy Giarrusso has been hired as the Land Use Clerk and will be in the office Monday thru Thursday from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. These 16 hours combined with our Wetland Agent/ZEO working up to 20 hours per week provide more hours in the Department than what Woodstock previously had. Therefore the town now has increased public access to the Land Use Office between Zoning Enforcement Officer and Land Use Clerk office hours.
- k. A thank you note was received from United Services for the donation of \$5900 from the Town of Woodstock for Mental Health Services provided to Woodstock residents.
- l. Mike Froelich is now the Steward for the Teamsters Union Local 493 at the Highway Department.
- m. A second notification for work on Route 171 was received at the Town Hall. Route 171 will be repaved next spring from the intersection of Route 169 west to the Eastford line and a rumble strip will be inserted to the center line at the corner of Pulpit Rock Rd for increased safety.
- n. There are number of Recreation Programs currently available. Please visit the Recreation Department page on the town website for details- <https://www.woodstockct.gov/recreation-department/pages/recreation-programs>

11. Public Comments

- a. Jared Morse voiced his concern with the current approach to EMS services. He feels that more options are needed and processes should be in place to transition services. He stated that the reality of the situation is that there are not enough EMT's in the area to provide coverage under the proposed program. He feels that because professional EMS is a transient business, long term coverage will not be

Woodstock Board of Selectmen Minutes

guaranteed. The EMS needs to be run as a business and not a volunteer service in order to provide needed services.

- i. Jay Swan noted that he is willing to give the volunteer EMS a chance to prove themselves able to provide services. He is actively looking into other options as alternate plans for EMS.
 - ii. Jared Morse stated that he would like to know what the next step is if the volunteer system fails and that regionalization is the only solution.
 - iii. Chandler Paquette noted that the Town of Woodstock does not have the currently budget available for that operation under Prop 46.
 - iv. Jay Swan stated that he understands Jared Morse's disappointment in the situation of not being able to adequately service Woodstock residents. He will continue to investigate options for the EMS services in town and welcomes any input. He stated that the steps being taken with volunteer EMS is only one proposal and their efforts to prove capability have an end date in which a decision can be made.
 - v. Jared Morse noted that ALS service, that currently services Southbridge and Dudley is also available in addition to KB services. This option will also be investigated as an option by Jay Swan on behalf of the Town of Woodstock after information is forwarded from Jared Morse.
- b. Ray Morgan asked about the Land Disposition Ordinance process. Jay Swan shared that after the draft is edited as presented, it will be sent out to other commissions and agencies for review. He also stated that he will put Mr. Morgan on the list to receive draft once made public. The process mandates that after all Town Board input is considered, the ordinance would go to Town Meeting for discussion and vote.
- c. Roger Gale inquired the status of the WPCA proposal for ARPA funds. It was noted that the WPCA proposal is on the list to be considered.
- d. Megan Bard Morse questioned Michael Dougherty's comment about EMS under agenda item 9. She asked clarification as to which role he was commenting on behalf of (Volunteer Fire, EMS or Board of Finance) and Michael Dougherty responded that the reference was from a Volunteer Fire perspective in reference to an EMS meeting.
- e. Megan also clarified that the Board of Education submits quarterly reports to the Board of Finance. The Board of Education was referenced as an example of an entity separate from general government in the budget in agenda item 9 when discussing fire tax. She feels that it would not be abnormal to ask for quarterly updates from EMS if a fire tax was instituted.
- f. Michael Dougherty shared for clarification that the Fire Protection Agency has a full page budget in the Town Budget with detailed spending and there is an annual audit performed as well. Currently EMS funds goes to the Woodstock Volunteer Fire Association as a subsidy. All money for EMS is dedicated specifically for EMS salaries which is monitored by a finance committee.
- i. Charlene Perkins Cutler would like to see financial statements of the EMS service in order to evaluate the finances of the overall organization. Michael Dougherty stated that monthly financial statements can be obtained from Mark Collins, Treasurer.
- g. Megan Bard Morse is requesting an effort be made to educate Woodstock Residents about Prop 46 and what cannot be accomplished while the town remains under Prop 46. She suggested focus groups and discussions as possible options to get public buy in.

12. Adjournment

- a. Charlene Perkins Cutler made a ***Motion** to adjourn. *** Seconded** by Jay Swan. ***The motion passed unanimously**. The meeting adjourned at 9:26 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by Amy Monahan, Recording Secretary. DISCLAIMER: These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Selectmen. Please refer to next month's meeting for approval/amendments.