Town of Rutland

Office of the Select Board

Minutes: February 24, 2020

Meeting Opened: 6:00 P.M.

Attendance:
Board Members Present: Sheila Dibb, Mitch Ruscitti, Jeff Stillings, Wayne Walker
Board Members Absent: Leah Whiteman
Staff Members Present: Mike Nicholson (Town Administrator), Tomeca Murphy (Secretary)

**Please note this meeting was recorded for transmission on Rutland Public Access TV & YouTube**

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes, Treasury Warrant & Payroll

- Motion to approve Treasury Warrant #18 and Payroll—Motion made by Jeff Stillings, seconded by Wayne Walker; vote unanimous at 6:01 P.M.
- Motion to approve the meeting minutes from February 10, 2020—Motion made by Jeff Stillings, seconded by Mitch Ruscitti; vote unanimous at 6:02 P.M. (Wayne Walker abstained)

Petitions, Applications, Awards & Presentations

Rutland Fire Brigade: One Day Liquor License
The Rutland Fire Brigade is seeking a 1 day liquor license for Friday, May 15, 2020 for National Law Enforcement Day. Jeff Stillings proposed that the service be expanded this year with a ceremony held at the old fire barn. The brigade is looking to serve beer at this ceremony as a fundraiser towards the restoration of the old building. Randy Jordan submitted a completed application on behalf of the Fire Brigade. Jeff said they would also like to hold a memorial service at the burial grounds, including a wreath laying and possible cannons. The board was in agreement and voted to approve the one day liquor license for the event.

- Motion to recognize National Law Enforcement Day on May 15, 2020 and authorize an event to be held on this date—Motion made by Jeff Stillings, seconded by Wayne Walker; vote unanimous at 6:16 P.M.
- Motion to approve a one day liquor license for the Rutland Fire Brigade to be served at the old fire barn on May 15, 2020 (rain date 5/16/20) between the hours of 4:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M.—Motion made by Jeff Stillings, seconded by Mitch Ruscitti; vote unanimous at 6:20 P.M.
- Motion to waive the license fee for a non-profit group—Motion made by Wayne Walker, seconded by Mitch Ruscitti; vote unanimous at 6:21 P.M.

Town Administrator Update

Select Board E-Mail Addresses & Chromebooks
The individual e-mail addresses for the Select Board members have been set up by CM Geeks. They will be added to the town’s website once it's up and running. Earlier in the day, the site had gone down but they were actively working to get it back up again. At the next meeting, Mike will have the communication policy for the board to sign, in which it states that all e-mail communications are public record. The board also received their Chromebooks, which is an effort by the town to reduce the amount of paper being used. There is a 24/7 support phone number available to the board for both the e-mail and Chromebooks.
Marijuana RFI Update
The working group has reviewed portions of the redacted RFI, however no discussion can be had at this time because it's still considered confidential information. Mike anticipates this information to be released in mid to late March.

Mike also added that there will be an update on the Route 68 discussion at the next meeting.

Public Comment

Darren Ross, 5 Rufus Putnam Lane—The town is hosting this year’s Wachusett Area Muster League on June 20, 2020. The league would like to offer a “beer garden” and will be requesting a one day liquor license in the near future. Randy Jordan shared that it's been about 20 years since the town has hosted the event. Darren added that the Fire Brigade would like to have another “beer garden” event on the evening of the fireworks (July 3rd), to be held behind the Franklin Wood House or on the common depending on the board’s preference. The proceeds from the event would go towards the old fire house restoration. There would be added police officers during the event, to which Mike Nicholson clarified that it's in their contracts that all officers must work on July 3rd and July 4th. There will be additional questions and details to be worked out, so this will likely come before the board at a later date.

Old Business

078—Town Administrator Evaluation
Mike has received the cover sheet with scores and the board member’s feedback, however, there is 1 document he is still waiting on. Since two of the board members were not present, it was decided to postpone further discussion until the next meeting.

094—DCR/Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting Update
A meeting was held on February 20th at the Rutland Library regarding the changes being proposed by the DCR. There was an overwhelming number of people in attendance, so many in fact, that they were unable to hold the planned meeting. Instead, the DCR gave a preliminary update and Jeff also had an opportunity to present the petition papers. There will be another meeting held on March 19, 2020 at 7:00 P.M. at Quabbin Regional High School (872 South St., Barre MA). Each of the four towns (Rutland, Barre, Oakham & Hubbardston) have 2 representatives that serve on the Advisory Committee—ours are Dick Williams and Brett Russ. Brett has now been appointed to the seat “at large”, leaving a vacancy for the Rutland seat (available April 1, 2020). In order to fill the seat, an official notification must be received and then the Town Clerk can post it on the website. Jeff shared that he would be leaving the meeting early so that he could attend a meeting of the Oakham Select Board regarding this topic to share the Rutland Select Board’s stance on the closing of the gates. He will also be attending Hubbardston’s Select Board Meeting on March 2, 2020. Jeff asked if the board was in support of him speaking on their behalf with the other towns in an effort to get their support. The board was agreeable to this and voted to approve it.

• Motion to approve Jeffrey Stillings to speak with the towns of Hubbardston and Oakham regarding the Select Board's letter of support to keep the gates open—Motion made by Wayne Walker, seconded by Mitch Ruscitti; vote unanimous at 6:32 P.M.

New Business

096—Fourth of July Events Update
Jeff Stillings attended the first meeting of the Fourth of July Committee. The theme this year will be 1920-2020: A Year in Decades/Paint The Town Red, White & Blue. Since the Fourth of July falls on a Saturday this year, they
are planning some concerts to be held on the Town Common, along with other events in the works. Jeff proposed that the Fire Brigade apply for a one day liquor license so they can serve beer on the common, similar to the Food Truck Festival. He said he presented this idea to the Fourth of July Committee and they were in agreement with the idea. This will be further discussed at a later date.

097—Budget Review
The board was presented with Version #15 of the current budget, which is based off of Governor Baker's budget numbers (the House's budget is expected in mid March). The biggest increases are $705,000 for the schools, health insurance/retirement and contractual increases. This year DPW Director Joe Buckley broke down specific line items into more appropriate categories in order to create a more accurate representation of the department's spending. Sheila inquired about the increase under the Town Clerk and Mike explained this is due to an increase in hours for the Assistant Town Clerk. Mike added that they still need to cut $475,000, with $175,000 already cut. In addition, Mike noted that the budget for the phone system went over because it took much longer to switch over, due to no fault of the Town. The education budget is seeing a 5.6% increase and the Council of Aging and Library are seeing an increase due to requests for additional hours. Revenue sheets will be provided at the next meeting.

099—DCR Sewer IMA Negotiation Update
Mike Nicholson and Joe Buckley recently met with the DCR regarding the sewer negotiations. Mike conferred with Town Counsel to find out if this topic could be discussed in open meeting and KP Law said that it could be. So as not to give away any information regarding negotiations, Mike asked for 1 or 2 board members to meet with he and Joe to further discuss. Mitch and Sheila both volunteered as representatives of the board and Joe added that it is time sensitive because the DCR is moving quickly. A follow up meeting will be scheduled for Joe, Mike, Mitch and Sheila to meet.

- Motion to approve Mitch Ruscitti and Sheila Dibb as volunteers to attend DCR negotiation meeting(s)--
  Motion made by Wayne Walker, seconded by Mitch Ruscitti; vote unanimous at 7:11 P.M.

100—Solect PILOTS
Naquag and Glenwood Elementary Schools will be having roof mounted solar panels installed. The total cost over 20 years is $34,571 for Glenwood and $30,711 for Naquag, with payments being made annually. Sheila noted that Rutland was the only town in the district that was able to take part in this because we are the only town that contracts with National Grid.

- Motion for the Town Administrator to sign the agreement for payment in lieu of taxes with Solect for Glenwood & Naquag Elementary Schools—Motion made by Jeff Stillings, seconded by Wayne Walker; vote unanimous at 6:07 P.M.

There were also two amendments made on the solar agreements for Pleasantdale Road Solar (signed in December 2015) and Wachusett Solar LLC (signed April 2018), both projects operated by Nexamp. For Pleasantdale Rd., they just received the certificate of electricity being generated, which will result in an increase of $28,185 for the remaining 20 years. The solar on Wachusett St. is at a usage of $31,609/year, with a total of $152,180 for the remaining 20 years.

- Motion for the Select Board to sign the amendment for payment in lieu of taxes on Pleasantdale Rd., c/o Nexamp—Motion made by Jeff Stillings, seconded by Wayne Walker; vote unanimous at 6:09 P.M.
- Motion for the Select Board to sign the amendment for payment in lieu of taxes for Wachusett Solar, LLC, c/o Nexamp—Motion made by Jeff Stillings, seconded by Wayne Walker; vote unanimous at 6:11 P.M.

101—Library Trustee Appointment
There is a vacancy on the Board of Trustees for Rutland Library and an applicant has shown interest in the seat.
Mitch recused himself because a family member of his sits on the board, and since 2 other board members were not present, the appointment will be discussed and voted on at a future meeting.

Other Business
Treasurer/Collector, Rebecca Tuttle, asked that a member of the Dispatch Center be appointed to the Insurance Advisory Board. They are holding a meeting on February 26th to discuss insurance rates and need a quorum to be able to vote. The Dispatch Center asked that Robert Holmes be appointed to the Board.

- Motion to appoint Robert Holmes to the Insurance Advisory Board—Motion made by Mitch Ruscitti, seconded by Wayne Walker; vote unanimous at 7:15 P.M.

Adjournment
Motion to close the meeting—Motion made by Mitch Ruscitti, seconded by Wayne Walker; vote unanimous at 7:15 P.M.

Note: Jeff Stillings left the meeting at 6:42 P.M. to attend the Oakham Select Board meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tomeca Murphy
Secretary