

**Town of Castleton
Select Board Meeting
Minutes of February 24th, 2014
Castleton Town Offices**

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Hale, Wenger Rehlen, Cristine Smith, Thomas Ettori

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: E. O'Shea

OTHERS PRESENT: See attached list

The meeting called to order at 7:00 by Chairman T. Ettori with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes for Approval-February 10th, 2014

MOTION

Motion to approve the minutes of February 10th, 2013 by C. Smith. Seconded by J. Hale.

J. Hale wanted to clarify that on page three, \$1000 is the average salary increase per employee, not the total cost to the tax payer.

W. Rehlen noted that on the bottom of page four, in discussion with G. Trudo, he asked him why he hadn't brought this issue up before that particular meeting. C. Smith stated she felt G. Trudo had been consistent, but W. Rehlen disagreed.

Vote on the Motion

All in favor of approving the minutes as amended. So voted.

Warrants for Approval

MOTION

C. Smith made a motion to approve warrant 0224R for \$5,141.00, 0224 for \$58,791.19; 0220 for \$7,647.99; 0213 for \$6,643.23; 0220P for \$20,841.57; and 0213P for \$11,346.76. Seconded by J. Hale.

W. Rehlen asked about the UV Ballast for the sewer plant. Chairman T. Ettori stated he thinks it is on a yearly replacement schedule.

VOTE ON THE MOTION

All in favor. So voted.

Petition Discussion—Frank Taggart

F. Taggart stated that 3 or 4 years ago, the Vermont State Board of Education stated that the town must close the village school or get enrollment up. He stated that he feels that \$500,000 could be saved by closing the school without getting rid of any teachers. He stated that enrollment has been trending downward and the budget is up. He feels it is a runaway train that no one wants to deal with. He stated his feelings regarding this issue have nothing to do with the town office, he just wants to save taxpayer money. He stated that according to the VLCT, the board has been advised not to act, but he asked the board if they would be willing to put it to a non binding vote.

J. Hale asked who has title to the village school building. F. Taggart stated he thinks it is the town. J. Hale stated that he thought it was the close and doesn't feel the Select Board has the authority to close. it.

F. Taggart stated that all he wants is a vote. He also noted that the school budget is getting out of control.

W. Rehlen stated that before putting it to vote, he wanted to ensure that the Select Board even has the authority to do anything about it. F. Taggart stated that a non-binding vote would at least get the feeling of the people and open up a conversation with the school board.

J. Bruno stated that the Castleton School District did own both schools at the time of the Castleton Hubbardton Union. He stated that feels F. Taggart is right on target. The state school board is asking schools to consolidate, and he stated he feels it is prudent to ask for a non-binding vote.

K. Thornblade asked if there was any room for a referendum at the town meeting in the form of a survey so the town wouldn't have to go through a whole separate election. F. Taggart stated that he would rather have it as a separate vote so people would pay attention to what they were voting for.

G. Trudo stated that he supports F. Taggart's effort and that the village school could be rented to the college to increase the town's revenue.

T. Kearns stated that the board has no say in this. He also noted that the budget has historically passed two to one.

R. Schoenfeld-Fox stated that as a teacher at the village school, she urges residents to think of our children.

J. Pintello noted that a budget vote does not indicate support of keeping the village school open.

J. Folsom stated that moving teachers and students to a different building should not impact the quality of education.

M. Finnegan echoed support for F. Taggart.

MOTION

C. Smith made a motion that the board accept F. Taggart's position and set a date for a non-binding vote for March 26th, 2014. W. Rehlen seconded.

Chairman T. Ettori noted that it needed to be sent to legal, which could take longer than 30 days. C. Smith changed her motion to reflect a date of April 15th, 2014.

VOTE ON THE MOTION

C. Smith and Chairman T. Ettori voted yes. J. Hale and W. Rehlen voted no. Motion fails for lack of a majority.

Appointment-Recreation Commission-Jeffrey Hayes

Tabled until J. Hayes comes in to meet the board.

Request for Approval-1st Class Liquor License

MOTION

C. Smith made a motion to approve the liquor license for Lake House Pub and Grille. Seconded by W. Rehlen. All in favor. So voted.

Request for Approval-2nd Class Liquor Licenses

MOTION

C. Smith made a motion to approve the liquor license for Jiffy Mart. Seconded by J. Hale. All in favor. So voted. All in favor. So voted.

Request for Approval-Tobacco Licenses

MOTION

C. Smith made a motion to approve the tobacco license for Jiffy Mart. Seoncded by W. Rehlen. All in favor. So voted.

MOTION

C. Smith made a motion to approve the tobacco license for Beverage King. J. Hale seconded. All in favor. So voted.

MOTION

C. Smith made a motion to approve the tobacco license for Vermont Vapor Inc. Seconded by W. Rehlen. All in favor. So voted.

Citizen's Request—Graham Trudo

This issue was moved under citizens' concerns.

Citizens' Concerns

Chairman T. Ettori stated that he would let G. Trudo read what he presented him with, but stated that he did not give it to him until right before the meeting.

J. Rehlen objected, saying this was disruptive and unprecedented.

G. Trudo stated that he is concerned about the legal opinion of the VLCT. He tried to recite from the charter, but was stopped by Chairman T. Ettori, who stated that the board got a legal opinion and that if he wanted to talk about the charter, the board would need to see it in advance.

G. Trudo stated that he does feel Title 24 has provisions for recall of elected officials which has been in effect since 1998. He stated that an act passed related to the Poultney charter. He stated that Poultney and Castleton charter both have provisions that stated that we have all the rights and privileges of surrounding towns and providences. He also feels the town should have a governance charter in town ordinances. Also, he stated that under Roberts Rules of Order, the town has the right to recall elected officials.

P. Graziano asked why the town report had no page listing benefits and pay of town employees.

Chairman T. Ettori stated that it would be made available on the website and at the town meeting.

J. Bruno stated that he feels the board was disrespectful in response to F. Taggart's request and he feels some members of the board are an embarrassment.

M. Finnegan urged the board to follow the will of the people and put 556 up for sale.

J. Folsom asked about heating 556, expressing concern that money is being wasted. Chairman T. Ettori stated that the heat is kept at 50 degrees, but that there may be a place to move the records. The manager is checking into this.

N. Cameron stated that she feels strongly that at the last meeting, G. Trudo made an unwarranted and obscene suggested. She feels such blatant sexual remarks were inappropriate and un-civil. She asked what kind of action would be taken. Chairman T. Ettori responded that when he calls on someone, he does not know what they will say.

N. Cameron stated that G. Trudo's comments regarding Vermont men standing up and voting sent a clear message that non-Vermonters or independent women were unwelcome.

M. Molnar agreed with N. Cameron. She stated she felt personally insulted. She also asked if campaigning is permitted at the town recycling center. Chairman T. Ettori stated that they are allowed to stand by the entrance, but not inside.

J. Rehlen expressed concern that the agenda was not on the website or front porch forum he didn't want to have to come to the Town Office to get a copy and asked whoever is responsible for this to be reprimanded. J. Potter stated that it was put online on Friday posted at Town Offices, Clerks and 3 post offices, , which is more than is required.

T. Molnar asked about a possible conflict of interest with R. Coombs running for Select Board. Chairman T. Ettori stated that in his opinion, he would not be able to vote on M. Coomb's budget, but there would be no other conflict. C. Smith stated she feels there is more of a conflict of interest with W. Rehlen and the Donchian fund. R. Coombs stated he would not vote on the Accounting Budget and would recuse himself regarding a vote on major fire equipment. J. Hale stated that if he recused himself, he couldn't even discuss it. R. Coombs disagreed.

M. Coombs responded in regards to the conflict of interest. She stated that J. Hale serves on the DRB. The health officer who is a paid town employee was on the Select Board. In the past, a member of the highway department was on the board, and Mulholland was also a member of the fire department and a board member.

J. Potter asked for an apology from J. Rehlen for wrongly requesting that there be a reprimanded.

G. Trudo responded to N. Cameron's statement that he was offensive. He stated that "Vermont men and women" includes people from all states who now live here.

Other Business

Chairman T. Ettori stated that the water district has asked to put their bylaws on the town webpage at their expense.

MOTION

Motion to include the water district bylaws on the town website at no cost to the town by C. Smith. Seconded by W. Rehlen. All in favor. So voted.

G. Trudo asked if he could give a toast to the flag at the town meeting. Chairman T. Ettori stated that would be the decision of J. Burke.

Select Board Concerns

J. Hale asked if the listers could come in and give the board an updated. He also noted that Rutland Regional Planning Commission offered to manage the Planning grant for the town. Chairman T. Ettori stated that E. Bove is coming to a March meeting.

MOTION

C. Smith made a motion that the town enter into discussion with the historical society to discuss stipulations related to the transfer of property of 556.

C. Smith stated that she just wants to have a discussion and doesn't understand why no one wants to talk about it.

Motion fails for lack of second.

Chairman T. Ettori stated that he feels the building should be put out to bid for sale. He stated that the historical society has the option to buy the property for \$5000 less than the offer. The town would then be under no obligation to sell.

Adjournment:

MOTION

Motion to adjourn by C. Smith. Seconded by W, Rehlen. All in favor. So voted.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 P.M.

Submitted by Brittany Gilman

Date of Approval