

TOWN OF CASTLETON SELECT BOARD MINUTES

Monday, January 16, 2023 6:30 p.m.
Castleton Fire Station Community Room
273 Route 30N, Bomoseen
In-Person & Zoom Virtual Public Meeting

Zoom Meeting Recording Link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/97BSyl-UI_VrgKapfWydk2EGuoIMGW4JYIYtLq-0VrbMaoZx0k4ZYRIPz6xMxqZu.37IRuSsgsRMuXt89

PRESENT: Richard Combs, Vice Chair; Mary Lee Harris, Robert Spaulding, Joseph Mark, Parliamentarian, Michael Jones, Town Manager, See Attached List

PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Nancy Mark, John Burke, Melanie Combs, Town Accountant,

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Select Board Vice - Chair R. Combs at 6:30p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

R. Spaulding made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. ML Harris seconded. J. Mark stated he felt it would be a good idea to have an Executive Session on Real Estate. R. Spaulding agreed. R. Combs stated the Executive Session will immediately follow the Selectboard Closing Comments or Concerns. **All voted in favor of the motion to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried 4-0. ML Harris made a motion to add an Executive Session for Personnel. J. Mark seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried 4-0.**

SELECTBOARD – Follow up discussion regarding the proposed draft operating budget for the fiscal year ending 2024

M. Jones stated he had distributed a comparison of current and proposed budgets and explained the \$3,000 one-time fee to set up the mapping for the assessor's budget that was overlooked making the new final budget number \$3,704,956. M. Jones also explained the comparison sheet totals do not include the \$90,000 that was in the budget for the CVS maintenance since the board wanted that to be a separate item on the ballot.

ML Harris questioned the increase in zoning for salary when they don't have anyone in that position. M. Jones stated that they had increased the hours for attendance at meetings, this had been underfunded in the past. Fire Department was questioned, M. Jones explained he proposed an equipment reserve increase be split between this year they are working on and the next budget year. Highway was discussed M. Jones explained half of the paving is in the proposed budget, and that ARPA funds be used for the other half. Also discussion on containers at the Transfer Station and use of ARPA funds. R. Spaulding asked about the wages for union and nonunion members, permanent part time, contracted employees. Further discussion on the Transfer Station, and whether fees would have to be raised and if the Transfer Station is self-sufficient.

R. Combs reviewed the numbers and stated that the total budget proposal of \$3,704,957, if approved, would be a 4.8% increase or \$171,359, and includes using \$143,200 of ARPA funds for a total budget increase of \$304,557, which is down from the original budget proposal that had an increase of \$529,054. **J. Mark made a motion to approve the budget as presented by the Town Manager for total expenditures of \$3,704,957, not including what we anticipate will be a \$90,159 article for the voters related to the Castleton Village School and not including the \$143,200 the Manager has proposed we spend of our available ARPA funds. R. Spaulding seconded.** R. Combs stated at the last meeting J. Mark had proposed the ARPA funds be included in the budget approval motion and it was just excluded. R. Spaulding agreed it was excluded. **R. Spaulding rescinded his second on the motion, J. Mark rescinded his motion.** M. Combs stated to the Board that she believes the motion should be what the budget dollars are that need to be raised by taxes would be, expenditures that are to be covered by other funding would need to be addressed when they calculate the tax rate in June. She feels it would muddy the waters if the motion to approve the Town budget includes parenthetical notes about where some of the money is coming from. Discussion on the operating budget being \$3,704,957 and it was clear that was what the motion should be. ML Harris stated it is not clear, as they had discussed putting the CVS on the ballot as a line item, and by doing that

separately and it is not included in the budget number it isn't clear to the taxpayers that they will be paying another \$90,000. Discussion held on whether it would be clear to the taxpayers that they would have to add another \$90,000 to the budget figure for the CVS line item. ML Harris stated she felt whether the separate line item was approved by voters or not, they are still going to have to pay that \$90,000 for that building, it isn't going to just go away. J. Mark stated the way the Town does their ballot, each department are separate line items, and theoretically voters could vote down any or all items, just as they can with the CVS line item. R. Spaulding pointed out that they are already accumulating costs with that property this year and have agreed to use ARPA funds to pay them for this current year, and they will need to include it for the new budget year.

J. Burke stated that he has listened to this discussion and the use of the ARPA monies. He does not feel that the ARPA money was supposed to be used for the operating budget as they are proposing. He feels it is a very slippery slope when they start using those funds for the operating budget, where is it going to come from when those monies dry up. J. Burke further stated that with the addition of the full time Recreation Director along with the building funding and additions to the programs, that budget alone increases over 300% over what it was two years ago. J. Mark stated this proposed budget does not propose using any ARPA funds for operating expenses. **J. Mark made a motion to approve the budget as submitted by the Town Manager that calls for total expenditures of \$3,704,957. R. Spaulding seconded.** J. Mark asked ML Harris if would like to amend the motion to include the \$90,519 for the CVS building in the final budget number. **ML Harris amended the motion to include the \$90,519 for the CVS building. Amendment to the motion failed for lack of a second. Vote on the original motion: R. Combs, J. Mark and R. Spaulding voted in favor. ML Harris opposed. Motion carried 3-1. J. Mark made a motion that they approve the Town Manager's recommendations regarding to disbursement of some of the ARPA funds for a total expenditure at this time of \$143,200. R. Spaulding seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried 4-0.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS PERIOD

H. Goyette stated it was his understanding that M. Jones was going to propose a second reserve account for the fire Department for their higher priced small equipment to avoid spiking budgets when they have to be replaced. It is also his understanding that this would have to be a separate line item on the ballot to create that account. R. Combs questioned the line item within the department that increased by \$18,000, H. Goyette stated that was for air bottles and such. He would like to start with the \$18,000. R. Combs was not opposed to putting that on the ballot. J. Mark felt they had asked the Town Manager to draft language to have that on the warning. M. Jones stated he would have the language for the warning for the next meeting.

SELECTBOARD CLOSING COMMENTS OR CONCERNS

R. Spaulding stated they have already voted on the budget, but he does not feel that the nonunion employees should ride on the coat tails of the union members and get the same pay raise as the union people, in fact they are getting more of a pay raise this year than the union, he doesn't feel that is right. M. Jones apologized that he did not point out that the board could have met with the union representatives and ask them to renegotiate in the past if there was something they were not happy with.

ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION

7:28 PM – J. Mark made a motion to enter Executive Session to include the Town Manager to discuss real estate. R. Spaulding seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried 4-0.

EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION

7:50 PM – J. Mark made a motion to exit Executive Session, no action taken. R. Spaulding seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried 4-0.

R. Spaulding apologized to M. Jones and did not intend it to be pointed at M. Jones, and he should not take it personally, as he feels M. Jones did a great job on the budget preparations. M. Jones said that it would be a good discussion to have next year before budget preparations.

ADJOURN

J. Mark made a motion to adjourn at 7:51 p.m. R. Spaulding seconded. All voted in favor. Motion carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted
Allison Harvey
Recording Secretary

F E M A L E