

Starksboro Selectboard
Minutes of 11/12/19 Special Meeting
Unapproved

Present: Eric Cota, Nancy Boss, Koran Cousino, Keegan Tierney, Greg Hahr

Others present: Rebecca Elder, Jen Myers

The meeting was opened at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Koran Cousino.

Additions to the agenda:

1. FEMA administrative work and support – end of meeting after budget discussion

The purposed of this meeting was for the board members to spend focused time reviewing the budget, bringing Greg Hahr up to speed on how the budget has been developed in the past and the work needed to prepare the FY 20-21 budget for voter approval at town meeting.

This will be Tony Porter's first year as Road Foreman and managing the Highway department budget. The town will provide assistance as needed; Rebecca is available to help. Koran will touch base with him about what he needs. Consultant Jen Myers shared how Bristol handles their budget and highway dollars. They list the highway taxes separately. By doing so it isolates the funds, creating a separate tax rate. 17 V.S.A. states that highway funds cannot be used for anything else, so what is the advantage of listing separately?

Simplifying some of the categories would help make the financial statement easier to navigate. Some examples: lumping the fees collected by the Clerk (birth, death, research, recording); keep dog licenses separate.

Payroll lines items: some hours are being charged to the wrong line; K. Cousino will follow up.

Insurance line item: It is helpful to break it out and assign cost to the different categories. What is the cost for each dept?

J. Myers advises not focusing on formatting now. That can all be adjusted at the end when the final budget is exported from NEMRC to Excel. Rebecca can format for the town report.

Cost center accounting principles for reporting are helpful. For ease of the eye, the board will consider different organization of the budget spreadsheet so a taxpayer can see the costs for whole departments.

Cost codes: Departmental view; dept. heads should approve invoices. Tony is now doing so for the road department. Invoices coming into the clerk's office should be distributed for cost coding by ZA and SB as needed. Question about legal notices: are these all DRB?

The board discussed how the library budget is developed and reported on and some history of the process. The library has its own board.

Board members asked J. Myers more about how committees such as SSP could be run (i.e. put funds in savings accounts; SSP as its own fund). Balance can be rolled over. Voter permission to create a reserve fund is not required because it is not a capital purchase but is operating instead like its own budget.

Suggestion for consolidated highway line items: reduce to 4 categories equipment, garage, general, contractor repairs. Starksboro has extensive granular categories.

The board discussed how truck/road equipment purchases are made. Town finances the whole thing and don't put any money down. Then the budget includes enough to cover the payment. J. Myers suggested the Town consider paying that from the general fund; the money that goes in the equipment fund should be for purchasing so that no financing is needed or at least do so over a short period of time.

Questions/considerations: Is the loan set up for short term payment to the manufacturer? Why finance 210K if you have 130K in the account? For comparison, Bristol puts money into the funds every year. The amount fluctuates based on what they might need to purchase.

K. Tierney asked about details on a few line items:

- Pottery studio – unknown if Judith plans to renew lease after March.
- Green Lantern income - 3K annually
- Culvert line item will go up – Tony to provide info
- Gravel/ditching up – Tony to provide info
- Bookkeeping – The board is collecting information about the services to be covered by a bookkeeper and will collect bids.
- Payroll service – already budgeted; Board to decide on which service or provider to use and prepare for January 1 transition.

FEMA and Storm event follow up

The town has received information from several landowners who have sustained damage to private property. Town officials have been in conversation with regional planning to learn more about potential resources and funding for repairs. EWP – requires 25% covered by sponsor (town would look to the landowner to cover the 25% portion). Board reviewed the information from ACRPC. There is the mitigation assistance program and the Hazard Mitigation program.

The Selectboard will assign a group who will be responsible for follow up and tracking. There may be funds available to hire someone to keep track of the roads administrative work and be reimbursed. K. Tierney will follow up with a plan. In Bristol, Sharon in the Town Clerk's office is managing the system for the Road Foreman. The bulk of the work involves: invoices, materials/tally sheets, work done, and photo documentation. There needs to be a list of sites, file for each site, tally for each site. Photos should be tied to location point (pref. GPS) – FEMA will come back and inspect the sites.

Motion to adjourn at 8:23 p.m.: Keegan, Eric
Motion carried

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder, SB Assistant