

TOWN OF HARTFORD SELECTBOARD MINUTES

Tuesday, January 23, 2024, 6:00pm

Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street, White
River Junction, VT 05001

This meeting was conducted in person at Town Hall

Present: Michael Hoyt, Chair; Kim Souza, Clerk; Lannie Collins, Member; Mary Erdei, Member; Ally Tufenkjian, Member; John Haverstock; Greg Sheldon; Tom Howell; Dana Clawson; Paulette Osborne; Colin Butler; MaryKay Brown; Dennis Brown; Will Adler; Danny Brzozowski; Joie Finley; Rebecca Clarke; Brandon Smith; Maeve; Jordyn Fitch; Paul Hyson; Jeff Arnold; David Briggs; Peggy Adams; Lynn Bohi; Tim Fariel; Laura Cooney; Allison Litten; John Haffner; CHlco Eldridge

Zoom: Lana Livingston; Dan Fraser, Vice-Chair; Rocket, Member; Heidi Duto; FX Flinn; Eric Krauss; Mishelle Boleski ; *GAIL OSTROUT,*

JAM Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0W4CdDQQZc>

- I. Call to Order the Selectboard Meeting by Chair, Mike Hoyt at 6:00 PM.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance was recited and led by Town Manager, John Haverstock.
- III. Local Liquor Control Board: None
- IV. Local Cannabis Control Board: None
- V. Order of Agenda: Item 5.k. is tabled until the next meeting.
- VI. Selectboard
 1. Public Comment: the full comments from the citizens can be found on the JAM link noted above.

Paulette Osborne from Hartford spoke to the Selectboard about a comment the Lannie Collins made at the last meeting. She supports the event and said it would be a positive experience for everyone. She was upset over the bomb threats and believes in "live and let live.

Joie Finley from the Main St. Museum spoke to the Selectboard about the cancelled performance of Drag Story Hour and the performers have agreed to come back to do their performance.

Jordyn Fitch works in WRJ with the youth and supports the Drag Story Hour for all.

Danny Brzozowski commented on the comments from the last meeting by Mr. Collins and supports the Drag Story Hour.

John Haffner from Wilder spoke to the Selectboard and supports the Drag Story Hour. He attended and enjoyed the show with his family until they were evacuated.

Val Warner from Quechee supports the Drag Storie Hour. He opposes Lannie Collin's comments and said bomb threats are scary.

CHlco Eastridge from WRJ supports the Drag Stories Hour. He said threats of violence are wrong.

Brandon Smith from WRJ, also running for Selectboard in March, Supports programs like the Drag Story Hour.

Steven Pomije from WRJ says diversity is a good thing in our community.

David Briggs, WRJ, shared plans for the downtown renovations and expansion of the Hotel Cooledge/Gates Street Block.

Jeff Arnold, Wilder, supports the Sales Tax and asked if funds could be used toward School District expenses.

Colin Butler, Hartford, supports the Drag Story Hour.

Heidi Duto, WRJ said that everyone should be respectful for all.

2. Selectboard Comments and Announcements

Mary Erdie thanked Public Works for plowing the last storm. She also thanked Dillon Walsh for helping at the IDEAL VT meeting held at Town Hall. Also, Dana Clawson who helped with the temperature in the conference room.

Kim Souza encouraged Lannie Collins to reach out to the people that commented tonight about his comment made at the last meeting. She was in a similar situation and found it very positive to do so.

Ally Tufenkjian thanked everyone that came out to the meeting tonight.

Rocket thanked DPW for their work. He is sorry he is on Zoom tonight – he isn't feeling well. He thinks not responding to the citizen comments when they are made might be something the Board should adopt. He thanked Joe Major and Esme Cole for the February 20th event on housing. He also asked about the status of the power doors for Bugbee Sr. Center. They asked for them a while ago.

Lannie Collins said he represents all citizens including the faith-based community. He opposes all bomb. threats.

3. Appointments: None

4. Town Manager's Report, January 23, 2024

Town Manager's Office

The Town's HR Director and Executive Assistant to the Town Manager, Paula Nulty, has been working remotely for several weeks and will continue do so through the end of this week and will be unable to work in any capacity until April. Lana Livingston has returned half-time and the hope is that her office hours will increase over time as her recovery continues.

Bugbee Senior Center

Following a meeting with Town Staff (Gail Ostrout, Scott Hausler, Dana Clawson and the Town Manager in November), the Architects from Studio Nexus met to update the leadership of the Bugbee Senior Center in December. The architects will continue their work and update the Selectboard at a future date.

Welcoming and Engaging Community Cohort

The Town's application to once again participate in the Welcoming and Engaging Community Cohort has been accepted and the Town Manager, Lt. Commander Connie Kelley and Selectboard member Kim Souza attended a kick-off session on January 9 at the VLCT offices in Montpelier.

Center for Cartoon Studies

A big "thank you" to Michelle Ollie for giving the Town Manager an excellent and informative tour of the Center for Cartoon Studies. It was great to see the campus and meet staff and several students.

Selectboard Structures Training

This is a reminder that Dominic Cloud will lead a Selectboard workshop devoted on the topic of Selectboard structures and committee liaison assignments on January 31st.

Significant Activity Reports Link:
<https://www.hartford-vt.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/465>

5. Board Reports, Motions & Ordinances

a. **Public Hearing No. 1 on Charter Revision Proposal**

Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion to recess the Selectboard Meeting and Opened the Public Hearing. Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

The revised Charter was presented. The full comments from the citizens can be found on the JAM link noted above.

Dennis Brown said the sales tax would harm retailers.

Jeff Arnold said he supports a sales tax. The LOT now averages \$250-300k. He suggested that the sales taxes to be given to the schools. Last time we did not lose any businesses. 1% is minimal.

Tim Fariel does not support the sales tax.

Colin Butler questioned the process. It is unclear what the LOT is going to be. There needs to be more research before going forward. He opposes the sales tax.

Mary Kay Brown concerning the rental housing regulation she supports the just cause language. The current proposal is not helpful as it is already in the State Laws.

Lynn Bohi was the cochair of the Charter Review Committee. She explained the Quorum as a majority section.

Richard Kip Miller, long time business/land owner. He asked Kim Souza what she meant as "retail". She responded that it is the same as the State rules.

FX Flinn spoke to the philosophy of town governance. We are a town meeting based town as opposed to a city government. He listed the proposals that the Charter committee put in the charter for review by the selectboard. Many of those items have been taken off the current one being reviewed tonight.

Colin Butler responded that there has been info put out for the public already about the current proposed charter.

Michelle Boleski suggested that the Selectboard pause the process. This affects the School Board as well and they should be in on the conversation. The process and the procedure is confusing and bad timing. The businesses need feedback. Maybe a new committee needs to be formed.

Erik Krauss agreed with FX Flinn's analysis however believes that there is inadequate information as no experts had input.

Public Hearing No. 2 will be on February 6, 2024.

Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins made the motion to close the Public Session at 9:25pm. Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

\$532,600.53 to be funded with \$515,000.00 of revenue. Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei made the motion That the Selectboard approve of the fiscal year 2025 White River Wastewater Fund budget totaling \$1,944,171.94 to be funded with \$1,968,186.00 of revenue. Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins made the motion That the Selectboard approve of the fiscal year 2025 Quechee Wastewater Fund budget totaling \$1,257,709.07 to be funded with \$1,224,737.00 of revenue. Member, Ally Tufenkjian seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Other: (Ally Tufenkjian) Town and School Meeting Agenda and the Annual Town Meeting Warning. The amount of dependent care reimbursement is \$20 not \$15.

Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion that the Selectboard approve the Warning for the Annual Town Meeting 2024. Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian seconded the motion. 7 were in favor the motion passed.

Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjin made the motion approve the language for the Warning for the Annual Town and School District Meeting Day for 2024 with the following revision for #3. Selectboard Members eligible to receive a dependent care reimbursement in the amount of \$20.00 per hour for meeting attendance. Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza seconded the motion. 6 voted yes, 1(Collins) voted no. The motion passed.

- d. Discuss Sister City Committee Trip
Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion to authorize the Town Manager to fund the Sister City Committee not to exceed \$4,000 separated from the part by the Bryne Foundation Fund Raising money. Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian seconded the motion. 5 were in favor, 1 voted no (Collins), 1 abstained (Fraser) and the motion passed.
- e. Report on Activities from Environmental Sustainability Coordinator **Tabled.**
- f. Consider Use of Climate Action Reserve Funds **Tabled**
- g. Consider Police Department Request to Purchase Rifles
Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins made the motion to award the bid to Ridgeline Outfitters LLC (4 Bud Way, Suite 19, Nashua, NH 03063 int eh amount of \$29,917.92. Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei seconded the motion. 6 were in favor, 1voted no (Tufenkjian) and the motion was passed.
- h. Consider Revised Utility Agreement with VTrans Water Line Relocation **Tabled**
- i. Consider Dump Truck Bid Award Revision
Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins made the motion to Authorize the Town Manager to sign Tax-Exempt Leasing Corporation's Exhibits A-I, and other related documents for the financing of a new 6-wheel dump truck to replace dump truck H5. Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Selectboard Chair, Mike Hoyt reopened the Selectboard Meeting.

- b. Consider Modifying Charter Revision Proposal
Modifications to the presented Charter were discussed.

Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion that the Selectboard table the decision to put the Charter until the November 2024 Ballot. Selectboard member, Ally Tufenkjian seconded the motion. 3 vote yes (Souza, Rocket, Tufenkjian), 4 voted no (Hoyt, Erdei, Fraser, Collins) – the motion failed.

Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins made the motion to strike 103(17) from the Charter. Selectboard Member, Rocket seconded the motion. 6 voted yes, 1 (Souza) voted no. The motion passed.

Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion to strike the words “or person” from 201(b)(2). Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei made the motion to approve several modifications that were discussed. Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Mike Hoyt – clarifying language.

- 301(d) Asst. Town Treasurer change to Town Manager and School Superintendent
 - The Assistant Town Treasurer shall be compensated at the same rate as the Town Treasurer when exercising the powers of the Town Treasurer.
 - 401(c) (2) leave this in – Rights and Privileges.
 - 201e (1) Adding “prior to Budget and Candidates Night”
 - 203 (2) E Duties of elected officers: Change to “The affirmative vote of three members present at a meeting at which a quorum of at least five members are present shall be necessary to exercise authority.”
- c. Review, Revise and Adopt FY2025 General Fund Budget
The WARNING FOR ANNUAL TOWN & SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING DAY 2024 and The WARNING FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2024 were presented and discussed.

Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei made the motion that the Selectboard approve of the fiscal year 2025 General Fund budget totaling \$21,655,825.44 to be funded with \$3,152,042.92 in non-tax revenue, \$2,000,000 from the Unassigned Fund balance and \$16,503,782.52 to be raised by taxes. Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza seconded the motion. 6 voted yes, 1 voted no (Collins). The motion passed.

Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion That the Selectboard approve of the fiscal year 2025 Solid Waste Fund budget totaling \$881,652.47 to be funded with \$647,000.00 of revenue. Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian made the motion to approve the That the Selectboard approve of the fiscal year 2025 White River Water Fund budget totaling \$1,293,874.20, to be funded with \$1,294,803.00 of revenue. Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Selectboard Member, Lannie Collins made the motion That the Selectboard approve of the fiscal year 2025 Quechee Water Fund budget totaling

- j. Authorize Additional Signatory for Town Bank Account
Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei made the motion to add the Selectboard Chair to the Town of Hartford bank Account. Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.
- k. Discuss Improved Access to Town Policies and Ordinances Tabled
- l. Review and Approve Select Board 2024 Meeting Calendar
Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion to approve the 2024 Meeting Calendar, Selectboard member, Mary Erdei seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

VII. Commission Reports

Mary Erdei, Selectboard Liaison

Two vacancies on Parks and Recreation.

After dubious weather beginnings for winter, the cold weather has established that the fishing derby at Dewey will occur. And the Red Zone 5 k race will also occur on Superbowl Saturday. The 2024 calendar was discussed and adopted. The ice rink over the Christmas holidays set a record for number of skaters, perhaps due to lack of skiing in the area. And the Zamboni has a new charger that was paid for through an insurance claim. Lastly, a survey is close to completion for public input on determining if there is a desire for a new community center and any input from the public on meeting these needs of the community and its residents.

Hartford Committee on Racial Equity & Inclusion (HCOREI): Ally Tufenkjian

-Julia Lau, Hartford School District Equity Coordinator, shared the impressive work that she is doing in collaboration with principals, teachers, and students in our school district. She asked for some feedback on school district initiatives she is working on and is excited to collaborate more with the committee. We are very lucky to have Julia!

-Our Town Manager, John Haverstock, will be attending the February 7th HCOREI meeting to learn more about its work.

-One Committee vacancy

VIII. Consent Agenda: Approve Payroll Ending: 1/20/2024

Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion to accept the Consent agenda. Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Approve A/P Manifest of: 1/19/2024 and 1/25/2024

Approve Meeting Minutes of: 1/9/2024

Note: Approved Selectboard Meetings: 2/6/2024, 2/20/2024

IX. Adjourn the Selectboard Meeting

Selectboard Clerk, Kim Souza made the motion to closed the meeting at 11:30PM. Selectboard Member, Ally Tufenkjian seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.



Kim Souza, Clerk
1/23/2023 Meeting