

**Minutes**  
**West Rutland Selectboard Meeting**  
**Monday, January 13th, 2025**  
**6:00 pm**

**Present:** John Harvey, Dick Daley, Chet Brown, Mitch Frankenberg and John Center

**Others Present:** Mary Ann Goulette, Tom Burditt and David Bosch, Vermont State House of Representatives, Michael Skaza (Fire Chief). Tom Lacz (Assistant Fire Chief) and Robert Bach.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm by John Harvey with the Pledge of allegiance.

**Agenda Approval:** Motion made by Chet seconded by John Center to approve the agenda as presented. All in Favor. Motion approved.

**Minutes Approval:** Motion made by Chet seconded by Dick Daley to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 9, 2024. All in Favor. Motion approved.

**Public Concerns:** None

**Discussion Items:**

- a. **Legislative Update** – Tom Burditt and Dave Bosch gave a preview on the upcoming legislative session. Tom will serve as Vice Chair on Judiciary and Dave will serve on the Commerce and Economic Development Committee. This year there is a very large group of new legislatures. Both are hopeful the legislature addresses education funding and housing as priorities.
- b. **Fire Department Budget** – Mike presented the department’s budget. Notable changes include increase in insurance with the new truck. We also increased the agreed values on existing inventory to keep up with replacement costs. Also, the building contents were undervalued. Overall fire department budget is increased to 3.8% . On another note, our volunteers are down to 13. We’ve lost 3 to Rutland City.
- c. **Highway Budget** – We were able to level fund most line items. New personnel and increase in health insurance. Overall -.9%
- d. **Water/Sewer Budget** – Water is up overall at 1.6%. We increased the capital reserve to \$40K. Sewer budget is up 4.4%. We have installed mission systems when possible, to reduce manpower. Annual cost is \$530 for each system. Sodium alluminate has double in cost to \$29K due to our new permit and lack of controls in the system.
- e. **Overall Budget** - The overall budget has increased 3.6%. Need at least five new computers plus a new server because of the Windows 11 upgrade.

- f. **Preliminary Study-Wastewater Treatment Facility** – Mary Ann included the structural report of the wastewater treatment facility. There are numerous significant issues, cracks, movement/settlement of the concrete slabs. Mary Ann said all the remedies will be included in the new bond. We are still awaiting cost estimates for the upgrade. The UV System and Elm Street pump station have already been upgraded using the capital fund.
- g. **Water Street Bridge** – Sean reached out for some preliminary numbers for work on the Water Street Bridge from Daniels Construction (the contractor that worked on the Whipple Hollow Bridge). The quote was \$247,425 with a new precast bridge deck at 22’ wide. Mary Ann will begin looking for funding.

**Action Items:**

- a. **Tax Stabilization Request – VMS Properties LLC.** – Jessica Dambrackas, the owner of Vermont Manufacturing Systems, has purchased 403 Sheldon Avenue. She is requesting a tax stabilization of 50 % off municipal taxes for a five-year period. Mary Ann is suggesting we begin from the date of purchase October 31, 2024. Motion made by Chet seconded by John Center to approve a 5-year tax stabilization contract for VMS Properties beginning November 1, 2024 through June 30, 2029. Motion approved unanimously.
- b. **Regional Ambulance Tax Exemption Request** - Regional Ambulance qualifies for tax exemption under VSA 32. They requested the item be placed on the ballot for their West Rutland facility. “Shall the Town of West Rutland vote pursuant to VSA 32 §3802 and 3832, beginning this fiscal year to exempt in whole the property owned by Regional Ambulance Service Inc., a nonprofit organization, from real property taxes for a period not to exceed 10 years.” Motion made by Chet seconded by Dick Daley. Motion approved unanimously. Discussion on Regional Ambulance annual budget request.
- c. **2025-26 Certificate of Highway Mileage** – No changes this year. Motion made by Chet seconded by Dick Daley to approve and sign the Annual Certificate of Highway Mileage. Motion approved.
- d. **Adoption of Ethics Investigation and Enforcement Ordinance** – The Statewide Municipal Code of Ethics - Act 171 became law on June 10, 2024 and changes the ethical regulatory landscape for municipalities. It removes municipal authority to enact conflict of interest prohibitions tailored to address the specific needs, concerns, size, and values of their municipalities and replaces that authority with a new, top-down, one size fits all, statewide Municipal Code of Ethics. VLCT has a model ordinance and Mary Ann suggests she will serve as the Ethics Liaison to the State Ethics Commission. Motion made by Chet seconded by Dick to adopt the Ethics Investigation and Enforcement Ordinance and appoint Mary Ann as the Ethics Liaison to the State Ethics Commission. Motion approved unanimously.

The warrant orders were approved and signed.

**Board Member Concerns:**

John Center – question on whether the churches can bring in the homeless. It would be against fire code to house them in addition to a change of use.

Chet Brown – Do our new highway drivers have a CDL? Wes has his permit and will take the test, Dave will need to take the class.

Dick Daley – announced he will not run for another Selectman term. He has served on and off for over 40 years and feels it is time for some new candidates. The group thanked Dick for his many years of service and wished him well in his retirement

**Adjournment:** Dick Daley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56pm and John Center seconded. Motion approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Ann Goulette