



### **CHITTENDEN UNIT FOR SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS (CUSI) FY'24 BUDGET REQUEST**

Vickie Rathgeb was present for CUSI. CUSI is charged with investigating sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, human trafficking, and child fatalities in Chittenden County. During COVID, the number of cases decreased because mandate reporters, such as teachers, were not seeing children. Now that children have returned to school their cases have increased. CUSI is funded by financial or in-kind contributions made by municipalities in Chittenden County. In-kind contributions are those where a municipality can provide an officer for investigations. Municipalities who do not contribute an officer pay a financial contribution based on the population of that town/city. Funding is critical to sustain the important work they do. CUSI is requesting \$3,090 which is \$100 less than the current fiscal year. There were three investigations in Westford last year and there are four sex offenders residing in town.

### **WINOOSKI NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT (WNRCD) FY'24 BUDGET REQUEST**

Adelaide Dumm from WNRCD was present. WNRCD works with landowners and farmers to control erosion, nutrient management plans, and promote sustainable uses of natural resources. The Town of Westford has benefited from some of the projects funded by the WNRCD, such as tree plantings along the Browns River. Ninety percent of their funding comes from grants with remaining funding from an annual tree sale and town contributions. WNRCD is requesting \$500.

### **VERMONT FAMILY NETWORK FY'24 BUDGET REQUEST**

Clair Giroux-Williams from the Vermont Family Network (VFN) was present. VFN is a statewide organization whose purpose is to empower Vermont children, youth, and families, especially those with special health needs. They served 355 families in Chittenden County, one of which lives in Westford. VFN uses population data to determine the amount requested. Their request of Westford is \$500.

### **SUMMER CONCERTS FY'24 BUDGET REQUEST**

Michael Kirick was not present. It was noted that his request is for \$2,000. Vicky stated the Library may have a lead on funding that can be used for concerts.

### **WESTFORD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT (WVFD) FY'24 BUDGET REQUEST**

Steve Willard, Westford Fire Chief, was present. WVFD is requesting \$49,000, which is level funded for the third year in a row. The department is facing challenges similar to those around the state; they are shorthanded and are having difficulty finding volunteers. Most departments are compensating their personnel. WVFD feel that they may attract more people if they use this model which, of course, will add an expense to their operating budget. Although though there have been increases in volunteers, the number is well below the minimum preferred.

### **WESTFORD LIBRARY FY'24 BUDGET REQUEST**

Bree Drapa, Pat Hechmer, and Vicky Ross from the Library were present. Bree advised that the Library has become interwoven into the fabric of Westford, partnering with organizations and groups. The library is busy with organizations and groups using the Library for meetings as well as a high volume of checking out physical and digital materials. The past year a Library Assistant was hired and nine hours of time were added to the hours the library is open. Vicky advised that the Library has been successful in obtaining grants and generating revenue through donations and fundraising. The balance in their reserve fund has decreased significantly due to some work done to the building. Per the Vermont Statutes, the Library is not permitted to charge for their services.

The Library is requesting \$89,828, which is approximately 10% higher than the current budget. While the Library appreciates the Selectboard's desire to keep the tax burden as low as possible, they believe this increase is in the best interest of the Library.

#### **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR FY'24 BUDGET REQUEST**

Harmony Cism, Zoning Administrator was present. This is the first year that the Zoning Administrator and Planning Assistant position will be submitting a budget. She is requesting \$33,098 which reflects the hours that she works and a cost of living adjustment.

#### **TOWN CLERK FY'24 BUDGET REQUEST**

Callie Hamdy, Town Clerk, was present. She is requesting \$49,378, which is a decrease from the current budget due to reorganization of the office. This includes a cost of living adjustment for her and her assistant as well as budgeting for a new computer. She is proposing \$2,520 for elections. This is a decrease from the current year due to fewer elections taking place.

#### **TOWN TREASURER FY'24 BUDGET REQUEST**

Greg Barrows, Treasurer, was present. He is requesting \$15,807 which is an increase from the current year. The increase reflects the purchase of a new computer and a 3% salary increase. All other items are level funded.

#### **UPDATE ON PLANNING COMMISSION PROJECTS**

George Lamphere from the Planning Commission (PC) was present. It has been a long year on the wastewater project because of the loss of Green Mountain Engineering which invalidated the contracts the Town has with the state. Stone Environmental has agreed to pick up the project however there is no contract mechanism in place yet. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has failed to meet expectations due to being under resourced. However, a new reviewer is on board and things are moving forward. The PC hopes to check off a lot of milestones through the rest of this year and into January. Once the public comment period ends November 14, the facility plan can be completed. This will enable Step 1 and Step 2 reimbursements to be closed out. They are hoping to have a revised Step 2 with Stone Environmental in December. Things are looking positive, but they are not where PC wants them to be.

The PC discussed the feedback from the ARPA committee regarding the application the PC submitted. The PC will be prepared to answer questions and discuss the request at an upcoming Selectboard meeting. They hope some of the local ARPA funds could fund certain tasks they had not been able to do with the engineers and consultants. The PC feels the use of local ARPA dollars could be allowed and that a town wide vote on the use of those dollars is not what they were meant for. They recognize the significance of the amount they are asking for.

Independent of how the Selectboard feels about the wastewater project the PC feels strongly that a member of the Selectboard should be participating in meetings with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The state and other agencies have committed more than \$3 million dollars, plus countless time and resources to the wastewater project and are accustomed to working with elected officials. The PC feels it would be wise to have a Selectboard member there. Lee asked what purpose would be served by Selectboard members attending technical meetings, etc. He feels the PC is the correct venue for handling it. George feels there is more to it than the technical part of it; it is a big project, it's a lot of money, it's quite a process. He thinks that the Selectboard would benefit by having somebody

at the table and thinks it is good optically for these agencies to see that there is an interest in the project. Bill also did not feel members of the Selectboard need to attend the DEC meetings.

Dave asked what the rationale of using local ARPA funds to fund some of the projects to advance the wastewater to a point of an informed vote versus using some of the State ARPA funds. George explained that close to \$3 million of the funding is from State ARPA money. The PC is pursuing concurrently additional funding to be added to the State ARPA funds.

Something that is frustrating for the PC is that the community has a lot of questions on how the system will work, ledge, etc. The PC would like to pay the consultants to do the work or hold meetings to describe some of this. This is not possible until the new contracts are in place, Stone Environmental signs on, and there is State approval.

The idea of using local ARPA dollars would allow us to check some of those boxes and not wait until January or February. From a funding standpoint he does not feel personally that the project is at risk because of availability of funds, it is just the timing of funds.

The PC is in the process of closing out the 1705 project. Town staff are working with CCRPC, BCRD, and project engineers to finalize the revised scope of work. The website will be updated with a webinar that summarizes the project as well as some of the accomplishments that were made. Unless one of the partners decides to re-engage, the PC is done; and it was a good project and a good effort.

The Selectboard asked the PC to respond to a resident's request to evaluate effects on traffic patterns in Westford if wastewater moves forward. Residents have overall concerns on speed and safety on town roads. The PC discussed it at a recent meeting and are drafting a response.

Lee conversed with Seth Jensen about traffic speed on several problem roads. It seemed that Seth may have access to more data about traffic volume and speeds on the through roads. Lee asked George to see if Seth can provide that data.

#### **KIOSK FOR SCHULTZ TRAIL AT MACHIA HILL ROAD END**

Sarah Pinto from the Conservation Commission was present. The Conservation Commission asked if they could proceed with putting up a kiosk on the Machia Hill end of the Schultz Trail. Sarah explained this was more of a poke because the question had been asked before about putting one up and the answer was it was still in discussion. There are very tasteful kiosks for Seymour Trail, Underhill end of the Goodrich Trail, Schultz end of the Schultz Trail as well as trails in Maple Shade Forest and Misty Meadows. This is a crucial kiosk because it would give instruction and direction to both the Schultz Trail and Goodrich Trail. The Commission feel this meets the concerns of the landowners because it would provide better communication at the trail head for users and emphasize many things that would address the abutter's concerns.

Ben Bornstein, landowner, was present. He thinks they need to be careful not to impose a burden on any single property owner. He thinks many of the issues that the landowners are facing are also problems on trails on town land. He believes Goodrich Trail can accommodate a lot more people and it is much more established. Ben has worked with Dale Rodgers several times maintaining that trail.

Kati and Jim Anderson, landowners, were present. There are a lot of very visible signs on the Machia Hill end. Is a kiosk better or different? Are all these different things needed? Or is there something in between? Before they move ahead with kiosks the Andersons had hoped would be to address some of their past concerns. If the kiosk ends up to being the best way to convey that information, then that is a conversation to have.

Lee is not sure how one is supposed to communicate to users of Schultz Trail what the rules are if the rules aren't posted where the users will see them. It is one thing to complain that people behave badly, but it is the Town's obligation to tell people what the rules are and to encourage people to behave. If a kiosk is not on both ends of the trail, how are users accessing from the Machia Hill end know they are passing through private property, where to park car, to pick up after their dog, etc. The Andersons were concerned what the scope would be in the end.

Lee explained that the need for the kiosk was kicked off because of a complaint from a property owner and the Conservation Commission was trying to find a solution. The Andersons wanted to know how much signage is needed at the end of a trail. Sarah agreed that it is a bit too busy on that end of Schultz Trail with all the signage and believes a kiosk will help clean up the area and make things clearer. The Conservation Commission had talked about putting up two Kiosks, one to direct people to Goodrich, but she thinks only one with both could work. There is no place to put one for Goodrich that is visible.

Kati is nervous about the idea of only one kiosk and directing people to Goodrich Trail because it is not uncommon for people to use their driveway despite the Andersons' efforts. She does not know if signage for Goodrich will be helpful down by the Schultz trailhead. Sarah feels with a kiosk they can provide a map and give clear instructions for users, which could include something about the private driveway.

Sarah reiterated that the attraction and public use of trails is the mission statement of the Conservation Commission to encourage use of Westford resources. If someone wants to call it an advertisement it is, it is their job. Lee explained that the Town is trying to find a way forward so the Town and the property owner can continue to enjoy their rights. Dave feels the kiosk is trying to take a positive step to help the property owner with the issues and clean up the extra signage. Dave also lives near a town trail and the kiosk is both attractive and has helped mitigate issues. It is not meant to be a burden.

Bill noted that offering the Goodrich Trail, which is longer, as an alternative on the kiosk map may redirect users and take some of the pressure away. Lee asked if the Conservation Commission could put together a proposal for what the kiosk would look like, the information it would contain and the location for the property owners to review. Sarah confirmed that was possible. When the plan is done it will be on a future agenda.

#### **IT MANAGED SERVICES PROPOSALS**

The Town's contract with VTC Tech expires the end of December. Nanette received seven proposals in response to an RFP. Two of the companies are located in Vermont and the others are out of state. The per month cost ranges from \$1,310 to \$290,000 per month.

Empire Consultants, Tech Group (from Vermont), Virtual Armor, VTC Tech, the Town's current provider were present. The vendors provided a brief summary of their business and proposal. Nanette stated that although Tech Group's proposal is less and they could likely provide a

good service, she would prefer the Town remain with VTC Tech based on the service provided in the past ten years and the positive relationship town office staff have with their staff. Callie concurred. Greg stated he would choose Tech Group. VTC Tech's monthly cost for a five-year contract, without the licenses is \$1,588. Tech Group's monthly cost for remote and onsite services, which is what the Town currently receives, and without licenses is \$1,452.

The Board would like to mull this over and make a decision at their next meeting.

#### **APPLICATION FOR WESTFORD'S REPRESENTATIVE ON CCRPC**

Ben Bornstein agreed to become Westford's representative for CCRPC. The board agreed that Ben would be an excellent representative for CCRPC. Bill motioned to assigned Ben to the CCRPC seat. Dave seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE**

Lee noted that the Selectboard got a note from Joe Franz about Maple Tree Lane and traffic on Woods Hollow Road as well as the question would a plausible buildup of the Town Common push traffic onto adjoining roads for thru purposes. The PC is working on that data. The Selectboard decided not to do a traffic study until next year due to the pending winter which will skew data.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

Nanette will contact the CCRPC about the traffic study.

#### **FY'23 GENERAL FUND STATUS REPORT**

Greg Barrows, Treasurer, went over the FY'23 General Budget Fund Status Report.

#### **ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND PAYROLL WARRANTS**

Greg Barrows, Treasurer, went over the Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants. The board signed the warrants.

#### **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee McClenny, Chair  
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy  
Minute Clerk

**GUEST LIST**

Ben Bornstein  
Sheila Franz  
Scott  
Harmony Cism  
Kati Anderson  
Anthony P  
Vickie Rathgeb  
Adelaide Dumm  
Claire Giroux-Williams  
Barb Peck  
Steve Willard  
Pat Hechmer  
Vicky Ross  
Bree Drapa  
George Lamphere  
Sarah Pinto  
Lori Johnson  
Jim Anderson  
David Mahoney  
Josh Peppin  
Brian  
Wolder

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.**  
**ROAD SCHEDULE**  
**October 28, 2022 – November 10, 2022**

Work to be done

- Grade roads when weather permits.
- Service (oil and filter changes) on the remaining equipment.
- Work on the screen.

Work completed

- Graded Old Stage Road, Rollin Irish Road, most of Old #11 Road, ~~lower Covey Road.~~
- Made repairs to Stoney Ridge and Machia Hill Road.
- Ditched a section on the south end of Old Stage Road.
- Service on the Loader and JD 75 (oil and filter changes)
- Munson changed the 2 culverts on Old Stage Road.
- Heritage Tree Service cut the trees and brush back on the south end of Old Stage Road.
- Hauled in a few loads of road gravel.

Approved at the 11/10/22 Selectboard Meeting.