

SPECIAL SELECTBOARD MEETING
July 11, 2023
Minutes

Present:	Lee McClenny Bill Cleary Dave Baczewski	Nanette Rogers Greg Barrows John Roberts
Guests:	Lori Johnson	Louise Jensen

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held in person.

CHANGES TO AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

FY'24 MUNICIPAL TAX RATE

Nanette and Greg advised that they were unable to level fund the municipal tax rate as estimated in the budget presented in the Town Report due to overestimating the Grand List value. Using the numbers in the town report with the actual Grand List, the tax rate was calculated at \$0.7145, which is a \$0.0204 increase over the estimated tax rate of \$0.6941. For property valued at \$400,000, the annual increase in property taxes would be \$84.60 and \$40.80 for property valued at \$200,000. According to the financial reports for FY'23, the Town ended the year with a \$155,812 surplus. Nanette and Greg pointed out that this is an unaudited amount. It was noted that the Town has a positive fund balance from prior tax years as well.

Nanette and Greg explained that to level fund the tax rate, the Board would need to utilize approximately \$91,770 of the fund balance, which is \$73,270 more than noted in the budget in the Town Report. The Board would like to reduce the tax impact by finding an agreeable amount. After working the numbers, the Board was advised that if the amount to be used to reduce taxes is increased from \$18,500 to \$89,500, the rate drops to \$0.7049. This would reduce the tax impact by approximately half. The Board felt this was a good compromise.

Bill Cleary made a motion to set the FY'24 municipal tax rate at \$0.7049 per \$100 of assessed value, which is based on utilizing \$89,500 from the fund balance in combination with the budget approved by the voters and the 2023 Grand List, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0.

It was noted that the residential education tax rate by the State of Vermont for 2023 is \$1.600, which is slightly more than the 2022 rate, and the non-residential rate is \$1.7065, which is slightly less than the 2022 rate.

REQUEST FOR BOUNCY HOUSE ON TOWN COMMON FOR AN EVENT

The Westford Country Store & Café and the Butcher Barn are wondering if the Town will reconsider allowing a bouncy house on the common during the July 14 Community Event. An email was submitted by Lori Johnson, a member of the Common Committee, pointing out that these types of structures are not allowed per the Town Common Policy due to liability

concerns and possible damage to the grass. If the Selectboard allows the bouncy house, it will be an exception to the policy. If allowed, electricity will be needed. The only location on the common with electricity is the gazebo. Also, due to the presence of the drainage system under the common, Lori stated that no driving should occur on the common. If the company cannot move the house onto the common to access electricity without driving on the common, then she feels the request should be denied.

The Board would like to find a way to approve the request. After some discussion, the Board felt that if the Westford Country Store and Butcher Barn can address the liability concern by submitting a Certificate of Insurance listing the Town of Westford as an additional insured, limit the amount of time the house will be erected, and no driving on the common, then the Board is fine with approving the bouncy house.

Lee McClenny made a motion to authorize a bouncy house being erected on the town common for the July 14 Community Event being sponsored by the Westford Country Store & Café and Butcher Barn providing they can meet the Town's concerns regarding liability insurance coverage, limiting the time the house is on the grass, and there being no driving on the common, seconded by Bill Cleary. Motion passed: 3-0. Nanette will advise Erin at the Country Store of the Board's decision.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:57 p.m., Bill Cleary made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a matter of personnel, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0. Those in attendance were Lee McClenny, Dave Baczewski, Bill Cleary, Nanette Rogers, and John Roberts. The Board exited Executive Session at 8:15 p.m. No action taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee McClenny, Chair
Selectboard

Nanette Rogers
Town Administrator