

**Bellows Falls Village Trustees Regular Meeting**  
Tuesday, November 10, 2015

Present: Nancy McAuliffe, Colin James, Stefan Golec, Sanford Martin  
Absent: Evelyn Weeks

Also Present: Willis D. Stearns, II, Municipal Manager; Kerry Bennett, Village Clerk; Douglas MacPhee; Deborah Wright; Wade Masure; Chief Connors, Charlestown Police Department; Philip Tirrell, SWNH Chief; Steve Neill & Art Grenier, Charlestown Selectboard

Press: Joey Powers & Kerye Hale, FACT8; Nancy Cavanaugh, Eagle Times

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Nancy McAuliffe.

Additions to the Agenda for Routine Administrative Matters and/or Pressing Matters that will require ratification at a future meeting: None

Approve Minutes of October 13, 2015: *Stefan Golec made the motion to approve the minutes of October 13, 2015 as printed. Motion was seconded by Sanford Martin. Motion passed unanimously.*

Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda: (3 minutes per person): None

Manager's Report: None

Agenda:

1. **Mutual Aid Agreement:** Charlestown Police Chief Connors was present to address the Board's concerns and answer questions. Stearns noted that the request for this agreement has come from Charlestown's decision to drop out of the Southwestern Mutual Aid organization. Stearns also noted that one of the concerns was the increased cost to the remaining members due to this decision. Stearns also noted that the agreement sets limitations on Bellows Falls as far as billing for services. Stearns did state that whether or not this agreement is signed, Bellows Falls Fire will respond if requested.

A lengthy discussion followed between Charlestown Police Chief Connors, Southwestern Mutual Aid Chief Philip Tirrell and the Board. Items discussed were Charlestown's reasons for leaving SWNH, Tirrell explaining the rationale behind the by-law changes to no longer allow non-dispatch departments as members, ambulance dispatch for various towns, and cost increases associated with these decisions. Resident Wade Masure encouraged the Board to not sign this agreement unless language was changed to allow Bellows Falls to recoup its costs. Connors stated that Charlestown responds to Bellows Falls as often as Bellows Falls responds to Charlestown at no charge. MacPhee asked if the frequency of Bellows Falls response would increase due to Bellows Falls' full time status causing additional expense to Bellows Falls and would this raise Bellows Falls higher on the run cards. Connors stated that Bellows Falls was already very high on the run cards and always has been and stated that this would not change.

After over an hour of discussion, the Board decided to table this again and to place this as an agenda item on the next regular Joint Board Meeting scheduled for March 2016.

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2. Updates

a) Water Project

- Approve & Execute RF3-308-2 Amendment 2: Stearns explained that this amendment will take the project to the full \$8.2 million and it is expected that \$50,000 of this will be forgiven. Stearns also noted that this is subject to change. Stearns noted that the complete document was distributed tonight to the Board and there are documents to be signed by the Board as a whole, the Village President, the Village Clerk and the Village Treasurer. *Sanford Martin made the motion that the Board approve and execute RFD-308-2 Amendment as presented and also authorize the Village President, the Village Clerk and the Village Treasurer to sign the appropriate documents as indicated. Motion was seconded by Colin James. Motion passed unanimously.*

Stearns then gave the Board an update on the projects. School Street/Henry Street final walk through will be done this Friday with Hadley, Oak & Chase hopefully being done in the Spring 2016.

Golec asked about the status of the sidewalk at the north end. Stearns stated that this is a Town of Rockingham item. Golec asked why. Stearns stated that the Village Trustees had turned over all highway and sidewalks to the Town several years ago. However, Stearns stated that this will be addressed in the Spring.

- b) Wastewater Project: Stearns stated that a meeting was held today and commended Wastewater Chief Operator Rob Wheeler on his expertise and input. Stearns stated that this project will be going out to bid and to expect a bond anticipation note for approval at the next meeting. Martin asked Stearns to relay the Board's thanks to Wheeler for his skills and attention to this project.

Stearns also informed the Board that 226,000 gallons of septic was dumped at the Wastewater Facility in the month of October making this the highest recorded amount.

- c) Route 5 (Atkinson Street) – State project: Stearns noted that all the side streets and driveways were scheduled to be completed today with signage still to be completed. MacPhee asked that Stearns have someone check the driveway ramps that were done today as it appeared to him that they looked rushed and uneven. Stearns will convey this to the Highway Superintendent.
- d) Unsafe Buildings: Nothing new to report. Water has been shut off at 25 Hapgood and 3 Pine.

3. Finance Office – C. Stearns

a) FY2016 YTD Budget Status:

- Stearns noted that the Fire/Police Facility roof should be completed this week. MacPhee asked if the Village was able to recoup any funds from the failed roof. Stearns stated that the roof was installed in 2002 and had a 25 year guarantee. There was a lawsuit but claims had to be filed by 2006 and the Village was not part of that suit.

- Stearns noted that taxes were due today.
  - Stearns stated that a \$42,000 check was received today from New England Power to clear up its delinquent water/sewer bill. James noted that there are numerous accounts that have high delinquent balances and asked if there is anything that can be done. Stearns stated that some are in bankruptcy and there is nothing that we can do about those at this point. However, Stearns did state that we can take some to small claims court.
- b) FY2015 Audit: Stearns noted that he has received the draft audit and has responded with questions. There were no findings and it appears that the Village has a \$200,000 surplus. Stearns stated that he hopes to have the final audit by the Board's next meeting.
- c) Discuss FY2017 Budget : McAuliffe stated that she put this on the agenda to see what the Board would like to do about scheduling budget meetings. Stearns noted that the general fund is just about done with the exception of the Fire & Police which should be completed by the end of this week. The Board scheduled a meeting for Saturday, December 5 at 8:00 a.m.
4. Trustee Items
- a) Property Access Request for Soil Conditions: Included in the Board packets was a request from State of Vermont for soil samples at the Recreation field. Stearns noted that this originally came to the Town but he has informed them that the land is owned by the Village. *Colin James made the motion to grant permission to the State of Vermont for access to the Recreation Field owned by the Bellows Falls Village Corporation for the collection of soil samples for a survey in response to recent General Assembly legislation. Motion was seconded by Sanford Martin. Motion passed unanimously.*

Overtime & Comp Time Reports: No concerns.

Review Fire Dept & Police Dept Call Logs: McAuliffe noted that she had recently asked if medical calls were costing the Village and would like to know what types of calls necessitate "call back time" and "detail". Stearns stated that he will request this information from the Fire Department.

Review Agenda Items for Next Regular Trustees Meeting – December 8, 2015:

- FY2016 Budget Status
- FY2017 Budget Discussion
- FY2015 Audit
- Award Bond Anticipation Note

Review Agenda Items for Joint Board Meeting – March 29, 2015:

- Mutual Aid Agreement with Charlestown Fire Department

Approve Orders, Bills and Warrants: *Colin James made the motion to approve the orders, bills and warrants as presented. Motion was seconded by Sanford Martin. Motion passed unanimously.*

Other Business:

- James noted that there are numerous cars in the municipal parking lots that do not have the current sticker and there are 2 vehicles in the Hetty Green Lot that have been there for a lengthy period of time with flat tires. Stearns will let Chief Lake know about this.
- Golec asked if something could be put on the website about the parking ban.
- Golec noted that the K9 unit does not yet have a vest. Stearns stated that he believes there are funds available and will look into this.
- McAuliffe reminded everyone that donations to the K9 program and the Adopt-an-Angel program are always accepted.
- Stearns stated that applications for the Adopt-an-Angel program are available at the Bellows Falls Police Department
- Stearns also noted that the Town Hall has joined the Green Light for Vets program noting that green lights have been put in all the windows to honor our veterans. The American Legion Post 37 will hold its annual Veterans Day Parade tomorrow beginning at 6:00 pm.

Executive Session: No executive session was necessary.

Adjourn: *Sanford Martin made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. Motion was seconded by Stefan Golec. Motion passed unanimously.*

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kerry Bennett, Village Clerk