Town of Panton Chartered 1761

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Selectboard Budget Meeting Minutes (amended)
Thursday, November 18, 2024

In attendance: Selectboard Chair Howard Hall, Selectboard Vice-Chair Teresa Boucher, Road Foreman Rick Cloutier, Robert Moulton, Janice Moulton, Nick Jackson, Dave Rheaume, David Miner, Thomas Saltus, Mary Rudd, Steve Weber, Terry Pelletier, Richard Jackson, Jeanne Jackson, Cindy Cooke, Charles Kennett, Kathy Kennett, John Viskup, M'Lissa Dayton, Kevin Cooke

1. Howard called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Additions/deletions to the agenda: Teresa made a motion to add the hiring of a new town clerk to the agenda. Howard seconded. Approved. Teresa also made a motion to remove Maggie McCormick as a signatory on Panton bank accounts at National Bank of Middlebury and Community Bank. Seconded by Howard. Approved. Teresa made a motion to add Rebekah "Becky" Condon as a signatory on Panton accounts held at National Bank of Middlebury and Community Bank until a new clerk-treasurer starts. Howard seconded. Approved. Finally, Teresa made a motion that current assistant clerk, Donna Oliver, be signatory and administrator of Panton accounts held at National Bank of Middlebury and Community Bank. Howard seconded. Approved.

3. Public Comment
    a. Howard commented that Sam Hillman at Telling & Hillman, the group that has done our audit for the past several years, contacted us and is unable to help us this year. Mr. Telling is very ill so they are short-staffed. She willing to provide a letter explaining that it is not the town's fault. We will need an accountant to review our books and an auditor to approve them in preparation for Town Meeting. VLCT will assist us with next steps.
    b. Kathy Kennett asked if a PA system has been added to the budget for next year. Teresa said it has not yet been done but will be included in the list. Kathy also asked about the digitization reserve fund. We have gone back 50

years and the expense came out of ARPA funds. A question was raised about the background check process. Howard said we are working with the Vergennes Police to do a Vermont review for the new hire. Vermont does not use the system that would provide a country-wide investigation. We are also considering whether the town clerk should be bonded. Kathy Kennett thought the town clerk must be bonded.

4. Working Budget Session
    a. Rick Cloutier reviewed the budget estimates for the Highway department. There was discussion of needs that should be prioritized.
    b. There was a brief discussion of the police coverage we have in town and the amount we are paying.
    c. The situation regarding the audit was also reviewed. Telling & Hillman is unable to do the audit. Becky Condon will provide accounting services to create the town report which will be reviewed by a CPA. This has been discussed with VLCT. Panton is not alone in this situation.
    d. Selectboard confirmed they will review the budget line by line to reduce expenses as much as possible.
    e. Next budget meeting will be held on Monday, December 2nd, 5:30 p.m. Zach will be gone all week.

5. Teresa made a motion to confirm an offer has been made to a new town clerk. Howard seconded. Approved.

6. Adjournment

Teresa made a motion to adjourn. Howard seconded. All in favor; the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna L. Oliver
Assistant Town Clerk