

**Town of Fletcher  
Select Board Meeting  
Fletcher Town Offices  
December 20, 2021**

Selectboard Members Present: Jon Bondy (chair), Matt Gillilan (Road Commissioner), Rich Bidwell, Matt Swartz, and Bruce Douglas (recorded minutes)

Town Officials: Karrie Sweet, Town Clerk; and Tara Sweet, School Board Chair

1. Meeting began at 7:00pm
2. Budget for Town Report Part I
  - a. Karrie Sweet participated in a discussion of the FY2023 Town budget. As the budget was discussed she answered questions page by page. There was a need to research how much the Broadband Administrator will need in salary. Jon will follow up on this. Need to add cost for Fairfax & Cambridge fire and rescue. Matt G. will follow up with each for final numbers. Newsletter Expenses were used for 2021 Town Meeting informational mailing – need policy for that in the future. There is a need to increase heat and electricity for the Town Office due to rising rates.
3. Public Input – Town Meeting
  - a. Tara Sweet relayed that she talked to school superintendent about having an in-person Town Meeting, and relayed the following information regarding the school:
    - i. Everyone would have to be masked in the gym.
    - ii. Food can be served in kitchen, but those who buy or bring food would have to eat in the library without masks. Classrooms could also be opened for people to eat.
  - b. Tara informed the board that VTDigger recently had an article on the topic of whether selectboards will be able to have choice of either Meeting in Person, postponing the meeting until warmer weather to meet outside or vote by Australian ballot. The legislature would decide early in session most likely in the first two weeks – by January 17<sup>th</sup>. Bruce stated that if the decision is to have an in-person meeting, he would say no food service to avoid eating and talking together without masks.
  - c. Discussion by the Selectboard. Jon pointed out that we are in a spike and likely to have an issue with meeting in person. Matt G stated that he likes in person meetings and hates masks . It was agreed that the Selectboard will need to make a decision depending on Legislature actions. Jon will keep in touch with School board between now and then. A straw pole was based on the assumption that a decision would be made based on what we know about COVID spike today. The outcome of the straw poll was three in favor of Australian ballot and two in favor of in person meeting
4. Tara Sweet and Karrie Sweet left the meeting
5. Budget – Part II
  - a. Jon asked Matt G to forward draft road budget to Karrie.
  - b. Salary of road crew was discussed. The Road Foreman – works 7-3 M-F for base salary. According to Matt S, Fletcher’s Road Foreman’s salary similar to Towns of Cambridge and Fairfax. Matt S. recommended performance-based incentives for pay increases. Rich pointed out that our road crew may be under paid relative to other towns; that we need to be competitive if someone leaves or retires; and we should be looking around in town for future employees, possibly a part-time person. Board discussed a possible 5% across the board raises for next year.
  - c. Road Equipment was discussed. Matt S. said that the ‘07 International maintenance cost is adjusted as we may not have it all of next year. We only need this to get through this winter – in summer it is used to hold the chloride tank.

- d. Matt S asked about leasing vehicles. Matt G responded that lease results in lower payment but no equity. Leasing a truck is similar to an automotive lease, where wear and tear could cost money at the end of the lease. Matt G pointed out that right now we do not have good trade in vehicles. The current plan is to buy a truck every 2-3 years, for the near future, and hold trucks for 7 years to minimize need for repairs on old trucks. Matt G pointed out that once the Grader is paid for the loader will be the next big piece of equipment to replace.
  - e. Other aspects of the draft road were discussed. Matt G pointed out that the cost of diesel is increasing. We currently get vehicle fuel from Abba. The road crew is managing temperature in garage better and therefore saving money on the heating fuel. There was a discussion of road salt, including a comparison of the amount of road salt applied, compared to other towns. Paving/Rebuild – Matt G estimates that it will cost about \$100,000 for middle section of Buck Hollow Road. Matt G will add a line item for that cost.
  - f. Additional Discussion of Town Vehicles. Matt G said that we could zero out the previous loan for '07 Truck and '03 budget and add a new line for the new truck (2023 International), which will have an annual loan payment of approximately \$34,000. The Town will make last payment on 2020 International next July (2022). Matt G will talk with Karrie to confirm annual payment for 2020 in the budget.
6. Road Report – The Selectboard briefly discussed whether the town should have a policy on road maintenance.
  7. Broadband progress – no new information was presented.
  8. Status of Metcalf Pond water level, grate, ledges, parking, posts – no new information was presented,
  9. Public input – there were no public in either remote or in person attendance at end of meeting
  10. Next meetings – every week in January. Need to send report to printer on February 1<sup>st</sup>
  11. Meeting Adjourned at 9:29 pm.

Jon Bondy, Chair

Matt Gillilan

Rich Bidwell

Matthew Swartz

Bruce Douglas