

VILLAGE OF LYNDONVILLE
TRUSTEES MINUTES
October 21, 2019
5:30 PM

Trustees

Chris Hunter
Sarah Whittemore
Doug Conly
Heather Bollman
Susan Mills

Press

Public

Justin Smith
Steve Gray

1. Chris Hunter called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM.
2. Adjustments to the Agenda: None
3. Minutes: Sarah Whittemore noted that one sentence relating to Dawn Dwyer administering the oath to her appeared to be left in the minutes for Oct 7th from the previous meeting held on September 23rd, 2019. Sarah Whittemore noting the one change made a motion to approve the minutes from October 7th, 2019. Chris Hunter seconded, and the motion carried 5-0.
4. Sign the Orders: The Board signed the orders.
5. Quarterly Report: The Board discussed the 3rd quarter report. The Municipal Administrator explained that the winter was tough to start 2019 so a mild fall would be helpful to balance things out for 2019. Most of the line items appear to be about where they should be at 75% expended. Mr. Smith did caution that the highway project line was about to be withdrawn from as the paving projects wrap up, while the bottom line looks in really good shape right now, it will soon be falling more in line with where we are in the budget year as paving bills will come due. The Board asked why the public utilities line was over budget and Mr. Smith explained that the clock maintenance had been put into this line and that the Village Treasurer, Dawn Dwyer was going to create a separate line item to more accurately reflect that expense. Mr. Smith reminded the Board that the Catholic Church had generously offered to pay for half of the clock repair so there was some offsetting revenue to help cover that expenditure. Mr. Smith said that the summer portion of the budget will close on October 31st, 2019, which is when we return to the winter budgets to finish out the year. The Board asked Mr. Smith if the Village Crew was back to five, eight-hour days. Mr. Smith said the Crew changes back the first week of November. Susan Mills asked what the hours were when the crew is on 10-hour days. Mr. Smith replied the hours were 6 AM until 4:30 PM with a ½ hour lunch break. Sue Mills then asked what the crew does in the dark at 6AM? The rest of the Board agreed that Mr. Smith should check into this to determine when the lack of daylight would begin to effect work at 6 AM. Mr. Smith said that he would check into this and determine when sunrise started to come at 6:30 AM, he felt that ½ hour before sunrise provided enough light for working.
6. Utility Partners Contract Discussion: The Municipal Administrator, Justin Smith re-visited the Utility Partners contract which he had provided the Board for review prior to the last meeting. Mr. Smith explained that he had requested the contract in advance so that the Board had time to consider the new figure for the 2020 budget. The current contract will expire on March 31, 2020. Mr. Smith provided the service contract along with the new proposed contract terms so that the Board could see in detail what the is covered by the contract. Mr. Smith also provided documentation of a second option for having Utility Partners take over as the operator of the Village of Lyndonville water system. Mr. Smith asked the Board if they were prepared to discuss the contract and reach a decision. The Board asked when the decision needed to be made. Mr. Smith explained that the contract runs through March 31, 2020, that it was important to have the number ready for the budget which would need to be completed prior to the water contract running out. Mr. Smith re-stated Doug Conly's concerns regarding the inclusion of a

minimum increase (a floor to the contract). Mr. Conly had expressed his opinion at the last meeting that any living expenses or increases would be covered by the CPI, and any further additional salary increases should be found through efficiencies within the company, not through a minimum contract increase. His belief was that using CPI was the fairest way for all sides, regardless of whether the increase was high or modest to low. Doug Conly stated it just depends on what you want. If you want to know what the minimum or more importantly what the maximum would be the floor and ceiling contract make sense, but if you want to pay the cost of living then it makes sense to eliminate the floor and ceiling from the contract. Mr. Smith pointed out that he had discussed these issues with Jefferson Tolman from Utility Partners, specifically about doing a contract without a floor and ceiling. Mr. Tolman said they would be okay with a contract based on CPI only, but they would want to use CPI Boston instead of the CPI Northeast which Mr. Smith had requested. Mr. Smith once again went over the differences in the terms of the 3-year vs the 5-year contract. If the Village chose the 3-year option, the terms would be a minimum of a 2.5% increase and a maximum of a 5.5% increase while using CPI Northeast. If the 5-year contract were used the minimum increase would be 1.5% and the maximum would be 3.5% and again the CPI Northeast would be used. If the Village requested the contract without the minimum and maximum increase CPI Boston would be used. To help the Board understand the risk Mr. Smith said if the 5-year contract were used there were 3 occasions in the last 15 years where the CPI was less than 1.5% and 2 occasions where it was more than 3.5%. If the 3-year contract were used there were nine instances where the CPI was less than 2.5% and no instances where it was over 5.5%. Mr. Smith recommended that if the Board were interested in having the contract with a minimum and a maximum it would be wise to use the 5-year contract and not the 3 year. The other piece of the contract that the board needed to consider was the System Operator piece. If we wish to add Utility Partners as the system operator it would be an additional \$5,000.00. It would relieve a paperwork burden from the Public Works Department and free up time for the Public Works Supervisor to not have to oversee every project relating to the water system allowing for more time for other projects. Mr. Smith stated if we did go this route immediately there would be a stipend required for the remaining 5 months of the current contract. Heather Bollman asked if there were any other companies local to Vermont that offer these services. Mr. Smith said the owner of the other company that bid last time had passed away. There was a large price difference between the two companies with Utility Partners being considerably more affordable. Susan Mills felt the Board was ready to move forward and discuss the contract she made a motion to approve the 5-year contract with Utility Partners that includes the minimum (1.5%) and maximum (3.5%) increases annually, as well as Utility Partners taking over as the System Operator immediately for an additional charge. Sarah Whittemore seconded, and the motion carried 5-0. Mr. Smith said he would get a contract from Utility Partners to review, specifically the additional responsibilities to be covered and then he would sign the contract.

7. Winter Labor Discussion: Mr. Smith asked the Board how they would prefer to handle the winter hire position for the Village Crew. He explained that he had written the help wanted ad two different ways: One was for an on-call position which the Village has had very little luck filling in the past, and the second was for a 40 hour per week position for 22 weeks, similar to the summer hire position, except the 40 hours would need to be flexible for either night or day shifts depending on storms. The position would not be an overtime eligible position. Mr. Smith said his one concern with the 40-hour position is effectively using an extra employee if the weather is mild and there are no wintery conditions. He does not want someone sitting around because they were promised 40 hours. However, he added there are very few, if any people who are going to jump at an opportunity to be on-call 24-7 not knowing if they are going to work (and be paid), who will be willing to stay in town, not have a drink, etc. while waiting for their phone call. Doug Conly felt the Crew could use the help and it would be the Public Works Supervisor's responsibility to keep the seasonal hire busy on meaningful projects. Mr. Conly felt there were items we were falling behind on that could certainly be worked on if the weather was fair. Mr. Smith added that a fifth person had been requested the last two years and this would be a less expensive trial to see if enough additional work is being done to justify the fifth person. He felt there was no doubt that there was a need for help when the Village is getting slammed with weather, the four-person crew

works long hours and gets worn down. The issue really comes down to not having employees standing around with nothing to do if we have a stretch of good weather. Doug Conly made a motion to run the winter position as a 40-hour a week position with flexible hours that may include nights instead of days. The position would not be eligible for overtime without Trustees' consent. Sarah Whittemore seconded, and the motion carried 5-0.

8. Other:

- A. Justin Smith handed the Board the new nightly reporting procedure for the police officers that Chief Harris put in place.
- B. Mr. Smith provided the Board with correspondence from the Vermont Labor relations Board informing us of the results of the vote by the officers to unionize which passed 2-0. Mr. Smith stated there is a 10-day appeal period at which time the Town will likely be contacted by the Union.
- C. Mr. Smith made the Board aware that VLCT was able to reduce rates for the upcoming year on workman's comp and property and casualty by 5.4% and 1.7 % respectively.

Having no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM.