



GEORGIA VERMONT

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Selectboard Special Meeting Wednesday, January 17, 2024 Chris Letourneau Meeting Room and via Zoom Minutes

Zoom Details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6165843896?pwd=STduU2JzTmpiVmE1MXZSaWZWLzVadz09>

Meeting ID: 616 584 3896 | Passcode: 5243524

Dial by your Location: 1 929 205 6099 (New York)

1. CALL TO ORDER

- **Selectboard Present** – Devon Thomas Chair, Shannon Jenkins Vice-Chair, Carl Rosenquist, Nicholas Martin
- **Selectboard Zoom** – Jamie Comstock
- **Staff Present** – April Edwards, Dawn Penney, Doug Bergstrom
- **Staff Zoom** – Cheryl Letourneau
- **Public Present** – Ken Minck, Tom Hargy
- **At 4:05 p.m.** – D. Thomas called the meeting to order.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. CHAIR UPDATE

4. ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

- C. Rosenquist brought up seeing an issue from Bridget and asked about it. S. Jenkins said they want to advertise for a position but want to know what they are working with. D. Thomas asked if that relates to the budget discussion. S. Jenkins said yes, saying they wanted a number to work within. A. Edwards said when she spoke with the library, they told her the only people who were going to make money were Bridget and Valerie and they had not budgeted for anyone else. Discussion was had. N. Martin said they must stay within their budget. A. Edwards said she asked the library what they were supposed to budget for, and she was told just Bridget and Valerie. S. Jenkins read the email. D. Thomas said they need to get in touch with them to see what they want.

5. SELECTBOARD MINUTES AND WARRANTS

- A. Approval of Selectboard Regular Meeting Minutes for 01.03.2023 & 01.10.2023

- 34 • C. Rosenquist made a motion to approve 01.03.2024, N. Martin seconded. C. Rosenquist asked
 35 for an amount to be added on line 31 if available. All in favor, motion carried.
 36 • C. Rosenquist made a motion to approve 01.10.2024, N. Martin seconded. C. Rosenquist asked
 37 about the money reported for the Historical Society. J. Comstock clarified. All in favor, motion
 38 carried.

39 B. Approval of Warrants #36 & #37

- 40 • N. Martin made a motion to approve Warrant #36 in the amount of \$9,062.03, D. Thomas
 41 seconded. Discussion was had on loading the town website. S. Jenkins asked about the turnout
 42 gear. All in favor, motion carried.
 43 • N. Martin made a motion to approve Warrant # 37 totaling \$15,498.25. J. Comstock asked why
 44 the law enforcement is only \$319, it is usually larger. S. Jenkins asked who they report to. C.
 45 Rosenquist seconded. C. Letourneau said it may have been an underpayment because they
 46 missed invoicing us at some point. All in favor, motion carried.

47 **6. BOARD BUSINESS (Public comment on agenda items limited to 5 minutes)**

48 A. Budget Discussion and Revisions

- 49 • S. Jenkins asked about the ARPA funding list. J. Comstock wanted confirmation the \$1.9
 50 million was the proper starting number. A. Edwards said that is what she had. Discussion
 51 was had.
 52 • S. Jenkins asked about the rec funds building project. C. Rosenquist recalled a discussion
 53 on what to do at the beach on the pavilion. S. Jenkins if we had any concrete numbers. It is
 54 said they do not. They were allocating money.
 55 • S. Jenkins asked about the town office and well, asking if T. Cadieux came to us with the
 56 heating and the well as problems and is \$30,000 enough and is it urgent enough. C.
 57 Letourneau brought up the well to her. Discussion was had.
 58 • D. Bergstrom mentioned the \$25,000 for the development regulation rewrite, they had
 59 applied for grant and did not get it. N. Martin said we must pay for this. D. Bergstrom said
 60 yes. N. Martin said the board is going to have to decide where to pull that money from. J.
 61 Comstock asked if they had paid for that out of ARPA. D. Bergstrom said they paid for the
 62 town plan at \$35,000 out of ARPA. The rewrite goes hand in hand with that, after the town
 63 plan.
 64 • C. Rosenquist said we can take it from the community projects fund. N. Martin said they
 65 wanted to go to the town and ask them what they wanted to do and give priority to ones that
 66 will generate income.
 67 • N. Martin said they are still going to the voters for a \$1.3 million bond. Discussion was had.
 68 C. Rosenquist said he thought the bond was going to be \$1.5 million. Discussion was had.
 69 • N. Martin said bridge allocation goes down to \$275 and the extra \$25,000 is the planning
 70 development regulation rewrite.
 71 • C. Rosenquist questioned \$12,000 for wetlands asking if we thought it was going to be that
 72 much money. S. Jenkins said she thought they had to. Discussion was had.
 73 • C. Rosenquist said it was brought to his attention that we need to make an allocation of the
 74 last two payments of the state aid to highways account for blacktop that we received early
 75 for 2024 to make sure it goes into the proper account. The treasurer asked for \$81,053 to be
 76 moved into the reserve account which currently has \$12,400. That totals more than we
 77 thought. We need a motion for that to be done. C. Rosenquist moved we move the last two

78 payments from the state of \$81,053.53 into the highway paving reserve, D. Thomas
79 seconded.

- 80 • J. Comstock asked why this was not brought up in the past and if we just learned that this
81 had to be moved. A. Edwards reported recently speaking with the auditor asking if she
82 could just move it or if the selectboard needed to make a motion. They said the selectboard
83 needed to make a motion. J. Comstock said this could have been a request via email and he
84 asked why C. Rosenquist is the only one that knew about it. A. Edwards said she found this
85 out this afternoon. Discussion was had.
- 86 • All in favor, motion carried.
- 87 • S. Jenkins asked A. Edwards if she met with Bob. A. Edwards said she did not. S. Jenkins
88 asked for a time for them to meet with her. S. Jenkins asked the board when the deadline is
89 for them to meet. N. Martin said they are trying to close out the end of 2023 and if they do
90 not get their information then it will show that they are over budget. S. Jenkins confirmed
91 that is why she is asking what the deadline is. S. Jenkins said this needs to happen. N.
92 Martin said they can send it via email. S. Jenkins said they had tried, and A. Edwards said
93 she did not get it. A. Edwards said she has the information they have given her. They have
94 not given her specific journal entries. A. Edwards said she will reach out. N. Martin said
95 they are also still waiting for their write-up. S. Jenkins asked C. Letourneau if she reached
96 out to the library, she confirmed she did. She reported that they responded they will get it to
97 her, but she has yet to see anything. J. Comstock said if the library does not get back to
98 them then they will not have anything in the town report. S. Jenkins asked when this must
99 be sent off. It is said it needs to be completed by Friday because that is when the town
100 report goes to the printer. S. Jenkins asked C. Letourneau to let the library know. C.
101 Letourneau said she will let them know again. N. Martin asked for the board to get cc'd.
- 102 • A. Edwards reported that she and D. Bergstrom spent the day working on this budget. She
103 reported what a typical tax bill will look like with the present numbers. D. Bergstrom
104 showed the spreadsheet. He reported that the numbers are very close to NEMRC so they
105 should feel comfortable making any changes. N. Martin said they stand behind everything
106 in this budget and for years the town has avoided making changes because they were afraid
107 to push forward. A. Edwards is concerned if the townspeople know their tax bills are going
108 up by that much and questioned if they are prepared for that. S. Jenkins said that is out of
109 their hands. N. Martin said most people are more concerned about the school numbers than
110 the town number. D. Bergstrom showed them what goes out. N. Martin said if they had a
111 0% increase people would still say, "How dare you guys, my tax bill is going up by this
112 much." A. Edwards said the voters have two options, to vote down the school budget and to
113 vote down the town budget, or they can pass them. A. Edwards encouraged the board to
114 look at the budget again to see if there was anything they could do to bring it down a little
115 bit. S. Jenkins asked what percentage they are at now. D. Bergstrom said they are at
116 11.45% and N. Martin said he was okay with that; it was consistent with last year. S.
117 Jenkins did not see a problem with it. N. Martin agreed. He said if anything he thinks
118 people may vote down the bridge repair. D. Thomas said he is willing to defend the budget
119 as is but is also willing to look to see if they can get it lower. J. Comstock said they have
120 gone over this a thousand times and the reality is, do they even have time. He thinks this is
121 an acceptable raise. N. Martin says it is their responsibility to go over the budget, however
122 he believes they have done a really good job of making a significant amount of progress
123 while staying within the same increase as last year. S. Jenkins said they also need to
124 consider the increase in salaries that they have given. N. Martin said they have gone

- 125 through a union, a full-time treasurer, and increases as well as new vehicles through a
 126 capital budget as well as can be done. It will be their job to educate the public on how much
 127 they oversee and an 11% increase.
- 128 • D. Bergstrom reported that they had gone over and highlighted some areas that they could
 129 look at where they could lower without affecting anything and it may get you under the 10%
 130 mark. Discussion was had on the legal, janitorial, janitorial supplies, highway building
 131 maintenance, firefighter position with overtime, fire department hose (impact), transfer to
 132 reserves, awards, and recreation to reserve (ARPA).
 - 133 • K. Minck spoke on conservation commission. Discussion was had. It is decided that 5% of
 134 money received will be allocated.
 - 135 • A discussion was had on Highway Labor numbers. D. Bergstrom said if you use the
 136 average of previous years, you can then reduce to \$78,500 and then the budget is now down
 137 to a 10.5% increase.
 - 138 • D. Bergstrom says there is an extra \$25,000 for a selectboard clerk that did not get hired and
 139 \$5,000 for holiday cheer, and town office salaries.
 - 140 • Discussion was had on the town office salary line. The board asked what was included, D.
 141 Bergstrom showed them there is a formula on the side for them to reference. N. Martin
 142 wanted an email listing it out.
 - 143 • S. Jenkins said she is comfortable with the number and does not want to reduce anything
 144 without letting the departments know. Discussion was had on money coming out of impact
 145 fees.
 - 146 • Discussion was had on Highway parts and supplies and why it was high. S. Jenkins reached
 147 out to T. Cadieux to find out. It was reported that all parts and supplies together (winter and
 148 summer were separated previously).

149 GCC & Park and Rec Funding

- 150 • D. Bergstrom asked if they wanted to keep the park and rec reserve the same. S. Jenkins
 151 confirmed.
- 152 • D. Bergstrom asked C. Letourneau if she had heard from anyone about the County Tax line.
 153 C. Letourneau checked and reported not having heard nothing at that time.
- 154 • Discussion was had on transfer to reserve again and funding out of impact fees. A.
 155 Edwards said the library has not spent their impact fees since 2016.
- 156 • C. Rosenquist asked about \$100,000 of unspent impact fees and how they can be used to
 157 reduce the budget. Discussion was had on this, how to possibly do this within the next two
 158 days, and how to best do it moving forward.
- 159 • The board reported wanting to ask the department heads to see if there is anything they can
 160 use impact fees on moving forward.
- 161 • A. Edwards said there is a b change in revenue. S. Jenkins said salaries may also. A.
 162 Edwards encouraged them to keep looking at it and continue to look for sources of revenue.
- 163 • J. Comstock said he feels if anyone gets back to them with changes, and if they can make
 164 them, they need to. D. Thomas said people in the office will make that change and they can
 165 vote on it on Monday.

166 Salaries line

- 167 • It is noted that some of these conversations were had in previous parts of the agenda.
- 168 • N. Martin spoke with K. Baker about increases and contradictions with policies.

- 169 • C. Letourneau explained that there was a previous motion that changed their fee but there
 170 was not a motion to make the change in the policy. They have been seeing that increase.
 171 • D. Thomas said he will add this to the agenda for Monday. C. Rosenquist said the
 172 personnel committee will meet and bring a recommendation to the board. N. Martin
 173 agreed.

174 Fire and Rescue Pay

175 Any other departments as well

176 B. Budget - Action to Approve Budget

- 177 • D. Thomas asked if they wanted to go ahead with this or wait until they have heard back
 178 about the impact fees.

179 C. Town Warning – Approve

- 180 • D. Thomas asked if they could approve the town warning. C. Letourneau informed them
 181 they need to have the budget numbers before any of that can be done.

182 D. Greenbacker - Action late payment penalty

- 183 • C. Letourneau reported that they were supposed to send a check before the end of the year.
 184 A. Edwards reported receiving it today. C. Letourneau said it was supposed to be paid by
 185 the end of the year and because it was not, we can assess a late fee. They reported they
 186 tried to wire it to our account, but it was returned to them. C. Letourneau questioned if they
 187 had called to get our account information to send it to and they said no. C. Letourneau said
 188 they normally send a check. C. Letourneau asked the board if they would like to waive the
 189 late fee knowing that this was a new contract which was just negotiated or if they want to
 190 access a possibly 8% late fee. D. Thomas said he is willing to be lenient the first time
 191 around. C. Letourneau said they are normally very good at getting it to us in time.
 192 • C. Rosenquist made a motion to waive the possibility of a late fee for greenbacker, N.
 193 Martin seconded. All in favor, motion carried.
 194 • J. Comstock asked about the details of the greenbacker money. Discussion was had.

195 **7. OTHER**

- 196 • Nothing was discussed at this time.

197 **8. PLAN NEXT MEETING AGENDA**

198 A. Regular Meeting

- 199 • 01.22.2024
 200 • C. Rosenquist asked if they need to schedule another meeting before then to approve the
 201 budget. C. Letourneau said they need to approve the budget on Monday because she needs
 202 to get the warning out. N. Martin confirmed these numbers were on the sharepoint, D.
 203 Bergstrom confirmed. The board asked D. Bergstrom to send the information to the
 204 departments to look at.
 205 • J. Comstock asked what action items are moving forward. N. Martin said he can make
 206 screenshots of their budgets as they are now and send it to them and then they will have to
 207 get back to the administration by Friday. Whatever changes they can make will only bring
 208 the number down further, so it will only benefit them.

- 209 • At **6:38 p.m.** - C. Rosenquist made a motion to enter executive session to discuss issues
210 where premature knowledge may be detrimental to the board or people involved, N. Martin
211 seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

212 **9. EXECUTIVE SESSION (if needed, pursuant to 1 V.S.A sec 313)**

- 213 • At **6:39 p.m.** - C. Rosenquist made a motion to go to executive session with the board and
214 our town administrator for the administrator to speak with the board, S. Jenkins seconded.
215 All in favor, motion carried.

216 A. Personnel - Highway Hire action will need to be taken out of executive session

217 B. Personnel – Admin

- 218 • At **7:05 p.m.** - C. Rosenquist made a motion to exit executive session, N. Martin seconded.
219 All in favor, motion carried.

220 **10. ADJOURN**

- 221 • At **7:05 p.m.** – C., Rosenquist made a motion to adjourn, N. Martin seconded. All in favor,
222 motion carried.

223 **Posted to the Town website, four designated places within the Town of Georgia (Town Clerk’s**
224 **Office, Georgia Public Library, Maplefields & Georgia Market), and e-mailed to the local media.**

225 **Signed: Cheryl Letourneau, Town Administrator**

226 **Phone: 802-524-3524 | Fax: 802-524-3543 | Website: townofgeorgia.com**