

TOWN OF HARTFORD SELECTBOARD MINUTES

Special Meeting Tuesday, December 19,

2023, 6:00pm

Hartford Town Hall, 171 Bridge Street,

White River Junction, VT 05001

This meeting was conducted in person at Town Hall

Present: Michael Hoyt, Chair; Kim Souza, Clerk; Lannie Collins, Member; Mary Erdei, Member; Rocket, Member; Ally Tufkenjian, Member; John Haverstock; Dillon Walsh; Greg Sheldon; Dana Clawson; Scott Cooney; Scott Hausler; Joe Major; Gail Osrout; Lynn Bohi.

Zoom: Dan Fraser, Vice-Chair; Heidi Duto.

JAM/zoom:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/ijJNT4iH2NM?si=WCOJ2ImlZzhImhOT>

- I.** Call to Order the Selectboard Meeting by Chair, Mike Hoyt at 6pm.
- II.** Pledge of Allegiance was recited and led by Rocket
- III.** Order of Agenda: VDCP Grant Extension matter was removed from the Agenda.
- IV.** Selectboard
 1. Public Comment/Selectboard Comments: Joe Major expressed disappointment that the current General Fund budget draft only includes funding for a Public Information Officer (PIO) as a contracted service, rather than a full-time Town employee, citing the need for better Town communication. Rocket stated his view that hiring a contractor to serve as PIO would be an important first step for the Town. Lannie Collins commented on Town communications and the need for greater transparency.
 2. Local Liquor Control Board: **Selectboard member Rocket made the motion to approve the permit renewal requests (1st Class, 3d Class and Outside Consumption) sought by Putnam's Vineyard. Selectboard Member Mary Erdei seconded the motion. Motion passed by a vote of 6-0-1 (Souza abstaining).**
 3. Continued Discussion of FY 25 General Fund Budget: There was extended discussion regarding the proposed budget as most recently revised to reflect Selectboard input from prior meetings. **Selectboard Member Ally Tufkenjian made the motion to commit the Selectboard to funding from the Unassigned Fund the unbudgeted vacancies in the Police Department (1) and department of Public Works (1) if either or both of those unbudgeted vacancies can be filled with qualified candidates. The motion was seconded by Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei. All were in favor and the motion passed. Selectboard Member Ally Tufkenjian made the motion to propose to the voters that the following items be funded by L.O.T. proceeds: Lyman Park Improvements (\$225,000), an Ambulance (\$200,000) and Beautification of Town Villages (\$30,000), for a total of \$455,000. Selectboard member Mary Erdei seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed. It was agreed that the Selectboard would consider approving the General Fund budget in January. Selectboard Clerk Kim Souza made the motion to propose to the voters that the Town issue a bond for \$1,300,000 for the design and construction of Fire House No. 2. Selectboard Member Mary Erdei seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.**

4. Discussion of Charter Revision: The Selectboard took up the draft Town Charter Revision, which reflects the proposal submitted to the Selectboard by the Town's Charter Commission and as revised by the Selectboard in a working session on December 12, 2023. The Selectboard reviewed the origin and intent of each proposed change to the Town's Charter, as follows: Section 103 has been changed to enable the Town to regulate rental housing. The Commission had suggested adopting "just cause" eviction language, but the Selectboard wishes to merely enable the Town to regulate rental housing, in order to consider adopting ordinances regarding a rental registry, the taxation of short-term rentals and other measures. Section 104 has been changed to add a sales and use tax to the list of local option taxes already in effect, as recommended by the Charter Commission. The Town has opted to have sales revenues used in a manner consistent with the use of other Town local option tax revenues (i.e., subject to voter approval of Selectboard proposals), rather than committing sales tax proceeds to property tax relief, as had been recommended by the Charter Commission. Section 201 (b) (2) has been changed to reflect the fact that the Town Clerk is no longer an elected official of the Town. Section 201 (e) (1) has been changed to add a Warrant Information Night, as recommended by the Charter Commission, to the list of meetings held in the lead-up to Town Meeting. Section 201 (f) (2) was changed to remove specific time for this meeting to allow more flexibility. Section 201 (g) was changed to add social media as a means of communicating meeting warnings, to keep up with the times and increase public engagement and participation. Section 202 subsections (f) (2) and (f)(1) were changed to extend the Town and School Moderator's term to three (3) years, consistent with the terms of other Town officers and to achieve greater continuity in this position. Section 203 (a) (2) was changed as recommended by the Charter Commission to allow for action by an affirmative vote of three Selectboard members to account for Selectboard member absences and/or abstentions in unusual circumstances. Section 301 (c) was added, per recommendation of the Charter Commission, to recognize and codify the current practice of having the Town Manager serve as the Delinquent Tax Collector. Section 301 (d) was added, in keeping with a recommendation of the Charter Commission, to allow for the appointment of an Assistant Town Treasurer who could act if and when the Town Treasurer was unable to perform their duties. Section 401 was changed to strike unnecessary language regarding "rights and privileges", per recommendation of the Charter Commission. **Selectboard Member Mary Erdei made the following motion:**

Motion to Propose the Revised Charter:

Pursuant to the procedure described in 17 V.S.A. § 2645 "Charters; adoption, repeal or amendment; procedure" the Selectboard of the Town of Hartford proposes amending the Charter of the Town of Hartford by replacing 24 V.S.A. 123A: Town of Hartford in its entirety with a revised version attached herewith titled "Charter of the Town of Hartford, Vermont Proposed Revision of December 19, 2023" which the Clerk of the Town of Hartford shall file as a public record not later than December 29, 2023.

Further the Selectboard calls for the two required public hearings on the revised charter to be held in conjunction with its regularly-scheduled meetings on January 23, 2024 and February 6, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the Hartford Town Hall

Selectboard Clerk Kim Souza seconded the motion. Motion passed 6-1 (Collins opposed). Selectboard member Ally Tufkenjian made the following motion:

Motion to Propose Local Option Sales Tax:

Pursuant to the procedure described in 17 V.S.A. § 2645 “Charters; adoption, repeal or amendment; procedure” the Selectboard of the Town of Hartford proposes amending the Charter of the Town of Hartford to enable the town to use the state option of imposing a 1% sales and use tax in the Town of Hartford.

The proposal is attached herewith as “Charter Amendment: Local Option Sales Tax” which the Clerk of the Town of Hartford shall file as a public record not later than December 29, 2023.

Further the Selectboard calls for the two required public hearings on this proposed charter amendment to be held in conjunction with its regularly-scheduled meetings on January 23, 2024 and February 6, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the Hartford Town Hall.

Selectboard Clerk Kim Souza seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

5. Consider Cancellation of December 26 Meeting: Selectboard Member Rocket made the motion to cancel the December 26 meeting and authorize Selectboard leadership to approve Payroll and Accounts Payable. Selectboard Member Lannie Collins seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.

- V. Consent Agenda: Selectboard Member Ally, Tufkenjian made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Selectboard Member, Mary Erdei seconded the motion. The vote was 6-0-1, with Ally Tufenkjian abstaining.

Approve Meeting Minutes of: 12/12/2023 and 12/14/2023

- VI. Adjourn the Selectboard Meeting
Selectboard Clerk Kim Souza made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 PM. Selectboard Member Ally Tufkenjian seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed.



Kim Souza, Clerk
December 19, 2023 Meeting.