

Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2019 Regular Meeting

Present:

Maureen Bell, Selectwoman
Peter Chamberlain, Selectman
Dawn Bower, Various Commissions
Russ Cumming, Lister
Sally Hoover, Auditor
Tom Johnson, Energy Commission
Kathy Jungermann, Auditor
Kathy Scott, Treasurer

Kord Scott, Selectman
Vance Bell, Energy Commission
Joyce Cumming, Selectboard Clerk
Bill Dunkel, Town Planning Commission
Jonathan Gordon, Fire Dept. Chief
Louise Johnson, Windham Meetinghouse Committee
Imme Maurath, Auditor Kathy Scott, Treasurer
Jan Wyman, Fire Dept. Treasurer

Call to order

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

Additions to Agenda/Announcements/Reminders

- Kord requested the addition of an item under Roads: bids for guard rail repairs/replacement.
- Kathy Scott requested the addition of an agenda item to sign a resolution to include Gail Wyman, Asst. Treasurer, as an authorized signatory on the bank account.
- Maureen announced removal of an agenda item: Request by the (Meeting House) Committee to call the building The Windham Community Meetinghouse.
- Maureen provided a brief update on the status of the Route 11 paving project (Londonderry-Chester).
- Maureen noted that the dumpster issue on Popple Dungeon Road has been resolved.

Act on minutes: November 4, 2019 Regular Selectboard Meeting (corrected)

Motion: To accept the minutes of the November 4, 2019 Regular Selectboard Meeting as re-submitted with correction—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Public Comment

Sargent Robert Lakin was in attendance to discuss initiatives proposed by Sheriff Mark Anderson of the Windham County Sheriff's Dept. such as enhanced communication and outreach, and volunteer services at community events. Brief discussion followed on staffing shortages in law enforcement. In response to an inquiry from Kord re: animal control services, Sargent Lakin responded that Sheriff Anderson is open to discussion including the possibility of a regional approach including other towns.

Imme Maurath noted the need for attention to the holiday lights in the tree outside the Meeting House prior to the upcoming tree lighting ceremony. After brief discussion, Imme agreed to contact Bob Kehoe to determine whether his bucket truck was available to address the lighting issues.

Jonathan Gordon distributed the Fire Department's proposed 2020 budget which included a request for a Town appropriation of \$30,000 (see attached). Jon stated he was not aware that the Public Safety budget was

scheduled for discussion at the last meeting and apologized for the delay. Jan Wyman, Fire Dept. Treasurer, stated that a 2019 year-to-date accounting was not available.

New Business:

Thank you to Ed Brown

Maureen reported that Ed Brown has re-painted the Town Office sign, it has been re-installed, and a thank-you is in order. Ed confirmed to Joyce that the work was completed at no charge. Peter agreed to prepare a thank-you letter on behalf of the Selectboard.

Shelf for Walt Woodruff's donated sign (and SB thank you)

Maureen noted that a shelf was constructed by Joe Lamson to display the sign donated by Walter Woodruff. A suggestion was made for a brass plaque to credit Walter for the donation. A suggestion was also made for a picture light to be installed over the sign; Kord agreed to discuss it with Bob Kehoe. Peter agreed to prepare thank-you notes on behalf of the Selectboard to Walter and Joe.

Added item: Sign resolution to include Gail Wyman, Asst. Treasurer, as an authorized signatory on the bank account

Kathy Scott noted the need to include Gail Wyman, in her role as Asst. Treasurer, as an authorized signatory on the Town bank account.

Motion: To sign a resolution authorizing Gail Wyman, Asst. Treasurer, as an authorized signatory on the Town bank account—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Kathy will prepare the necessary documents.

Special Town Meeting

Maureen noted the need to schedule a Special Town Meeting to act on the petition received October 26th re: the question: "Shall Windham vote on all public questions by Australian ballot?" as well as the subsequent petition received on November 4th re: the questions: "Shall the Town of Windham, Vermont elect town officers by Australian ballot?" and "Shall the Town of Windham, Vermont adopt all budget articles by Australian ballot?" Maureen noted that the Selectboard has 60 days to act on the petitions and must adhere to a 30 day notice in warning a Special Town Meeting. In addition to the petition questions, an election must be held to fill the Selectboard seat to which Peter was appointed. Maureen discussed the process with the Secretary of State who advised the Selectboard to act sooner rather than later to allow time for preparation of ballots should the vote pass on the question of voting on all public questions by Australian ballot. Brief discussion was held on discussion from the floor at the Special Town Meeting. Based on the receipt of the first petition on October 26th, the Selectboard has until December 26th to act on the petition. Discussion followed on the impact of the first question (vote on all public questions by Australian ballot) on the other two questions, the need to prepare ballots in advance of regular Town Meeting Day, implications affecting the auditors, the Treasurer, and Town Clerk, issues associated with early voting prior to an informational meeting, and the elimination of the option for amendments from the floor at the general Town Meeting. Imme agreed to look into whether the annual general Town Meeting must be held on the first Tuesday in March.

Discussion followed on the possibility of moving the date up for the Special Town Meeting to avoid conflicts around the holidays. The Selectboard entertained the notion of warning the meeting today for a Special Town Meeting on Wednesday, December 18, 2019, the earliest possible date. Kord suggested holding discussion at the Special Town Meeting on the obstacles that will need to be addressed if the vote passes on the first question (vote on all public questions by Australian ballot). The Selectboard has the option to include articles in the warning for the general Town Meeting regardless of the vote on the petition question. Kathy Scott expressed concern regarding the Town not being able to pay bills should the vote on the petition question pass at the Special Town Meeting and the budget is voted down at the general Town Meeting. Maureen agreed to look into this concern. Discussion returned to the date and time for the Special Town Meeting and whether 7 p.m. is too late to allow for sufficient discussion prior to voting. After further deliberation regarding work schedules and the date for the elementary school concert, it was decided to schedule the Special Town Meeting for 6 p.m. on Wednesday, December 18, 2019.

Motion: To schedule a Special Town Meeting to vote on the petition questions as well as the Selectboard vacancy for Wednesday, December 18, 2019 at 6 p.m. at the Meeting House (see attached warning)—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Maureen will post the warning as required.

Town Plan – SB hearing December 16

Maureen noted that the Planning Commission held its Public Hearing on the proposed changes to the Town Plan last week on November 12th. The Selectboard must schedule a hearing on the proposed Town Plan and Maureen suggested December 16 at 5 p.m. (just prior to the regular meeting at 5:30 p.m.)

Motion: To schedule a Public Hearing by the Selectboard on the proposed Town Plan for 5 p.m. on December 16, 2019 at the Town Offices—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Old Business:

Personnel Policy update

Maureen received guidance from Jill Muhr at VLCT re: wording for the personnel policy. Maureen shared the information with the other Selectboard members and asked them to review it and get back to her. Maureen also offered to share VLCT's model policy as well as its own policy if members are interested.

The Meeting House:

The Meeting House Committee appointment –Tom Widger (2 yr. term) and Chris Dunkel (1 yr. term)

Maureen noted the staggered terms for the initial appointments to the Meeting House Committee thus far and suggested appointing Tom Widger and Chris Dunkel for 2-year and 1-year terms respectively.

Motion: To appoint Tom Widger to the Meeting House Committee for a term of two (2) years—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Motion: To appoint Chris Dunkel to the Meeting House Committee for a term of one (1) year—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Item Removed: Request by the committee to call the building “The Windham Community Meetinghouse”

Request for water testing (estimated cost \$50-\$75) & Request for Fire Marshal inspection of the building for safety issues/violations, occupancy, egress/exit concerns, fire extinguishers (estimated cost \$125-\$175)

On behalf of the Meeting House Committee, Russ Cumming requested funds for testing the water at the Meeting House by a certified contractor prior to expanding the use of the building. He also requested funding for an inspection of the Meeting House by the Fire Marshal to ensure that the facility meets safety standards and code for occupancy, egress, fire extinguishers, etc. Discussion followed on elements found in the water at the WRCP location at the bottom of the hill. Based on its use, that facility was considered a transient public water source. Kord will share the contact info for the water testing contractor used by WRCP for the Committee’s consideration. Discussion followed on state and private contractors and the scope and requirements for water testing. Because of the need for express shipment of water samples to contractor(s) within 24 hours of collection and the possible scope of testing, a suggestion was made that the amount for water testing be increased to \$125 (same amount for Fire Marshal inspection). It was agreed to let the Committee determine which contractor to utilize for water testing.

Motion: To approve \$125 for water testing at the Meeting House to be performed by a certified contractor of the Meeting House Committee’s choice; and to approve \$125 for inspection of the Meeting House by the Fire Marshal—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Budgeting Process:

Town Clerk

Mike McLaine joined the meeting to present the Town Clerk budget (see attached). He requested level funding the salary lines for the Assistant Town Clerk and Town Clerk in 2020. Fica and Medicare should remain as funded in 2019. Mike proposed reducing the line item for Contracted Service-Clerk Training to \$500 next year, reducing the line item for Mileage to \$100, and reducing Seminars/Workshops to \$200. Mike reported that the vault re-organization (budgeted at \$2,400 in 2019) is well-underway and thanked Peter for his assistance in the project. There are a number of banker boxes filled with paper documents that will need to be destroyed. Mike suggested allowing residents to bring their documents for shredding as well. He is in the process of getting two quotes for mobile shredding services (one company located in Burlington and another national firm) but the cost is likely to be approximately \$800 for 3 hours of shredding services. Once the vault reorganization is complete, it is a matter of maintenance. Mike does not anticipate a need to fund this line item next year.

Mike mentioned another item as part of the Town Office M & I budget touched upon briefly at the last meeting. He has a quote for approximately \$5,000 (one-time expense) for a system to store land records flat on shelving units as intended initially as part of the vault plan. The shelving system is a proprietary design. Mike demonstrated how town and land records are currently stored upright/vertically in books (legal paper size) with identification information such as book number, etc. on their spines. These records should be stored flat/horizontally for longevity.

In addition to the shelving units, the covers on the books will need to be replaced with a different system using tabs on the short ends of the books to identify book number, etc. Mike does not yet have a price for the replacement covers needed for approximately 40 books.

Town Office

The Town Office budget for 2019 (see attached) included \$6,789 for Computer Expense and Contracted Services. Line items within this category were reviewed individually. Discussion followed on lack of satisfaction with services performed by 2 Wired Guys for computer maintenance and repairs. Most of the updates are performed remotely. Several computer stations within the town office cannot print to the copier, therefore requiring separate printers and the expense associated with separate print cartridges, etc. Vance agreed to review the issue of whether the work stations can be configured to print via the copier. Discussion followed on whether all new computers should be included in one budget vs. individual department budgets. As Auditor, Imme agreed with including all computer expenses in one budget rather than individual department budgets. Discussion followed on cybersecurity issues and the need to prevent hacking incidents experienced by other towns. Copier expense, currently under budget, was proposed for level funding. Insurance expenses were proposed for level funding. Office supplies and cleaning is currently over-expended by approximately \$500; Kathy agreed to review YTD expense for this line item. A suggestion was made to increase postage by \$100 next year as this line item YTD is slightly over budget. Mike suggested waiting and adjusting the line item if needed to compensate for a possible increase in postage rates next year. Discussion followed on whether a postage meter might provide measurable benefit, and options for distribution of the annual town report. Imme will research the requirements for distributing the town report. Utilities were proposed at level funding for 2020.

Roads:

Rt. 121 Culvert Grant Application status

Kord reported that a decision is not yet available on the grant application for replacement of the culvert on Rt. 121.

2021 Better Back Roads Grant Application update

Kord needs to review this grant application further to determine if the Town can apply for 2021 funds based on its 2020 grant status.

Harrington Road update

Kord discussed options for Harrington Road with Marc Pickering of V-Trans. Harrington Road is currently designated as a Class 3 road which requires year-round maintenance. One option is to reclassify it as a Class 4 road (less stringent maintenance requirements; not plowed in winter). Another option is to “throw up” the road, essentially giving the road and responsibility for its maintenance to its residents who must agree to accept the road. Marc suggests reclassifying the road. This will mean a loss in state revenue of approximately \$500-\$600 per year. Maureen and Peter agreed with this option. Kord noted that the Town is responsible for the culvert repair, and that there is money available in the bridges and culverts fund. Kord will begin to solicit quotes. Reclassification requires a process that may take some time; Kord will begin the process.

Equipment – F550

Kord reported on ways to approach pricing for a vehicle to replace the 550. There is an option to buy the cab and chassis from one source and buy the body separately. Richard has gotten a quote of \$95,928 for a 2019

replacement vehicle with a 9' bed which is not ideal for the bucket loader which requires 8 feet. A better option would be to order a 10' bed. Kord suggested an appropriate replacement vehicle would cost approximately \$100,000. Currently \$60,000 is available through Town appropriation last year. Brief discussion followed on funding the balance via a loan from the State. Discussion followed on an extended warranty and the benefit of a better trade-in value if a year or more remain on the warranty at trade-in. A 2019 vehicle ordered at this point would be available in January or February at the earliest. A 2020 model would be available by summer at similar pricing.

Third Road Crew Member update

Kord reported that 2 applicants have expressed interest in the part-time road crew position. Jill Muhr has provided sample job applications for positions requiring a Commercial Driver's License and positions with no CDL requirement.

Salt bids update

Kord reported that the Town will utilize all three salt providers who provided bids for the 2019-2020 season.

Blower demo update

Kord noted an unanticipated problem associated with the roadside ditching work has been the accumulation of leaves and possible clogging of exposed culverts as a result of wet leaves. The results of the road erosion inventory are not yet available. Kord is hoping to arrange for a demonstration of Jamaica's blower in early December. Kord reported that a unit similar to Jamaica's would cost \$7,000 - \$8,000. There may be an option to share or buy in to Jamaica's unit, though it may not be ideal when both towns need use simultaneously.

Road "fill" waiver update – conversation with Atty. Bob Fisher

Kord shared information he received from VLCT and PACIF re: waivers for roadside fill material with Attorney Bob Fisher. Attorney Fisher is away until tomorrow. Kord will follow up later this week.

Grizzly sand "de-lumper" fabrication

Kord noted that Kurt has fabricated a device to remove lumps from sand; the device is at the Town garage.

Added item: Guard rail bids

Kord stated that funds for repair of guard rails damaged by the snowplow were included in the budget. Bids were solicited from three companies, but only one bid has been received thus far. The other two bids should be received in the near future; Kord will report back.

Correspondence/Payroll/Bills

Correspondence, payroll and bills were reviewed and approved as required.

Peter asked Kord about status of George Dutton's concerns re: widening of West Windham Road. Kord does not have any information to offer at this time.

Executive Session

Personnel evaluation prep – final review

Motion: To enter into Executive Session at 7:42 p.m. for the purpose of discussion re: preparation for a personnel evaluation and final review—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Motion: To exit Executive Session at 8:10 p.m. and resume the public meeting—moved by Kord—all in favor.

No actions were taken.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the regular Selectboard meeting at 8:11 p.m.—moved by Peter—all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Cumming
Selectboard Clerk

Attachments:

- Warning of Special Town Meeting to be held on December 18, 2019
- Notification of Appointments to the Meeting House Committee
- Windham Volunteer Fire Dept. Budget for 2020
- Town Clerk Budget for 2020
- Town Office Budget for 2020