

Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes
November 4, 2019 Regular Meeting

Present:

Maureen Bell, Selectwoman
Peter Chamberlain, Selectman
Gerry Amsden
Pat Cherry
Joyce Cumming, Selectboard Clerk
Bill Dunkel
Tom Johnson, Energy Commission
Kathy Scott, Treasurer

Kord Scott, Selectman
Vance Bell, Energy Commission
Dawn Bower, Various Commissions
David Cherry, Rescue Committee Chair
Russ Cumming, Lister
Louise Johnson, Windham Meetinghouse Committee
Kathy Jungermann, Auditor
Gail Wyman, Asst. 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: West Windham Road.
- Maureen announced that Sargent Lakin will attend the November 18 Selectboard meeting.
- Maureen thanked Kathy Jungermann, Emergency Management Director, for staffing the Town Office during the recent power outage.
- Russ offered a reminder to check the propane level and schedule delivery if necessary to replace the fuel used during the power outage; Kord reported fuel at 65% on Saturday but he will follow-up.
- Maureen shared an update on the Route 11 paving project (Londonderry-Chester) from the VT. Agency of Transportation. Work will begin next week with the installation of construction signs and erosion control measures throughout the length of the project (14 miles from the intersection of Vt. Rt. 100 and Vt. 11 in Londonderry extending easterly on Rt. 11 to Chester at the intersection with Lovers Lane). Motorists should expect alternating one-way traffic patterns in the area of active construction operations. Construction activities include coarse milling, cold in place recycling, paving, drainage, pavement markings, guardrail and signage.
- Bill Dunkel announced that the Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on the proposed changes to the Town Plan to be held November 12 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Office. A copy of the complete plan is available at the Town Office; a 2-page summary is also available. Bill thanked Vance for his assistance in formatting the 130 page document.
- Bill also announced that the Energy Commission will be holding an Energy Fair on November 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the elementary school. Several Windham homeowners will offer testimonials on the energy-saving measures implemented in their homes and the savings realized. Representatives from Efficiency Vermont will also be on hand to promote Button-up Vermont; free walk-through inspections will be offered by Efficiency Vermont.
- Bill reported on a very informative presentation at last week's Windham Regional Commission meeting given by a representative from the Agency of Natural Resources on the importance of maintaining forestry lots in Vermont. Bill will invite the speaker to attend an upcoming meeting of the Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, and/or Selectboard in Windham.
- Maureen mentioned that she will be away for a few days but will be available by phone.

Act on minutes: October 21, 2019 Regular Selectboard Meeting and October 31, 2019 Emergency Selectboard Meeting

Motion: To accept the minutes of the October 21, 2019 Regular Selectboard Meeting as submitted—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Motion: To accept the minutes of the October 31, 2019 Emergency Selectboard Meeting as revised—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Public Comment

Gerry Amsden offered an update on his wife's illness. Gerry explained that Anne's condition has resulted in financial hardship for the family and requested an extension to remit the balance of his property tax payment. Gerry was referred to the Town Clerk in order to complete paperwork and receive information on how to request a hearing before the Board of Abatement.

New Business:

The Meeting House Committee appointment – Eileen Widger

Maureen noted that Eileen Widger has expressed an interest in serving on the Meeting House Committee. Brief discussion followed on the term of the appointment. Current members are serving staggered terms: Dawn Bower – 3 years, Louise Johnson – 2 years, Russ Cumming – 1 year. Members can be re-appointed if interested at the conclusion of their terms. Maureen suggested appointing Eileen to a 3 year term; Kord and Peter agreed. The Selectboard signed the Notification of Appointment appointing Eileen Widger as a member of the Meeting House Committee for a term of 3 years (see attached).

Social Services Committee appointments – Peter Chamberlain, Tom Widger, Marcia Clinton and Skip Raymond

Maureen reported that all four candidates have served previously on the Social Services Committee. Peter Chamberlain, Tom Widger, Marcia Clinton and Carlton "Skip" Raymond were appointed as members of the Social Services Committee for a term of 1 year (see attached).

Special Town Meeting

Maureen explained that a Special Town Meeting was anticipated for December 3, 2019 based on a petition received on October 7, 2019 to increase the total membership of the Selectboard from three members to five members, with the term of office for the additional members being two years. That petition has subsequently been withdrawn but will likely be resubmitted at a later date to be voted upon at the Annual Town Meeting in March 2020.

Another petition received on October 26, 2019 requires a Special Town Meeting (to be scheduled) on the question: Shall Windham vote on all public questions by Australian ballot? Maureen spoke with the originator of that petition who explained that the intent behind the petition was to require a vote on any budgetary items by Australian ballot. That petition has not yet been withdrawn.

Maureen learned that another petition has been circulating on the question of voting on any budget articles by Australian ballot and whether to elect town officers by Australian ballot. Maureen will speak with the Secretary of the State to determine whether a Special Town Meeting can be scheduled considering the timing until the Annual Town Meeting in March.

Old Business:

Ambulance Service Review – David Cherry, MD

David Cherry presented a report on the work of the Rescue Committee which was formed to assess options to improve emergency rescue services available to Windham (see attached). The committee looked at services available through the Londonderry Voluntary Rescue Squad (LVRS) and through Rescue Inc.

LVRS has a single location in Londonderry and serves 7 towns including Windham. It is the only fully volunteer squad in Vt. that provides services at no cost to clients. LVRS responds to approximately 500 calls a year including approx. 20 in Windham. LVRS is paid \$1,500 annually, and the dispatch of the rescue/ambulance service is included in the money paid by the Town for SWNH Mutual Aid Assn. & Dues. (\$10,700 in Public Safety budget for 2019). LVRS relies heavily on fundraising efforts.

Rescue Inc. serves 13 towns in Vt. and 2 in NH. It has stations in Brattleboro and West Townsend and responds to approximately 5,000 calls a year. It does not currently service Windham. It bills each town based on number of households (\$28.63 per household) and charges the client for transportation services. A subscription plan is available to clients to offset the cost for services (2017-18 subscription cost was \$60/year if insured; \$120/year if not insured; see attached). Subscription services include 3 emergency transports, 3 non-emergency transports (1 of which can be long-distance up to 75 mi.), and treatment without transport. Cost per household is between \$88 and \$148 per year including the town fee and subscription plan.

LVRS serves an area of approximately 255 square miles while Rescue Inc. serves an area of approximately 500 square miles.

Average response time for LVRS to North Windham is approx. 20 minutes, to South Windham approx. 30 minutes. Response data for Rescue Inc. to Windham is not available due to insufficient calls on which to base data. David pointed out that response time is critical especially in the case of cardiac arrest when intervention is needed within the first 4 to 6 minutes. Survival after cardiac arrest is reduced 7 -10% for every minute without defibrillation and advanced life support, and survival after 10 minutes is rare. In more densely populated areas of the United States the average response time is 6 to 7 minutes, while in rural areas the average response time is 20 minutes. Vermont has the second worst response time in the U.S. at 22 min. 56.4 seconds. The goal is 1 minute for dispatch and arrival in 4 minutes. Data from the central regional rescue dispatch covering Windham shows an average of 4 minutes to form a team. The average response time for LVRS to arrive at the scene is 22 minutes 12 seconds (the fastest arrival of a team was 12 minutes). The average time on scene by LVRS is 18 minutes 12 seconds. The goal for cardiac arrest is 10 minutes or less on scene.

Rescue Inc. has 75 staff members including 17 EMTs, 23 Advanced EMTs, 22 paramedics and 9 critical care paramedics. Twenty-eight staff members at Rescue Inc. are fulltime career staff with the rest being volunteers. Rescue Inc. has ambulances stationed full-time in Brattleboro and in West Townshend and is staffed around the clock with an average response time of 2 minutes.

LVRs has 45 members including 11 ambulance drivers with CPR, 9 emergency medical responders, 9 EMTs, 11 advanced EMTs, and 5 paramedics.

Both LVRs and Rescue Inc. have at least 1 advanced EMT on board when responding to a call. Both LVRs and Rescue Inc. transport patients with urgent medical needs to the closest facility able to address their medical condition.

LVRs offers patients a choice of transport to Springfield Hospital, Rutland Regional Medical Center, Southern Vt. Medical Center, Grace Cottage Hospital or Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. LVRs does not transport to Dartmouth-Hitchcock. The DHART helicopter is available to transport serious trauma and medical patients, weather conditions permitting. LVRs does not have Critical Care Paramedics.

Rescue Inc. transports patients to the nearest facility that can address the patient's medical needs. Rescue Inc. can drive to Dartmouth-Hitchcock. Rescue Inc. has 6 Critical Care Paramedics.

Both LVRs and Rescue Inc. use Intercept, which allows a critical care provider to meet the ambulance en-route. Both have educational facilities on site. Both have vehicle extrication tools and a Mass Casualty Incident trailer. Rescue Inc. has a thermal imaging drone.

While Rescue Inc. is likely to have a quicker response time to South Windham based on its location in West Townshend, the response time to North Windham would certainly be longer. North Windham is likely to have a better response time from LVRs. While it may be possible to have LVRs serve North Windham and have Rescue Inc. serve South Windham, there is the issue of how to pay for Rescue Inc. In addition to the Town's cost toward Rescue Inc., there is the subscription fee of \$60 or \$120 per household which not everyone can afford. Rescue Inc. will bill clients who do not have subscription plan coverage, and send overdue accounts to a collection agency for payment. On a personal level, David said his preference is Rescue Inc.; but on a Town level, unless funding is available to cover the cost per household and subscription plans, the next best option is training and placing AEDs (Automatic External Defibrillators) in various locations around town. Training is available at no cost. David said the average cost for an AED is approximately \$1100, possibly less if purchased in bulk. Kathy asked whether grants were available to purchase AEDs. Maureen thanked David for his service on the Committee and his presentation on the Committee's findings.

Budgeting Process:

Schedule – Check dates with Kathy

Maureen asked Kathy Scott about several of the dates in her September memo for budget review by department (see attached). Some of the dates fall on days of the week other than Mondays. After brief discussion, it was determined that December 3, 2019 should be December 2, 2019, December 12, 2019 should be December 16, 2019; January 5, 2020 should be January 6, 2020, and January 12, 2020 should be January 13, 2020.

Budget Review – Public Safety

Kathy Scott presented the Public Safety budget (see attached). Kathy requested that the line item for County Sheriff should remain at \$6,200 for 2020 based on 10 hours per month at \$51 per hour for an annual expense of \$6,120 (rate increase to \$52/hour for 2020-21). Receipts from civil fines to date are \$1,537 which does not include September or October. The line item for the Constable was budgeted at \$200 for 2019. Kathy

explained that this does not include mileage. She felt that the compensation was insufficient. Kord will discuss travel with Joe Lamson (constable) and report back. Kathy suggested level funding the Emergency Management Dept. line item for Education & Seminars at \$200 and Mileage at \$150 next year. Mike McLaine requested that the Fire Department budget be level funded at \$30,000 for 2020. He explained that the cost of insurance and the need for proper equipment are significant expenses. The Fire Department purchased one truck and will be buying another with cash. Kathy Scott expressed her concern that the Town cannot afford to level fund this budget every year especially considering the recent tax increase. Mike will ask Jan Wyman, Fire Dept. Treasurer, for a detailed accounting of the YTD expenses of the Fire Department. Kathy suggested the line item for Health Officer-payroll remain at \$500 for 2020. Southwest New Hampshire Mutual Aid Association & Dues is over-expended by \$6 based on YTD expense of \$10,706 for 2019; Kathy suggested increasing this line item to \$10,800 for 2020.

Town Office M & I

Last year, this account was funded at \$3,749 (based on 10% of budget carried forward from 2018) with an additional \$1,467 (10% of total non-tax funds received) for a total of \$5,216. Kathy reported expenses were \$3,856; and the current balance in Town Office M & I is approximately \$26,000. There will be a considerable expense next year to paint the building. Kord will contact Joe Lamson for an estimate. Mike McLaine pointed out that the expense of the hanging plat map system was charged to Restoration in error—it should have been charged to Town Office M & I. Kathy Scott made a note re: the need for the fund transfer. Mike also noted additional needs for the vault such as roller units which were part of the original vault design and shelving units for flat storage. The basement needs insulation work and Kord will contact Joe Lamson for an estimate. Brief discussion followed on the importance of leaving the thermostat at a set temperature and not setting it back on Fridays. Town Office M & I will need to be re-visited.

Tax Review Plan – N&N Article

Kord suggested including an article in the next edition of News & Notes to explain the Selectboard's efforts to develop a strategy going forward to address taxes and reduce spending wherever possible. As an example he cited a surplus in the Roads account which was given back to the Town. Despite these efforts, the Selectboard has limited control over homeowners' property tax bills. Kord agreed to draft an article for N&N to share with the Selectboard before submission.

Letter to Town Departments re: budgeting process

Kord will draft a letter to all Town Department heads regarding budget requests for 2020 and the importance of fiscal restraint. Previously, he suggested fund balances remaining in department budgets at year-end be used to offset funding requests for subsequent years. Kord will share the letter with the Selectboard prior to dissemination to Town Departments.

Roads

Re-adopt Winter Roads Policy

The existing Winter Roads Policy (adopted on October 17, 2016) was reviewed with Richard. Richard is in agreement with re-adopting it for the upcoming 2019-2020 winter season. See attached.

Motion: To re-adopt the Winter Roads Policy for the Town of Windham, Vermont for the 2019-2020 Winter Season as presented—moved by Peter—all in favor.

Signs, Stripes and Speed Limits Training Session Highlights

Maureen reported on the workshop she attended on Signs, Stripes and Speed Limits facilitated by Vermont Local Roads, describing it as very worthwhile and informative. Topics included signage, local speeds, ordinances, mud season postings and exemptions, effect of CBD oil in drug testing results, etc. Vermont State Statutes authorize the local governing body to set speed limits, ranging from 25 to 50 mph, though the posted limits must be justifiable and reasonable, and a traffic study is recommended. A big topic statewide is sign maintenance with policies outlining the expected life span of signs and a recommendation to develop an inventory of signs with GPS identifiers re: locations. Another hot topic is 'retroreflectivity'. Maureen spoke with Jeffrey Trowt of the Dept. of Motor Vehicles Commercial Enforcement Unit who shared lots of useful information re: weights and speeds. Now that the roads have been registered through DMV, roads can be posted with weight limits and DMV can be requested to set up weight stations around town and enforce the weight limits. Maureen will share the materials with the Selectboard members and the Road Crew.

Equipment – F550

Kord reported that the F550 is out for repairs again. He is in the process of pricing a replacement vehicle and should have an estimate by next meeting. For some vehicles, it is possible to cobble together different assemblies such as chassis and bodies. The best guesstimate available from Stewart's for a replacement vehicle ordered in 2020 is approximately \$95,000-\$100,000. Discussion followed on the sophisticated technology and automation of the new vehicles which drivers don't want and their preference for keeping the older vehicles which are more driver-friendly. Kord expressed his opinion on keeping a vehicle for its reasonable life expectancy. He also noted that some concerns cannot be ignored i.e., rust due to salt erosion, safety issues, cost of repairs, etc. He will get quotes on a replacement vehicle for budget consideration.

Harrington Road update

Kord reported that Marc Pickering of V-Trans inspected the failed culvert on Harrington Road. The road is currently closed due to the tornado earlier this fall. Marc is in favor of a proposal to tear out the old stone culvert for use as concrete pre-formed blocks over which beams and a wooden deck would be placed. Kord and Richard will need to develop specs to meet the Stream Engineer's Standards and submit same to Scott Jensen, District Stream Engineer. Several contractors will need to quote on the project and submit sealed bids by the bid deadline. Maureen inquired about the timing for the project—anticipating the need to wait until spring; Kord responded that the work did not need to wait until spring and might be done sooner. In response to a follow-up from Peter about the consequences of "throwing up" the road, Kord replied that he had yet to discuss it with Marc Pickering and was not sure about the mileage affected and how cost effective that approach might be.

Third Road Crew Member Update

Kord reported that to date, just one applicant has expressed an interest in the part-time road crew position. Asa Goodband brought in his son, Aubrey, who met with Richard briefly. Richard was reasonably impressed and Aubrey is interested in working for the Town of Windham. Aubrey does not have a CDL but that would not be necessary to operate the 550. Brief discussion followed on age requirements and PACIF best practices. Kathy reported that the payroll budget for roads is under control presently.

Salt Bids Update

Kord spoke with all three vendors who submitted salt bids for 2019-2020. None have minimum purchase requirements. Kord recommended signing on with all three. The Selectboard agreed with Kord's recommendation. Kord signed off on the proposals.

Added item re: waivers

Kord discussed the need for waivers to be signed by homeowners who have requested fill from road ditching projects as the specific composition of the fill is unknown and the Town has limited liability in delivering the excess material. A sample waiver was provided to the Town Attorney for review and approval.

Added item re: West Windham Road

Kord reported concerns expressed by George Dutton about the perceived widening of West Windham Road. George has the impression that the Town is trying to make the road wider, thereby encroaching on his property. Kord has spoken with Jonathan Stevens to see if there is documentation regarding the width of West Windham Road and property boundaries of homeowners. Richard suggested a meeting between George Dutton and one or all of the members of the Selectboard to discuss concerns. All Selectboard members were agreeable to meet with George for discussion. Maureen cited a Vt. State Statute (Title 19, Section 702) that provides that "the right of way for each highway and trail shall be 3 rods wide unless otherwise properly recorded." This total minimum width extends evenly (24.75 ft.) on both sides of the highway centerline.

Correspondence/Payroll/Bills

Correspondence was reviewed including a letter from the Health Officer, Marcia Clinton, regarding the trash situation at Erica Van Alstyne's residence at 6186 Popple Dungeon Road (see attached). Despite repeated attempts, Marcia has not been able to get the resident to correct the deficiencies and is requesting the Selectboard intervene as the Board of Health. Kathy Scott offered an alternative approach for the Selectboard to consider.

Mike McLaine joined the meeting to announce that a petition was received today—the aforementioned anticipated petition re: voting on any budget articles by Australian ballot and whether to elect town officers by Australian ballot.

Michael Longo submitted a letter to the Selectboard formally stating his offer to work with the Road Crew to remove dead/dangerous trees in Town at a rate of \$80 per hour. Maureen questioned where this letter originated; Kord explained that Richard had spoken with Mike about utilizing his services. Brief discussion followed about the budget for Contracted Services. A suggestion was made to ask Richard to come in for discussion and submit documentation re: the proposal.

A note was submitted from the Asst. Town Clerk re: a property owner's request to pay property taxes via credit card. The town does not currently have a means of processing credit card payments. Brief discussion followed on agreements whereby the payer covers the fee of the credit card transaction. At Maureen's request, Kathy agreed to research this further.

A property tax payment was received with a note of criticism re: the tax rate "not being sustainable" and the need for the Town to "do whatever is necessary to reduce it to a level that people can afford..."

Executive Session—Personnel Evaluation preparation

Motion: To enter into Executive Session at 8:15 p.m. for the purpose of discussing personnel evaluation preparation—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Motion: To exit the Executive Session at 8:50 p.m.—moved by Kord—all in favor.

No actions were taken.

Further discussion of correspondence (petition received) was held briefly.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the regular Selectboard Meeting at 8:52 p.m. —moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Cumming
Selectboard Clerk

Attachments:

- Notification of Appointment to the Meeting House Committee
- Notifications of Appointments to the Social Services Committee
- Rescue Committee Report by David Cherry, M.D., Committee Chair
- Memo from Kathy Scott re: dates for budget review
- Public Safety Budget for 2020
- Winter Roads Policy for 2019-2020
- Correspondence
 - Letter from Marcia Clinton, Health Officer to Selectboard dated 31 October 2019 and correspondence to Erica Van Alstyne, 4 May 2018, 27 Sept. 2019, and notes
 - Letter from Michael Longo offering to work with Road Crew to remove hazardous trees