

Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2019 Meeting (rescheduled from 12-2-19)

Present:

Maureen Bell, Selectwoman
Peter Chamberlain, Selectman
Bob Bingham
Ginny Crittenden, Conservation Comm.
Russ Cumming, Lister
Tom Johnson, Energy Commission
Kathy Jungermann, Auditor

Kord Scott, Selectman
Vance Bell, Energy Commission
Dave Crittenden, W. Windham Cemetery Commission
Joyce Cumming, Selectboard Clerk
Bill Dunkel, Town Planning Commission
Louise Johnson, Windham Meetinghouse Committee
Kathy Scott, 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 Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue (hire).
- Maureen announced a webinar on setting appropriate speed limits scheduled for December 11 at 2 p.m. and asked Vance to access the webinar at the Town Office so that members of the Road Crew could participate.
- Maureen shared information on Cold Weather Driving Safety tips to be posted on a bulletin board.

Act on minutes: November 18, 2019 Regular Selectboard Meeting

Motion: To accept the minutes of the November 18, 2019 Regular Selectboard Meeting as presented—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Public Comment

Bill Dunkel noted that the Selectboard will hold a Public Hearing on proposed changes to the Town Plan on Monday, December 16, 2019 at 5 p.m. just prior to the regular Selectboard meeting.

New Business:

Esther Fishman – Recycling Coordinator, Londonderry Solid Waste Group

Discussion of agenda items was running early and Esther had not yet arrived-this topic will be discussed later.

Old Business:

Town Office printer networking

Vance reviewed the printer networking issues discussed at the last meeting. He was able to connect Russ' workstation to the printer. After noting how Vance resolved the issue, Russ was able to connect the other two Lister workstations to the printer. Vance was asked to address the auditors' workstation next.

“What if” – some Australian ballot questions answered

Maureen responded to a question raised by Kathy Scott at the last meeting, namely, the ability of the Town to tend to its financial obligations if the budget is voted down at Town Meeting in March and the vote on all budget articles by Australian ballot passes at the Special Town Meeting in December. After follow-up, Maureen reported that there is no timeline in this scenario and the budget would need to be re-voted as many times as necessary for approval. In response to a question from Ginny, Maureen explained that discussion on questions will be held from the floor at the Special Town Meeting on December 18. If the vote on all public questions by Australian ballot should fail, Windham will continue discussion from the floor at Town Meetings. If the vote on all public questions by Australian ballot should pass, Town Meeting becomes simply a voting day, and an informational meeting can be held on a date prior to, but not at, Town Meeting in March. Maureen distributed some information regarding problems and prospects surrounding Australian ballot voting (see attached “All Those in Favor”).

The Meeting House:

Funding request for repairs to existing and new emergency lighting

Russ noted that the Meeting House was inspected by the Fire Marshal and a written report is anticipated. He cited the need for repairs to the emergency lighting as a priority and safety issue. Emergency lighting repairs are anticipated to cost approximately \$1300 including fixtures and labor. In addition, the swing on several doors must be reversed to allow emergency egress—this work can be performed by volunteers and/or “Friends” at no expense. The Friends of the Meeting House will meet on Wednesday; and the Meeting House Committee meets on Thursday.

Kathy Scott suggested removing The Meeting House from the Appropriations budget and creating a separate budget category to include expenses and revenue associated with The Meeting House.

Motion: To establish a new budget category for the Meeting House and remove it from the Appropriations budget—moved by Kord—all in favor.

Brief discussion followed on whether to review the Meeting House budget as part of the Appropriations budget tonight as anticipated. Preliminary discussion will be held tonight with further review of the new budget category for the Meeting House scheduled for next meeting. Dave Crittenden noted that the insurance policy for the Meeting House was recently renewed in November. Originally, the agreement was that the Church would continue to support its share of the Meeting House expenses until the Town Meeting in March. During subsequent discussion of the transition to full ownership by the Town, January 1 was suggested as a target date. No formal action on the ownership transition has begun yet. Maureen suggested limiting discussion to the topic at hand and postponing further budget discussion until later.

New Business:

Esther Fishman – Recycling Coordinator, Londonderry Solid Waste Group

Esther introduced herself and explained that the Londonderry Transfer/Recycling Center is open to residents of the towns of Londonderry, Landgrove, Peru, Weston and Windham. As Recycling Coordinator, she is responsible for outreach to communities on topics such as disposal of electronics, hazardous waste collections, etc.

Discussion followed on dues and fees paid by its member towns. Last year, fees were reduced from the prior year; however, this year will bring an increase with another increase anticipated for next year. While Esther did not have specifics regarding the amount, she will be in touch with Kathy Scott once the new rates are established. One factor in the increase is the limited number of landfills remaining statewide. Another factor is the negative revenue from recycling. China no longer accepts plastic or paper for recycling. The transfer station charges for trash disposal but not recycling, and more and more materials are required to be recycled including food scraps which are banned from household trash effective July 1, 2020. The Londonderry Transfer Station accepts food scraps including meat and bones. Haulers are exempt from the requirement to pick-up food scrap waste, making it necessary for elderly customers to visit the transfer station to dispose of food scraps.

Esther passed out flyers outlining means for disposal of various household items, such as light bulbs, thermostats, batteries, electronics and paint. Brief discussion followed on disposal of electronics at the Winhall Transfer Station, and paint which is accepted at R.K. Miles and Sherwin-Williams. In response to a question from Bill Dunkel about recycling containers for boots and shoes, Esther explained that the big yellow box for Planet Aid has been replaced by two One World boxes for disposal of clothing and shoes. Bedding items are not accepted. All items must be clean and dry.

On behalf of the Selectboard, Maureen thanked Esther for the information.

Budgeting Process:

Appropriations

The proposed budget for Appropriations/Dues/Fees/Taxes was discussed. Kathy noted that the line items for the Abbott Fund and County Taxes should remain level funded at \$12 and \$7,500 respectively. Under Library, no request for an annual stipend was received for next year. Kathy reported that the expense for Fiber Optic is increasing from \$700 to \$1,000 for next year. Brief discussion followed re: whether the telephone expense was included or not. Dave Crittenden reported that the church pays part of the phone bill. Meeting House expenses will be reviewed at the next meeting as a free-standing budget category. Transfer Station was budgeted at \$15,393 for 2019. As just reported by Esther Fishman, this item will increase next year; this line item will be reviewed again when the new rate is known. VT DEC Watershed Expense was budgeted at \$900 for 2019. Brief discussion followed on both an annual fee and a permanent fee though only one of the two was charged this year. Maureen agreed to follow-up on this. VLCT will remain level funded at \$1523. Windham Regional Commission budgeted at \$1,000 for 2019 will increase to \$1,500 next year. The Appropriations budget will need further review once additional information is available.

Maureen mentioned that notice was received from NEMRC re: a substantial increase for next year from \$1,461 to \$5,000. Kathy suggested that because this software is used by various departments, it should be moved from the Town Office budget to Appropriations. The Selectboard will take this under consideration. Kathy went on to explain that this line item is single-source and the Town does not have an option re: choosing a service provider. The State reviews bids and then chooses the provider for all towns.

Selectboard

The Selectboard budget for next year was reviewed. Education & Seminars was budgeted at \$500 for 2019. A discrepancy was noted in the amounts shown for year-to-date expenses (\$335) and the balance (shown at \$570). Kathy believes the YTD amount of \$335 is accurate and the balance should be \$165. A suggestion was

made to level fund this line item for next year. Legal Services is over budget YTD by approximately \$950 due to expenses associated with the fuel spill, the Meeting House, and other factors. These expenses are not anticipated to be ongoing; therefore the line item for legal expenses was suggested for level funding at \$1,500. Mileage was suggested for level funding at \$300 next year. Payroll line items were requested for level funding: Select Board at \$7,500, Select Board Clerk at \$3,000, and Employer Fica/Medicare at \$803. Discussion followed on Public Notices which did not show any expenses YTD and whether expenses were applied elsewhere in the budget, i.e., the Energy Commission budget for notices regarding the Energy Plan, Roads for notices regarding vacancies, etc. A suggestion was made to level fund Public Notices at \$500 for next year.

Kathy noted a problem in attempts to issue amounts due posthumously to Hal Wilkins. After brief discussion, a suggestion was made to call VLCT for information. Failing there, Bob Fisher may be consulted. Maureen noted that the Windham Conservation Commission received correspondence from the Londonderry Conservation Commission acknowledging Hal for his service.

Budgets scheduled for review at the next meeting include Roads—Retreatment & Bridges; and Meeting House. Kord has initiated discussion of the Roads budget with Kurt and Richard. Kord noted that Bob Fisher outlined next steps for the Church in preparation for the transfer of the Meeting House to Town ownership. Kord will re-send the email from Bob Fisher outlining this information. Kord suggested that the Selectboard take formal action regarding the transfer at the next meeting. Brief discussion followed on whether the Church should have its own attorney or share the services of the Town attorney under separate expense. Dave Crittenden noted that the Church will continue its membership, just not the physical building, and may be able to donate some funds toward the Meeting House, whether to the Town or to the Friends of the Meeting House. Discussion followed on the National Register of Historic Places and the importance of historic preservation of the Meeting House. Maureen cited recent discussion by the Meeting House Committee regarding changing the name of the facility and advised against a change. Discussion followed on open communication between the Friends of the Meeting House, the Church, and the Meeting House Committee to avoid any miscommunications. Russ agreed to include Ginny and Dave Crittenden in information disseminated re: the Meeting House Committee; he already includes Peter Newton as member of the "Friends".

Roads

Storm Update

Maureen reported no complaints received about the plowing during the recent multi-day snow storm.

Correspondence/Payroll/Bills

Correspondence, payroll and bills were reviewed and approved as required. Maureen reviewed the notice from NEMRC mentioned earlier re: a substantial increase for next year from \$1,461 to \$5,000 (see attached).

Added: Executive Session

Executive Session to discuss a personnel issue—road crew hire.

Motion: To enter into Executive Session at 6:39 p.m. for the purpose of discussion re: personnel/road crew hiring—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Motion: To exit Executive Session at 6:47 p.m. and resume the public meeting—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Motion: To hire Asa Goodband for part-time road crew position (plowing) based on terms discussed in Executive Session—moved by Kord—all in favor.

Maureen agreed to check with Sgt. Lakin regarding DMV background check.

Added: Guard Rail Repair Quotes

Kord noted that one quote has been received so far for guard rail repairs. Another contractor opted not to bid. A third contractor came out to review the scope of work and was expected to submit a quote today which has not yet been received. Sealed bids were not required for this work. Brief discussion followed on the possible need for a brief special meeting to discuss and award the contract should the second quote arrive. Both Maureen and Peter are available should this be the case.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the regular Selectboard meeting at 6:52 p.m.—moved by Maureen—all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Cumming
Selectboard Clerk

Attachments:

- Cold Weather Driving Safety Tips
- Recycling Flyer
- "All Those in Favor" - Problems and Prospects: Australian Ballot
- Appropriations Budget for 2020
- Select Board Budget for 2020
- Letter from NEMRC dated November 19, 2019 re: rate increase for 2020