Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes

August 2, 2021 Regular Meeting

In Person: Via Zoom:

Maureen Bell, Selectboard Chair George Dutton, Selectboard

Kord Scott, Selectboard Marcia Clinton, various positions

Vance Bell, various positions Joyce Cumming

Dawn Bower, various positions Mike McLaine, Town Clerk

Louise Johnson, Town MHC Carolyn Rubin

Tom Johnson, various positions Jeff Rubin

Kathy Jungermann, various positions

Kathy Scott, Treasurer

Gail Wyman, Assistant Treasurer

**Call to Order:**

Maureen announced the meeting and called it to order at 5:30 PM

**Additions to Agenda/Announcements/Reminders**

There were none.

**Act on minutes from July 19 Selectboard Meeting**

Motion: To accept the minutes of the Selectboard Meeting – moved by Maureen. Kord and Maureen voted in favor.

**Public Comment**

Kathy Jungermann would like to express her gratitude to the Road Crew for the work they do under tough conditions like the rainstorm last week. Dawn stated similar thoughts.

**Correspondence**

Read message from Vermont Interfaith Action regarding a memorial service to honor all Vermonters lost to Covid-19. It will be Sunday, September 19 at 3PM on the State House Lawn in Montpelier.

**New Business:**

**Set Tax Rate**

The Education Tax Rates are:

Homestead - $1.6402 (LY $1.7586) and Nonhomestead – $1.6478 (LY $1.5925)

The Municipal Tax Rate is:

$0.80 (LY $0.81)

George asked what say we have on these and Maureen explained that the State sets the Education Rate, and the Municipal Rate is based on our budget, which is voted on, on Town Meeting Day.

Kathy Scott advised that in the NEMRC system, we have the option of checking a box which would waive the penalty fee for those who file their Homestead status late. The fee, when collected, does not go to the Town, but directly to the State. In previous years, those who had been assessed that penalty usually asked the Town to waive it, so this will eliminate that step.

Motion: To approve Homestead Education Tax Rate of $1.6402, Nonhomestead Education Tax Rate of $1.6478 and Municipal Tax Rate of $0.80 and to click the box on the NEMRC system which will eliminate the penalty fee associated with late-filing Homestead status – moved by Maureen. All voted in favor.

**Old Business:**

**The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding**

It is confirmed that we will be receiving $41,546 from the Federal government. We should be seeing half of that very soon and the remainder in about a year. Maureen spoke with ARPA fund coordinator Katie Buckley at VLCT about this, as she had been contacted by The Chester Telegraph to see what in what direction we’re headed. Katie reassured me that we should take our time and get it right. We don’t have to commit to any plan until the end of 2024 and we don’t have to use the money until the end of 2026. There are certain things we can spend the money on and many things we cannot. Maureen is considering a special meeting to deal with this topic.

Kord asked for specifics on how we can spend it. It’s still a little vague. At the very least we can collect it as a revenue loss and put it to the bottom line. Kathy Scott perked up on this and understands the concept. Maureen might not be explaining it exactly right, but it’s something like the Government is saying we should have a 4.1% revenue growth year over year and if we do not, we can claim the money due to revenue loss. Katie is quite sure that no Vermont town would meet this growth. There are other ways – childcare initiatives if they support the economic growth of the Town; a rec center might be feasible. There are also some infrastructure projects to look at. Again, according to Katie, there is no need to rush.

**The Meeting House:**

**Septic/Plumbing update**

Dorr pumped and cleaned the tank and cleaned the drain line in the kitchen last week. It’s in good shape. There was very little sludge and debris. Since we don’t know the last time it was pumped, this was a good idea. Dorr recommends putting us on a 5-year schedule. The tank is a 1000-gallon tank. We should make a date to look at this in 2026.

**Tree Work update**

Green Mountain Power (GMP) will come in on August 20 to disconnect the power line so Michael Longo can take the tree down. The Road Crew will work with Michael to, at the very least, get the debris out of the way so that it’s not blocking the parking lot and looks decent for the memorial service scheduled for the next day.

Michael will start doing the rest of the trees this week. He’ll be off next week and then back again the following week. Richard will be helping with the cleanup. If anyone sees the wood and wants it, they can come pick it up. If there’s anything left, Michael will pick it up and take it to the ANUFF wood program in Townshend.

Louise expressed concern about GMP coming back to reconnect the power line at the end of the day. There is a memorial service in the building the next day. Kord assured her that GMP will take care of it.

Pete Newton and Richard (on his own time, as a volunteer) will be scheduling a crew to help with cleanup.

About the power line disconnect, Kord wondered if there is anything in the refrigerators to be concerned with. There is nothing in them currently. They will be turned on after the power is restored.

**Roads:**

**July 20 Storm Damage**

Kord and Richard met with VTrans and had the initial damage assessment meeting on Saturday. It looks like the damage to Wheeler Road is in the $250-300,000 range. Kord thinks the total damage to the Town will be about $400,000. We had 4 culverts washed out – 1 x 24” and 3 x 18”. There are 10-14 different locations around Town that got damaged. Marc Pickering from VTrans expects that FEMA will be out here to assess the damage next week.

We are allowed to start work on repairs, especially if it means opening a road or keeping one open/functioning. Have to document everything with pictures. We actually had 3 different contractors working in Town and by the end of the day, they had the culverts all replaced and they were doing ditching work along Burbee Pond Road.

We ran out of safety cones, signage and barricades. We have to remember that when the Safety Grant is publicized.

**Highway Ordinance discussion**

Sheriff’s Officer Robert Lakin had a ticket challenged and thrown out in court due to something a judge saw in our highway ordinance. The Sheriff’s department doesn’t have a “certified” copy and that caused the problem. He’s asked us to supply him with that. Mike found the ordinance from 1994. We need to resume work on updating the ordinance. The ordinance, as it currently stands, is on the website.

We’ve done a traffic study and established that we should have a town-wide speed limit of 35mph. Along with that, we’d have to have correct signage.

**Rt 121 Culvert project**

We were contacted by the engineer on the culvert project. He wanted us to know that they’re making progress and will be contacting us again shortly to schedule another Local Concerns public meeting.

Culvert-related, but a different project – The Chase Road culvert, for which we have received grant funding, was designed a while ago by engineer Everett Hammond. He is going to review the project and make sure the cost fits into the parameters of the funding.

**Payroll and Bills:**

Everything looked in order for signing. Maureen signed for the Board.

**Adjournment:**

Motion: To adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 6:06 PM – moved by Kord. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bell

Acting Selectboard Clerk