Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2022 Regular Meeting

Via Zoom:

Maureen Bell, Selectboard Chair

Kord Scott, Selectboard

George Dutton, Selectboard

Vance Bell, various positions

Louise Johnson, Town Meeting House Committee

Tom Johnson, various positions

Kathy Jungermann, various positions

Imme Maurath, various positions

Stephan Maurath

Al McLaine, Assistant Town Clerk

Pat McLaine, Auditor

Kathy Scott, Treasurer

Gail Wyman, Assistant Treasurer

**Call to Order**

Maureen announced the meeting and called it to order at 5:31 PM

**Additions to Agenda/Announcements/Reminders**

Kord announced that a group of coworkers are sending Maureen a gift from the Brattleboro

Co-op. He expressed appreciation to Maureen for all the hard work she has done. He respects her and thanks her for the many extra efforts she has put in over many years.

**Act on minutes from February 7, 2022 Selectboard Meeting**

**Motion**: To approve the minutes of the February 7 Selectboard Meeting – moved by Maureen. All voted in favor.

**Public Comment**

Maureen thanked Pat McLaine for her assistance with the minutes.

Imme said she, Kord and Bill Dunkel (Planning Commission) had gotten together to discuss 2 of the known loggers currently working in Town. Neither have a heavyweight permit. Hitchcock Hill has often been blocked. The group is trying to determine exactly who is in Town doing this work.

Separate, but related issue, George wanted to know how we get permission from VTrans to eliminate the heavy traffic on our roads, like Chester has done. Kord said that classification has to be approved by the Legislature. George wondered if checking with Chester would be a good place to start, since they have successfully banned this traffic. George will start the inquiry.

**Correspondence**

There was no mail correspondence.

**Old Business**

**Town Office air exchange system repair**

George said he spoke with Bill Farace, who had been involved in this, but had forgotten where things ended up. Bill might have the motor in his garage. George hasn’t heard from Bill since the initial conversation. George thinks that someone else had looked at the system but didn’t know who – they were unable to figure out the problem. He will follow up with Bill. Maureen expressed concern that it has been quite a while since this was first discussed and important to get this work moving.

**More information on Town-wide reappraisal – reminder of December 23, 2021 letter**

Maureen reminded us that the Town did get a letter from the State dated December 23 stating that our numbers (Common Level of Appraisal – CLA and Coefficient of Dispersion – COD) meet the criteria for reappraisal. Again, it is not a matter of if, but when. The new Selectboard might want to talk about it sooner, rather than later.

**Roads**

Kord indicated that Everett Hammond worked up cost estimates for 2 projects, Chase Road and Wheeler Road

**Update on Chase Road project – sign engineering agreement**

Kord checked in with Marc Pickering of VTrans to see if they would increase the amount of our Structures grant from $175,000 to $200,000, since that was the new upper threshold that has been established and aligns with our estimate. Our grant was awarded just before that. VTrans had a lot of Towns asking for the increase and decided they couldn’t do it for any one of them.

Everett had a few ideas about what we (Road Crew) could do ourselves to save some money and he modified his agreement to exclude on-site monitoring of the contractor. Richard is capable and confident in doing this, so we’ll save Everett’s fee. The total project estimate is now doable at $175,000.

**Motion:** To sign the engineering agreement with Everett for the project – moved by Kord. All voted in favor.

Kord indicated that this project and the next one to discuss (Wheeler Road) will both have box culvert designs. Everett has reached out to local contractors and found that the culverts are now in short supply. He will get quotes for fabrication of the culverts directly from manufacturers, rather than waiting until we have a contractor lined up, thereby decreasing the time to get the projects going as well as decreasing some of the costs, like the contractor’s mark-up. Kord asked to have some flexibility to meet with Everett and make a decision on ordering the culvert(s) and putting out bids for construction. This will make it easier to get in the queue as early as possible, hopefully in time for this construction season. The culverts will of course have to meet the specifications required by the Agency of Natural Resources and the Stream Engineer.

**Update on Wheeler Road culvert project**

This is a FEMA project. Kord spoke with the manager and VT Emergency Management who is overseeing the project about how we should proceed. Kord reminded the Selectboard that the VTrans Rt 121 project cost $200,000 more due to requirements for bidding and a municipal project manager. Kord said there is a little more flexibility because this is storm damage and the upgrade is built-in as part of the project, but he doesn’t have a solid answer about what can be done. Everett Hammond put together an engineering proposal and project cost estimate. Kord sent them to FEMA and VT Emergency Management for review and hopefully will get approval of the process, treating it like a “normal culvert replacement” project. Kord can’t sign the agreement or make any orders until we are sure that we will be reimbursed for the work. Again, Kord asked for flexibility to make decisions on this.

**Motion:** To give Kord the flexibility he needs to get the culverts ordered – moved by George.

As long as we don’t violate any of the FEMA regulations, Maureen is ok with this. Kord assured her he won’t move on the Wheeler Road project until it is cleared with FEMA.

All voted in favor.

**Update on Capital Equipment replacement schedule**

Maureen put the schedule on the screen. Kord indicated that we are trying to get this to work like the long-term paving plan, showing the contribution from Town Meeting articles any other sources of revenue. The top part tracks the fund balances. Numbers for equipment we have and are going to replace are accurate for the time being. Purchase date and costs of equipment are shown, including the number of years until anticipated replacement. Maureen indicated that the document will be helpful for future planning. Kord is planning to further update the document.

**Payroll/Bills**

Maureen had a question about the Hartgen Archaeology payment for $2880. She didn’t have a chance to do the research, but she did not remember the figure being that high. Kathy said the document was submitted by Otter Creek Engineering and she can question them about it.

**Motion**: To approve the bills (with the exception of Hartgen Archaeology for now) and authorize Kord to sign off on them for the Selectboard – moved by Maureen. All voted in favor.

**Indulge me for 2 minutes!**

Maureen thanked everyone for coming to the Informational Meeting on Saturday. She said that being on the Windham Selectboard has been such a wonderful experience and she has learned so much about so many things, especially roads. She was even certified as a traffic flagger.

Maureen thanked everyone she has served with on the Selectboard and indicated it had been a real pleasure to work with them. She offered special thank-yous to Mike McLaine, Kathy Scott and Gail Wyman. To the engaged citizens who attended meetings – than you for your time and support. To the Road Crews, past and present, thank you for your hard work and big smiles and keeping us all safe. Thank you to the many other Town Officers and Committee Members – it has been a real pleasure. This has been a highlight of Maureen’s life, for which she is very grateful.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion**: To adjourn the Selectboard meeting at 6:03 PM – moved by Kord. All voted in favor.

Next regular and reorganizational Selectboard meeting is scheduled for March 7, 2022 at 5:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Bell, Acting Selectboard Clerk

(With terrific assistance, once again, from Pat McLaine)