

**Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
May 20, 2022 Emergency Meeting**

**In-Person at Meeting House**

Kord Scott, selectboard chair  
Michael Pelton, selectboard

Jessica Clay, dog owner  
Erica Van Alstyne, dog owner  
Erica Abbott, relative of dog owners  
Ashley Pinger, sheriff's animal control officer  
Capt. Paul Samataro, sheriff's office  
Robert Larkin, sheriff's office

Kathy Scott  
Jim Lawler  
Imme Maurath

**Via Zoom**

George Dutton, selectboard  
Mary McCoy, selectboard clerk  
Elizabeth Sober, complainant  
George Heslin  
Barbara Letterberger  
Becky Eliastam

Maureen Bell  
Gail Wyman  
Marcia Clinton  
Stephan Maurath  
Crystal Corriveau

**Recording and Call to Order**

Kord started the Zoom recording at 11:59 AM and called the meeting to order at 12:00 Noon. Kord explained that this was a quasi-judicial meeting with a procedure that would be followed. He acknowledged that this is an emotional issue, and urged all speakers to stick to the facts.

**Reading of the Complaint**

Michael Pelton read these out loud. (See attached Rules.) There were no questions asked.

**Definition of a Quasi-judicial Body**

Michael Pelton read these out loud. (See attached Rules.) There were no questions asked.

**Conflicts of Interest**

Michael read the definition of conflicts of interest. (See Rules attached.) Kord asked if the dog owners or complainant had any conflicts of interest, and all replied that they had none.

**Receipt of Complaint by Dog Owners**

The dog owners acknowledged that they had received a copy of the complaint within the time required.

**Complainant**

Elizabeth Sober swore to tell the truth. She is waiting to hear about the rabies report, as one of the dogs that chased her was not vaccinated, and she does not know which of the two bit her. She urged the selectboard to ensure that the dogs are vaccinated and licensed and to enforce the town's dog ordinances to protect the safety of residents. The selectboard had no questions for her.

**Dog Owner 1**

Jessica Clay swore to tell the truth. She was not present at the time of the biting, but at other times has tried to keep the dogs inside, except when they needed to go outside to the bathroom. Her dog, Angus, is friendly, vaccinated, and has never bitten anyone. She is not sure how the dogs got outside.

Jessica answered questions. George asked why they had not put up a fence. Jessica said they plan to install an electric fence, as they can't afford an in-ground one. Michael asked her to verify that they have had multiple complaints about their dogs. Jessica said that Zoey, the German shepherd, ran

free at their former home, and they are doing their best to keep her in since they moved. Kord asked if they can afford to have a dog, Jessica said they can take care of dogs' food and basics, just not an in-ground fence. George commented that a small area with an in-ground fence could be better than an electric fence, because dogs will ignore the electric shock if they're protecting their owners or territory.

### **Dog Owner 2**

Erica Van Alstyne swore to tell the truth. She confirmed that two dogs, Zoey and Cash, left their property at the time Elizabeth was bitten. Cash is not vaccinated, but is getting the shot, and both dogs will get registered. She wants to control the dogs with an electric fence and possibly a shock collar. Michael asked her to clarify the dogs' vaccination and registration status, and Erica said neither is registered or vaccinated. Michael asked what steps they have taken after receiving previous complaints, and Erica said they let the dogs out one and a time and watch them. Kord asked why they have not been confined on a leash as ordered. Erica said dogs in a rural area normally run free.

### **Public Comment**

George Haslin said he disputes what the family says. Gary Clay gave him a number to call if the dogs are on George's property, but George has called the number many times, and no one has ever answered. He stated that as soon as they arrive at their house, the neighbors' dogs are there. George swore he told the truth.

Erica Abbott swore to tell the truth. She is a relative and spends time at the Clay home. She said there are also children at the house who let the dogs out, and it is hard to stop that from happening. She said the family is going to put up an electric fence. She had one once that worked well. Erica commented that other people's dogs run free, and she wondered why her family was being targeted.

Becky Eliastam swore to tell the truth. Her family went through a vicious dog complaint, and the town required them to build an in-ground fence, which they could not afford. The cost of these fences is prohibitive, so she asked the selectboard to seriously consider an electric fence. There were no questions for her.

### **Animal Control Officer**

Ashley Pinger swore to tell the truth. She referred to the document she presented for the selectboard. (See attached.) She has interacted with the family numerous times. They had been told to keep their dogs on leashes whenever they were outside or to erect an electric fence. In her view, Angus is a sweet dog and is not a problem. Cash needs containment, as he has bitten before and could be the one who bit Elizabeth. He has a history of running at large. George asked about previous fines related to the dogs. Ashley said all fines are unpaid, and Cash and Angus are not registered.

### **Adjournment**

Kord stated that a letter with the selectboard's decision will be sent within seven days.

**Moved:** To adjourn the meeting at 12:53 PM and go into deliberative session.

Kord moved and all agreed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary McCoy, selectboard clerk  
Minutes approved June 6, 2022

Accompanying documents:

Rules and Procedure for Selectboard Vicious Dog/Wolf Hybrid Hearings

Complainant's Statement

Clay and Van Alstyne Dog Issue History