**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes**

**October 17, 2022 Regular Meeting**

**at Meeting House and on Zoom**

**Via Zoom *Others attending via Zoom for part of meeting:***

George Dutton, selectboard

Michael Pelton, selectboard

Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk

**Guests at the Meeting House**

Andrew French, Silvio Conte Refuge

Jon Binhammer, VT Nature Conservancy

Jim Shallow, VT Nature Conservancy

Imme and Steve Maurath

Tom & Louise Johnson

Tom & Eileen Widger

Maureen & Vance Bell

Joyce & Russ Cumming

Ginny & Dave Crittenden

**Also at Meeting House**

Kord Scott, selectboard chair

Dawn Bower

Alison Trowbridge

Abby Pelton

Becky Elaistram

Eve Frankel

Pat McLaine

Jon Gordan

Marcia Clinton

air

**1. Call to Order**

Kord announced the meeting, called it to order, and started the recording at 5:35 PM.

**2. Changes to Agenda**

There were no additions to the agenda. Kord said he would skip the first item under Old Business, as Town Clerk Ellen McDuffie is still getting bids and is not ready to discuss buying a new copier.

**3. Announcements/Reminders**

Kord let people know that today is Bill Dunkel’s birthday. Kord also thanked those who have wished Kathy Scott a speedy recovery.

**4. Act on Minutes from 10/3/22**

There were no changes to the minutes from the meeting on October 3, 2022.

**Motion:** To approve the October 3rd minutes. Kord moved, and all agreed.

**5. Public Comment**

Imme suggested that selectboard meetings be moved to the Town Office, as it is heated 24/7, whereas the heat at the Meeting House is turned on and off. Kord said the selectboard wants to see how many people will attend in person. Meetings might continue via Zoom only.

**6. Correspondence**

* A request was received from Ellen to buy paint for the entrance to the Town Office. The purchase can be made at Londonderry Hardware where the town has an account.

**Moved:** To approve the purchase of paint for the Town Office. Kord moved, and all agreed.

* Michael received information from the VLCT regarding taxing those in town with vacation rentals. They said we can do this, if it is included in our town charter. Mac reported that there are five Windham homes listed on either Airbnb or VRBO.

**Next Step:** Michael will further research this tax option.

* Emails were received regarding a loose animal that ate a neighbor’s crops. Town Constable Jim Lawler and Animal Control Officer Ashley Pinger followed up, telling the owner of the loose animal that fencing must be installed to restrain the animal that got loose.

**Next Step:** This incident will be the agenda for the next meeting.

**7. Payroll/Bills**

There were no questions and nothing to discuss.

**Moved:** To approve the pay orders received from the town treasurer. Kord moved, and all agreed.

**Moved:** To have Kord sign for the payments presented. Kord moved, and all agreed.

**8. New Business**

**A)** Update from Nature Conservancy Regarding Glebe Mountain – Jim Shallow from Vermont’s chapter of Nature Conservancy read an overview of his organization. He explained that his organization purchased the land on Glebe Mt. previously owned by the McGraw family. It has been open to the public and has been made more animal-friendly as a wildlife refuge. The Nature Conservancy is now selling the land to the federal government to be under the auspices of the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service. He said this will create a loss in tax revenue for the town of about $2,620 per year.

Andy French spoke representing that Service’s Conde Reserve. He wants to work with the town to mitigate this change. There are benefits to towns that host a wildlife refuge, primarily related to repairs and upgrades for roads leading to the refuge.

Questions and comments followed, with Andy providing this information:

*­Traffic Problems*: They understand the problem with traffic and parking for Hamilton Falls, and will work to avoid those problems with this refuge. As public land, the refuge will have good parking and signage, and funds will be available to improve access to the area.

*Habitat Protection:* They are driven to do whatever is best for wildlife. Timber will be harvested only to improve habitat. There is no possibility of a wind installation, as it would not be compatible with a wildlife refuge.

*Community Asset*: They want to be good neighbors and make the refuge an assist to the community. It will be open to the public. There will be well-maintained trails, including those with universal access. Snowmobiling will continue to be allowed on routes designated by the state. Roads to the refuge can receive federal funds that will cover their entire cost of improvements. Andy did not know if those funds could create a new road to the refuge.

*Influx of Outsiders*: They will not advertise to encourage people to visit the refuge, except to include it on their website. When confronted with problems like visitors littering and disrespecting local residents, they will rely on their experience since 1975 in managing and tempering the way the area is used.

*Further Info*: If people have more questions, they can call Andy at 413-313-8682. Andy and Jim will come back for a meeting for the sole purpose of providing more information, including figures on the financial impact on the town.

**Next Step:** Alison, head of Windham’s Conservation Committee, will contact her counterpart in Londonderry to set up an informational meeting focused on this change that will impact folks in these two towns.

**B)** FEMA’s Building Resilient Infrastructure **–** The application is due December 9th.

**Next Step:** Kord will pursue this and report at the next meeting.

**C)** Municipal Planning Grants – The application is due December 1. Kord needs Bill Dunkel’s input.

**Next Step:** Kord will speak with Bill about this grant.

**D)** AARP Grant – Maureen reported that AARP is giving towns up to $4,000 to create a sense of place for older residents during the winter. This is a way to heat the Meeting House for programs for seniors. They can meet for lunch or games or whatever. Maureen has received input from the community and is submitting an application. Maureen read a letter of support that she asked the selectboard to sign.

**Moved:** To sign a letter of support for the AARP grant application. Kord moved, and all agreed.

**Next Step:** Kord will sign for the selectboard before the Wednesday deadline.

**E)** Route 121 Culvert Issue – Kord said that work on the culvert has revealed a problem with the grade of the road near the culvert, not far from Four Corners after it becomes gravel enroute to Grafton. There is a sag in the road that doesn’t meet state standards. To fix it, they have to build up the road. The current speed limit there is 40 mph, and that demands more extensive buildup than if the speed limit was 35 mph.

This relates to the question of lowering the town’s speed limit to 35. Or we could say it is 40 on paved roads and 35 on gravel. Or we could say it is 35 (or 40) except where it is posted otherwise. Lowering the speed limit might also help address the speeding issues on West Windham Rd.

An ordinance would have to be passed to make a change. Speed studies have been done on our paved roads and on West Windham Road. One can be done on that section of 121. The work on the culvert can be delayed. This situation can motivate a change in town speed limits.

**Next Steps**:Kord will speak to town attorney, Bob Fisher, about changing the ordinance. He will also arrange a speed study of the gravel section of Rt. 121.

**9. Old Business**

**A)** Canon Copier Upgrade to Color – This was tabled until Ellen is present.

**B)** Sale of Town Properties and Decision on Rt. 121 Land – Kord contacted the person who made an offer on the Woodburn Rd. property and the person who made an offer on Horsenail Hill property to let them know that we are accepting their offers. Two of the parties who bid on the Rt. 121 land have indicated that they want to use the site for storage. Both had not seen the land, which cannot be built upon. The other offer was from Jon Gordan who wants to use it as a picnic area for his family.

**Moved:** To sell the land to Jon Gordan. Kord moved, and all agreed.

**Next Step:** Kord will ask Bob to prepare sales agreements.

**C)** Town Office Insulation – Kord reported that Vermont Foam Insulation will install the insulation during the first week of January. They agreed to delay the need for a deposit.

[Note: An email received on the day after this meeting changed the insulation date to December 14-16. They require that the office be closed during this time.]

**D)** Town Office Air-Exchange System – George asked a contact at F.W. Webb for application advice, and he recommended we speak to an engineer. Kord talked to John Penny, an engineer, who has advised many others. He suggested a replacement of the HRV that is sized appropriately with new duct work. Another option is a Lunos system which does not have ducts but is mounted in the exterior walls and can be installed by an electrician.

**Next Step:** Kord will get prices for a new HRV system and for the Lunos.

**E)** AV Equipment – Maureen said we need a speaker and a cart. A second camera for the person running the meeting would be useful.

**Next Step:** Experiment with what we have and investigate what is needed.

**F)** ARPA Committee – Mac reported the committee wants input from the town’s people about their opinions of the eight projects the committee has identified, and they will conduct a Survey Monkey, asking the town’s folks to weigh in with their opinions. There was discussion about controlling who takes the survey. Mac said anyone with an email address can take it, but they will ask respondents if they live in Windham and if they live here part-time or full-time. Mac asked the selectboard to approve the possible costs. If there are more than 40 respondents, it will cost $99 for one month’s use or $198 for two months. A plan for multiple surveys over the course of a year is $498. Several people commented that Survey Monkey could be beneficial to the town related to other matters.

**Next Step:** The selectboard will pay for one month’s cost, and will pay for a year’s plan if this survey exceeds one month.

Kord reported that David Cherry contacted him regarding DVFiber, saying commitments from towns are needed by June. He said $10,000 from the ARPA funds would help with the cost of the fiber optic cable installation, which would be doubled by another source.

In the interest of time, items G) and H) were tabled until the next meeting.

**I)** ZBA Decision on Wheeler Rd. Property – The landowner has asked that the stop work order be lifted, but lifting the stop work order is conditioned on his hiring an engineer to create a plan to protect the slope from erosion. The landowner said he has hired an engineer, and it will be many weeks for the engineer to complete the plan. He wants the stop work order to be lifted long enough to cover the foundation and control drainage in preparation for winter. Bill Dunkel spoke with the engineer who confirmed that he has been hired, but has not received a deposit. Bill also spoke with Bob Fisher, town attorney, to confirm that the ZBA has the authority to temporarily lift the stop work order to address the fact that winter is coming.

**Next Step:** Bill will get a confirmation from the engineer that he has received the deposit, and if so, he will move forward with temporarily lifting the stop work order.

**J)** LHMP Project – Kord received a list from the Windham Regional Commission of who should serve on the LHMP planning team.

**Next Step:** Kord will contact everyone on the list to confirm their participation and plan the first meeting.

**Adjournment**

**Moved:** To adjourn the meeting at 7:25 PM. George moved and all agreed.

**The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 7 at 5:30 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk