**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes**

**November 21, 2022 Regular Meeting**

**at Town Office and on Zoom**

**Via Zoom *Others attending via Zoom:***

George Dutton, selectboard

Michael Pelton, selectboard

Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk

**At the Town Office**

Kord Scott, selectboard chair

Jim Lawler, constable

Tom & Louise Johnson

Becky Eliastram

Carrie Tintle

Ron Cohen

Maureen Bell

Gail Wyman

Abby Pelton

Jeff Rubin

Leigh Merinoff

**1. Start Recording and Call to Order**

Kord announced the meeting, started the recording, and called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

**2. Changes to Agenda**

There were three additions to the agenda: Discussion of burned house on Abbott Rd., discussion of the town plan and Chapter 11, and discussion of jet maneuver noise.

**3. Announcements/Reminders**

Kord announced that the Town Office will be closed December 14-16 when insulation is installed in the building.

**4. Act on Minutes from the Previous Meeting**

There were no changes to the minutes from the meeting on November 7, 2022.

**Motion:** To approve the November 7, 2022 minutes. Kord moved, and all agreed.

**5. Public Comment**

There were no comments from the public.

**6. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

**7. Payroll/Bills**

There were no questions. Michael noted that the fuel costs have increased 2 ½ times from last year.

**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)** Discuss & Approve NeighborWorks TO energy audit update charge (for rebate) – The town is eligible for a $3,000 rebate on the insulation work, if we conduct an energy audit before and after the insulation work. The audit costs $500, for a savings of $2,500.

**Moved:** Kord moved to approve the audit from NeighborWorks. All agreed.

**B)** Discuss creating a directory of services offered by residents – Michael said that Chapter 10 of our town plan encourages support for town businesses. He asked the selectboard to support the creation of a directory of services offered by residents; there was no disagreement.

**Next Step:** Michael will draft a letter for the website and the N&N to promote participation in the directory.

Michael said Chapter 11 of the town plan talks about town goals and their implementation. Michael wants the selectboard to support the town plan in these regards.

**Next Step:** Mac will add a discussion of Chapter 11 to the parking lot for the next selectboard meeting.

**C)** Jet Plane Noise – Leigh Merinoff reported her concerns about the noise from jet plane maneuvers over her property, which is disturbing to the elementary students when they visit her farm. She is also concerned that the planes will eject fuel onto her land. She asked if the selectboard could find out when the maneuvers happen and when they will stop.

**Next Step:** ~~Kord~~ Michael will see what he can find out about this.

**D)** Discuss Chase Rd and WHRd signage after accident – Michael reported that a car recently went through the stop sign at end of Chase Road, across Windham Hill Road, and onto the Corriveau’s property. This is the second or third similar incident at this intersection.

**Moved**:George moved put up a sign warning of the upcoming stop. All agreed.

**9) Old Business**

**A)** Update on VTrans FY24 Better Roads Grant Program due 12/6 – Kord & Richard have an upcoming meeting regarding a Class B grant for $20,000 and a Class C grant for $60,000 . He reported that support from VTrans for creating a connection between Ingalls and Old Farm Roads is unlikely, as they told him there are greater priorities for them in Windham and other towns.

**B)** Update on FY23 VTrans Grant for New Salt Shed—Kord reported that no alternative sites have been found for the new salt shed, despite his search for one. He asked others to look for two acres for the shed or four or five acres for the shed, garage, and other road crew storage. It was noted that we currently do not have the money for such land or other new buildings.

**Next Step:** Kord will ask Ellen to put out an email blast, asking about possible locations.

**C)** Update on another fuel tank location and ways to conserve fuel – Michael wondered if anything could be done about the 2 ½ increase in fuel costs. He said that in Wyoming, fuel is purchased by the semi-trailer load, making it possible to buy large quantities at once at a lower rate.

**Next Step:** Michael will ask Cota & Cota about this possibility. George will ~~ask Dead River and other~~ check diesel pricing from other fuel suppliers.

We have been asked to donate our old 500-gallon tank for use on a VAST trail. We would want assurance that the old tank, which might leak, sits in a ~~retainer~~ containment basin and is safe ecologically.

**Moved:** To give the 500-gallon tank for use Chester Snowmobile Club, with the understanding that it be set in a retaining tank. Kord moved, and all agreed.

**D)** Report on Town Office Improvements – Kord received three estimates on the improvements to the ventilation systems, for $5800 from Cody Jeffers, $6000 from Tim Jeffers, and $7800 from Alliance. The lower estimates do not include the extra ducts that the larger estimate specifies and which consultant John Perry recommended. The cost of the insulation and the ventilation would total $21,618, using the highest estimate for ventilation. With the rebate we get of $3,000 minus $500 for the energy audits, we have $22,282 for the insulation and ventilation.

**Moved:** To have the energy audits done. Kord moved and all agreed.

It would be best, not is not essential, to have the ventilation work done before the insulation begins December 14th.

**Next Step:** Kord will contact the two installers to include the extra ducts in new estimates and to find out when all three installers could do the work.

**Moved:** To choose a ventilation installer. If we get updated info from them quickly, a special selectboard meeting will be held to select the installer. If not, a decision will be made at the next selectboard meeting. Kord moved, and all agreed.

Kord reported that he spoke with a water compliance person regarding the foul water in the Town Office. We start by sending samples of the water to be tested. He and George know people who do testing.

Kord acknowledged the new paint on the interior walls of the Town Office, and he thanked Carrie for her excellent painting. The lighting still needs to be improved, and Ellen may have already contacted Bob Kehoe (Sparky Electric) about this.

**Next Step:** George will talk to Bob and present an update at the next meeting.

**E)** Update on Town Office NAS data backup system – Our new system for backing up Town Office data will start Friday. It will also backup our recordings on the website, although this work will need to wait a short while. Backups will be automatic. Videos of meetings will be stored for one year.

**F)** Consider Workshop On Solutions for Local Housing Needs (12/1) – Kord and George are unable to attend.

**Next Steps:** Michael will see if he can arrange to attend. He will also see if Leigh Merinoff would like to attend.

**G)** Update of the role of town constable & the equipment/training required – Michael shared info from the VLCT saying we can increase the scope of our constable’s work and make it a paid position. It costs $1800 for the necessary training and certification. Complete outfitting could be as much as $4,000. There’s also the issue of insurance for his vehicle, making the total as much as $6,000. We currently pay the sheriff $5,000 to $10,000 per year for work that the constable will be able to do. So it would cost us initially, but we ~~would~~ might be well served to have our own constable have some increased responsibilities.

Jim said he also spoke with folks at the VLCT, and the next training is in March. He has to take this, even though he is already well-trained in law enforcement. He has most of the equipment he needs, except for traffic cones. If he is hired as a parttime employee, he will concentrate on weekend traffic speed control.

Michael recommended that the town provide the cones, a safety vest, a first aid kit, or whatever Jim needs, and he recommended that Jim have the required training and certification. Michael told Jim he was doing a great job, and George said he was grateful for Jim’s work.

**Next Step:** Kord will ask Richard if we have any traffic cones. Jim will make a list of the equipment he needs.

**H)** Update on changing speed limits and speed enforcement activity – Kord spoke with his contact in the Sheriff’s Department who acknowledged that the speed enforcement coverage here has been lacking. Kord will talk to Mark Anderson to provide more coverage. Michael said the Sheriff’s Dept is a contract agency, we have a contract with them, and we can demand appropriate service.

In terms of changing our speed limits, the VLCT advisors said we need to identify what roads will have what speeds. Kord asked Michael and George to each make a list of roads and what they think the speed limits should be for each. George said he would like to have speed studies done on Route 121 and Horsenail Hill Road. He, Michael, and Kord agreed that the limit on unpaved roads should be 35 mph. Michael said that Chapter 7 of the town plan calls for a reduction in the speed limit through the two hamlets (South Windham and the cluster near the Meeting House), and it would be reasonable to have a limit of 30 at both hamlets.

Jim suggested checking with the VLCT to see if he can issue warnings (not tickets) to speeders before he is certified. Kord said we also need to find out if the funds we receive for law enforcement can be used for the constable or however we want. There is much still to learn.

**Next Step:** Kord will talk with the Sheriff’s Dept about getting increased speed enforcement and additional speed studies. Each on the selectboard will make a list of what the speed limits should be on each road. Kord will learn more about the process for changing speed limits and if reimbursements for law enforcement can be used in whatever way we want. Jim will find out if he can issue warnings for speeding.

**I)** Update from ARPA Committee re survey and committee’s ongoing work – Mac said there were 74 responses to the survey, which is a good level of response. The results will be reported via email blast, the website, and the N&N. Of the eight suggested projects, the fire gear was most highly rated, followed by the Meeting House improvements and the financial aid for broadband connection. Close behind was the solar installation on the Town Office roof. Clustered together after that were the funds for a grant writer, the AV equipment, the Town Office equipment. Last were the plantings on town properties.

The committee will look at the survey results and the costs for each project when they decide how to recommend the funds be spent. The members agreed to look at the needs of the Meeting House for repairs and upgrades separately from those to make it an emergency center. Each committee member agreed to see their project of interest through to the end when all funds have been spent.

David Cherry reported to the committee that there is a large pool of money (about $2.5 million remaining) that is available as matching funds for towns connecting with DVFiber. David calculates that Windham will need about $30,000 to get everyone connected to the broadband lines. There is competition with other towns for the matching funds, so David recommended that we take action as soon as we can. At the ARPA Committee’s next meeting (which will be in January), a decision will be made about recommending to the selectboard that they approve around $15,000 of the ARPA funds for the broadband project

**Next Step:** At the January 16 meeting, the selectboard will probably consider whether to approve funding the DVFiber broadband aid, before any other recommendations from the ARPA Committee.

**J)** Update on possible town store – Michael said the town needs a plan to address the increase in traffic in town which he sees will happen with the creation of the Conte Wildlife Refuge. He wants to control the traffic and to use it to the town’s finance benefit. Perhaps improvements to the Meeting House could include a town store. A plan is needed.

**Next Step**:The selectboard will discuss this further later. Kord will find out from Alison if a public meeting has been set with the Conte Wildlife Refuge people, where we can gain a better understanding of the changes the Refuge will bring.

**K)** Update on culvert replacement projects (Chase Rd and Rt. 121) – The Chase culvert is completed, and we are working on reimbursement. We are now in the design process for the culvert on Route 121.

**L)** Follow up on short-term rentals – Michael reported that we can create local ordinances to ensure that these rentals are safe. Taxing them requires a convoluted process, including setting registration fees and reviewing and approving rentals.

**Next Step:** Michael will ask the Planning Commission to look into this.

**M)** Update on FEMA project – Kord said that FEMA and Everett could not come to a consensus about the projected cost for Wheeler road culvert upgrade, so Everett recommended putting it out for bids, and FEMA agreed.

**Next Steps:** Everett to put a bid package together with a due date asap. Acquire agreements needed since the project is bigger than planned. Secure easements from abutting property owners.

**N)** Update on LHMP Planning Team – Kord said the first meeting of this group is scheduled for 12/7. It will be led by the Windham Regional Commission.

**O)** Update on Town-owned property sales – The selectboard has accepted offers on the three properties. Town Attorney Bob Fisher is preparing the sales agreements. Those whose offers were accepted have been made aware of challenges presented for building on the properties. They can back out and have their deposits returned.

**P)** Update on collaboration of rescue services – Kord spoke to Peter Cobb of Londonderry Rescue who said he understands that folks in South Windham might look to Rescue, Inc for quicker service. He would be fine with a collaboration between Londonderry Rescue and Rescue, Inc. They already have an agreement for calling on other rescue services.

**Next Step**:Decide if and when to contact Rescue Inc. again about this.

**Q)** Update on moving in-person access to selectboard meetings from Meeting House to Town Office or school (Carl Andeer’s 11/7 email) – Kord said there was no one there at the Town Office except him for the meeting, as most people prefer to attend via Zoom. But after January 15, we are required to have a physical presence at a location where others can join. Kord and others are working to make our AV equipment more user-friendly. Michael said he thinks hybrid meetings are a good idea, and he suggested that we use the sandwich boards to let people know where and when selectboard meetings are. Carrie commented that a better sandwich board is needed.

**R)** Burned house on Abbott Road – Michael said the house is falling down, looks abandoned, and is dangerous. He was unable to find an address for the owners.

**Next Step:** Kord will talk with Bob Fisher regarding the safety risks posed by this house.

**10) Adjourn regular meeting and stop recording.**

**Moved:** To adjourn the meeting at 7:38 PM. George moved and all agreed.

**The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 21 at 5:30 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk

*Minutes approved on December 5, 2022*