

**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes
January 16, 2023 Regular Meeting
Hybrid Meeting at Town Office and on Zoom**

At Town Office

Kord Scott, selectboard chair
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
Kathy Scott, town treasurer
Gail Wyman, asst. town treasurer
Richard Paré, road foreman
Jan Wyman, fire company
Jon Gordan, fire company
Mike McLaine, fire company

Attending via Zoom

George Dutton, selectboard
Michael Pelton, selectboard
Kathy Jungermann
Tom Widger
Leigh Merinoff
Pat McLaine
Carrie Tintle
Ron Cohen

1. Start Recording and Call to Order

Kord announced the meeting, started the recording, and called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM.

2. Changes to Agenda – There were no changes to the agenda.

3. Announcements/Reminders – George asked that in the future selectboard meetings not be held on holidays. Kord announced that information about a lost dog has been circulated.

4. Act on Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Motion: To approve the minutes from January 3, 2023. Kord moved, and all agreed.

Motion: To approve the minutes from January 9, 2023. Kord moved, and all agreed.

5. Public Comment – There were no public comments.

6. Payroll/Bills – There were no questions nor discussion.

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

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

7. Old Business

A) FEMA Project Update – The bids have been reviewed, and the engineer, Everett Hammond, has recommended awarding the contract to Daniels Construction. Town Attorney Bob Fisher’s office has prepared the paperwork for the easements from the adjoining property owners, but they have not yet been signed.

Motion: To award the contract to Daniels Construction, contingent on the two property owners signing the easements, and to have Kord sign the contract with Daniels Construction after the easements are signed and received. George moved, and all agreed.

B) Budget Preparation – Kathy reported that she has made the changes to the budget that were approved at the last meeting. She has heard from the Transfer Station and Londonderry Rescue, who confirmed the amounts due to them. She had not heard back from the others that were contacted, so there was no way to approve the budget this night.

Fire Company – Jan, Jon, and Mike were asked to explain why they are requesting \$30,000 for the Windham Volunteer Fire Company and an additional amount from the ARPA Committee. Jon explained that the \$30,000 would help with their annual expenses and their fund for long-term needs. The ARPA request is for firefighters’ gear, and that request has not been decided.

ARPA Funds – The selectboard recognized that they need clarity on what the ARPA Committee will recommend for some items, in order to know what to put in the town budget and what to pay through ARPA.

Next Step: Get greater clarity on what does not need to be in the budget, looking at the ventilation over-cost, the digital index for the land records, the clerk’s wages, and anything else that can be covered with ARPA funds.

Overview of Budget – Kord said figures for the General Fund and Roads were still estimates, since we don’t have final information on several items. The total estimated for 2023 is \$866,429. This would be an increase of 2.3% over last year.

Repaving – Our schedule for repaving is based on when we get enough money to do the work. We will have the funds we need in two years if we put \$50,000 in there this year.

Bridges & Culverts – This amount of \$15,000 was the same in ’21 and ’22. Kord said we receive state grants for the bulk of the culvert work, and we are due to receive another grant through VTrans. The \$15,000 in the budget will be used primarily as matching funds needed to get grants. Lee said there are culvert issues that need to be addressed. Richard said 600 to 700 feet of new culverts are installed each summer to replace failing ones. This summer the focus was on culverts on Wheeler and Chase Roads and Route 121.

Meeting House – This fund was started last year, and the Meeting House Committee is asking for \$5,000, which is the same as last year.

Library Trustees –Maureen said that the Library Trustees voted to receive no allowance in the budget. Kathy said that and other issues would be addressed before the selectboard votes on the budget.

Other Expense Categories – Kord gave information about some other expense categories. He said ARPA money will be needed for some Town Office expenses. There is \$60,000 in the account for the Town Garage. ARPA funds may be used to pay a grant writer/administrator. We don’t have a total for the mandated reappraisal of properties, but we know what we need for 2023. The long-term paving plan needs to be updated. There is state aid for transportation, about \$72,000, that is uncommitted and is not in any account discussed. Funds for restoration can’t be used at this time. Weatherization funds can be used for the Meeting House and Town Office. The rainy-day funds are not being used and can be moved for another use.

Road Machinery Fund –Michael and Kathy discussed what Michael saw as a deficit in this fund and Kathy did not. Kord said we haven’t put money into the account in a few years, and we used most of it when we purchased a new truck. The schedule for replacing equipment needs to be updated, and until we have a clear schedule, we won’t know exactly

what amount is needed. The old plan called for \$60,000 per year. We have budgeted \$30,000 for 2023. George thought this amount was enough. Michael suggested using some of the \$72,000 we received in state aid for transportation, which is now undesignated.

Motion: To put \$45,000 into the Road Machinery Fund. Michael moved, and it was not approved.

Next Step: Revisit this when we make final decisions.

Grant Writer/Administrator –Michael said his research indicated that the cost for a grant writer/administrator is about \$25 an hour, but he thought we could hire someone locally, send them to a training, and pay them \$17 an hour, like we pay others. Mac said the research done by the ARPA Committee indicated that a professional is needed at a rate of approximately \$70 an hour. The ARPA Committee has discussed paying a grant writer/administrator \$7000 for a year or up to \$21,000 for three years. Kord said some grants include paying the grant’s administrator, and the Windham Regional Commission provides this sort of support. He thought \$7000 for the coming year sounded like a reasonable amount, and having someone to do this work would take the stress and strain off those who are doing it now.

Undesignated \$72,000 – Michael returned to the undesignated \$72,000 and asked if the entire amount could be moved to the Road Machinery Fund. Kord said we’d need to ask the taxpayers. It would bring down the voted amount in this category to \$50,000 less than last year, a decrease of 5.9%. George asked what else the \$72,000 could be used for. Kord said that in the past, it supplemented roads, paving, and culverts.

Next Step: Kord will present some ideas about how to use the \$72,000.

Deadline – Kord talked to Imme, and she said we can wait until Monday to finalize our budget and send it to the auditors.

Next Step: Kord said he will send George and Michael the additional information about expenses when it is received. The selectboard will meet again in a week to finalize the budget.

8. Adjourn regular meeting and stop recording.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting and stop the recording at 7:07 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 23, 2023 at 5:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
Approved 1/23/23