**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes**

**January 23, 2023 Regular Meeting**

**Hybrid Meeting at Town Office and on Zoom**

**At Town Office Others Attending via Zoom** Kord Scott, selectboard chair Maureen Bell

Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk Bill Dunkel

Cathy Edgerly

**Attending via Zoom** Abby Pelton

Michael Pelton, selectboard Tom Widger

George Dutton, selectboard Joyce Cumming

Gail Wyman, asst. town treasurer (Kathy Scott was unable to attend

the entire meeting due to illness.)

**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 –** Item #7 Payroll/Bills was deleted from the agenda.

**3. Announcements/Reminders –** Kord announced that the state legislature has passed H.42 that will allow all town meetings to be held as hybrid meetings or conducted by Australian ballot. The bill is now on the governor’s desk.

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

**Motion:** To approve the minutes from January 16, 2023. Kord moved, and all agreed.

**5. Public Comment –** There were no public comments, but Michael thanked everyone who has helped prepared the budgets, especially Kathy, Gail, and Kord.

**6. Correspondence** – There was no correspondence.

**7. Payroll/Bills** – There were no bills or payroll checks to process.

**8. New Business**

**A)** West Windham Road/Cobb Brook Emergency Work – Scott Jensen, the district stream engineer,, has looked at the damage caused when the brook rerouted itself, as there’s a danger of the road being washed out. That would make it impossible for West Windham residents to travel to and from their homes. Scott issued a permit to have Chaves Excavating complete the recommended temporary stream alterations and he will determine what permanent work is needed. That would be completed in the spring. We will try to get an emergency grant from VTrans to cover the expenses.

**9. Old Business**

**A)** FEMA Wheeler Road Project Update – Kord reported that Pat Cherry, one of the property owners who needs to sign easement papers, had to go out of town so is unable to sign. Town Attorney Bob Fisher, said that since Pat has given verbal agreement, we can move forward. The other property owner has signed. Everett Hammond will notify Daniels Construction that they will be awarded the contract and prepare an agreement. FEMA will also be notified.

**B)** Budget Preparation – Kord presented a comparative budget spreadsheet to use in finalizing the budget. Maureen shared it on the Zoom screen, so everyone could see it, and she made adjustments as they were made. She was thanked for this valuable aid.

General Funds and Roads Budgets – These have been reworked with only minor changes since the last meeting. The selectboard accepted the total of $251,580 for the General Fund. The Roads Budget was adjusted after the last meeting, as no loan payment will be needed for the 2017 International truck which was paid off in 2022. The uniform expense was removed after Richard and Kurt told Kord this was not needed. In fact, it appears the town has been charged for uniform services we didn’t receive. An additional change was made to the Roads Budget later in the meeting.

**Next Step:** Kord will contact the uniform company and work on a refund.

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Total of All Expenses – Kord pointed out that the worksheet shows a bottom-line figure and the percentage of increase or decrease from 2022. He suggested that this figure be kept as a decrease, to help keep taxes down. The selectboard then addressed the expenses in various funds that needed to be approved individually as articles.

Road Machinery Fund – The proposed amount was $30,000. Michael said he had reviewed the long-term machinery replacement schedule for our road trucks. We will need the $30,000. He said there is $72,000 in the bank from the State for transportation, and we could use some of that to lower the amount taxpayers have to pay. (A motion on this was passed later in the meeting.)

Repaving – There is currently +$410,347 in this fund. Our plan calls for adding $100,000 per year. However, VTrans has extended the plan, and $30,000 is all that is currently needs to be added.

Bridges and Culverts – We have a negative balance of -$67,676, but $200,000 is expected to be received in grant reimbursements that will be returned to this fund. The state aid is also available. We do not need to add funds for bridges and culverts.

Meeting House Maintenance and Improvements – This fund currently has a balance of +$8,772, The amount proposed for 2023 is $10,000.

Town Office Maintenance and Improvements – With a current balance of +$5,864, no additional funds are needed for this fund.

Town Garage Maintenance and Improvements – There is +$65,379 in this fund, but $10,000 is needed as matching funds for the salt shed grant. (A motion on this was passed later in the meeting.)

Reappraisal of All Properties – We are paying NEMRC $2,290 monthly for their services on a contract that ends in June 2024. The +$32,614 currently in this fund has accumulated since the last reappraisal. Adding $10,000 now will get us through our contract. We may need to add additional funds next year when the costs involved with the reappraisal are clearer.

Restoration – It is not clear if we can use the +$22,259 now in the fund to reorganize the vault contents. No additional funds are needed.

Weatherization – No new funds are needed, as we have +$5,719 in this fund.

Audit – There is no indication that we will need an audit anytime soon. There is now +$4,500 in this fund, so new funds aren’t needed.

NEMRC – An estimate of $8,285 was received for NEMRC’s accounting software and services. This would also provide training and support. Our current accounting software, Quickbooks, has caused problems. We already have +$2,000 in this account.

**Motion:** To include an article in the warning for $5,000 for NEMRC accounting software and services. George moved, and he and Kord agreed.

Dog Fund – There is +$4,025 already in this account, and no new funds are needed.

**Next Step:** Find out from VLCT what can be done with this money.

Rainy Day – The VLCT recommends having 18% of the total budget in this fund. We have +$18,980 in ours. For now, we will not add funds in order to keep our total budget as low as possible.

Social Services – The Social Services Committee has recommended a total of $5,658. According to state law, this will require an article with that total.

**Further Discussion** – At this point, the total for all spending was $843,841, which was .4% less than 2022. The selectboard considered additional ways to cut spending.

Income from Sale of Town Properties – We have received $5,500 from two of the sales, with $30,000 expected from the sale of the Horsenail Hill property. This $35,500 could go into the General Fund. It could fund NEMRC, be put in the Rainy Day Fund, be held as a surplus, or used for whatever is needed. No decision was made.

State Aid from VTrans – We have +$72,000 that could be used to reduce the Roads budget. Michael suggested looking at what is needed for trucks. His research indicates that we should add $53,000 to the Road Machinery budget for down payments and to avoid borrowing. He and George suggested moving some of this $72,000 into the Roads budget. This is a way to reduce the total required from taxpayers.

**Motion:** To use $25,000 of the $72,000 from the state aid for transportation to reduce the Roads budget to $476,603. George moved, and all agreed.

Additional Changes

**Motion:** To put $10,000 in the Town Garage M&I Fund to serve as matching funds for the new salt shed. George moved, and all agreed.

**Motions:** To put an additional $5,000 in the Road Machinery Fund, making that amount $35,000, to provide for the ongoing need to repair and replace road equipment. Michael moved, and all agreed.

**Total General Fund, Roads Budgets, and Articles** – The total to be paid by taxpayers is now $833,841, a 1.6% decrease from the total for 2022.

**Motion**:To accept the amounts on the worksheet for the various budgets and funds, as discussed and decided, with the total of $833,841. Kord moved and all agreed.

**Next Step:** Add all amounts as articles in the warning for town meeting.

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

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting and stop the recording at 7:12 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

**The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 6, 2023 at 5:30 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk