

**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes  
March 6, 2023 Regular Meeting  
Held on Zoom Only**

|                               |                     |                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Kord Scott, selectboard chair | Leigh Merinoff      | Gail Wyman            |
| Michael Pelton, selectboard   | Russ Cumming        | Abby Pelton           |
| George Dutton, selectboard    | David Lewis         | Marcia Clinton        |
| Mary McCoy, selectboard clerk | Cathy Edgerly Fales | Pat McLaine           |
| Richard Paré, road foreman    | Maureen Bell        | Tom and Louis Johnson |
| Kathy Scott, town treasurer   | Imme Maurath        | Tom and Eileen Widger |
| Pete Newton, Friends of MH    | Barbara Jean Quinn  | Jon Gordon            |

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

Kord announced the meeting, called the meeting to order, and started the recording at 5:33 PM.

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

**3. Announcements/Reminders** – Kord stated his intention to end the meeting by 7:30 PM.

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

**Motion:** To approve the minutes from February 6, 2023. Kord moved, and all agreed.

**5. Public Comment** – Leigh questioned the legality of having selectboard meetings by Zoom only, and she stated her preference that meetings be held in person. Kord assured her that Zoom meetings are a legal option. George said he has heard complaints about town meeting being in May.

**Next Step:** Discuss the way future meetings will be conducted.

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

**7. Payroll/Bills** – There was no discussion.

**Motion:** To approve the pay orders from the town treasurer. Kord moved, and George agreed. Michael had not reviewed the pay orders and abstained.

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

**8. Staff Reports & Discussion**

**A) Road Forman** – Richard reported that this winter’s thawing and freezing have required them to use most of the 400 tons of sand that were purchased. More sand is coming, which should get us through the rest of the winter.

**B) ARPA Committee** – Mac (Mary McCoy) reported that on April 1 the committee will tour the Meeting House and consider various funding options for improvements to the building. The committee has invited the selectboard and representatives from other town committees to join them.

**9) New Business**

**A) Discussion and Appointments re Open Positions**

1) Planning Commission Member – Kord commented on the great work Cathy

Edgerly Fales has provided as a member of the ARPA Committee and her extensive background in municipal work before moving to Windham. Kord has spoken with her, and she is interested in the position.

**Motion:** To appoint Cathy Edgerly Fales to the Planning Commission. Kord moved, and all agreed.

2) Grant Administrator – Kord explained the purpose of this new position is to manage the reporting requirements for the federal and state governments grants we've received. This is a time-consuming job that he and other town officials have been handling, but with all of the new grants that the town has received, an additional person is needed to manage the requirements. Kord has meet with Imme Maurath about this job. With her background running a business and her years of working as a Windham auditor, she is highly qualified for the position. Michael questioned whether a job description was needed before the appointment, and Kord said the description would best be written after we see what all is involved with the job. Kord said some grants include payment for an administrator, and for those that don't, the position can be paid with ARPA funds. Kathy has estimated that \$4,000 would be needed from ARPA funds. The grant administrator would be paid \$17 per hour.

**Motion:** To create the position of grant administrator, to make the appointment on an annual basis, to appoint Imme Maurath to the position, and to use ARPA funds to pay the administrator when necessary. George moved, and all agreed.

3) Health Officer – Marcia Clinton has resigned from the job. Pat McLaine has expressed interest in the position, and as a nurse with a background in public health, she is highly qualified. Marcia was thanked for her many years of good service.

**Motion:** To appoint Pat McLaine as Health Officer. Kord moved, and all agreed.

**B) Update on Bill Dunkel Becoming Ex-officio Chair of the PC** –Bill discovered a state statute that says the same person cannot serve as the chair of both the Planning Commission and the Energy Committee. Bill does not want to do anything illegal. He can be on both committees if he becomes the ex-officio chair of the Planning Commission as a non-voting member. This is what he will do.

**C) Discussion of the Paul Bruhn Revitalization Grant (for the Meeting House)** – Pete Newton, chair of the Friends of the Meeting House since 2000, explained that this grant is from the U.S. Department of Interior through the Vermont Preservation Fund. Its purpose is to restore historic rural buildings. The deadline for applying is March 31, with the work completed by June 30, 2025. Grants range from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and are highly competitive, so there are no guarantees of our receiving funds. Pete said that in 2020, an accessibility study was conducted that focused on problems with the doors, the ramp, and the platform in front of the building. Sketches for the improvements were made then that can be used for the grant. Pete can make the additional drawings needed, but a certified engineer needs to approve them. The Friends of the MH can take charge of this grant application and the work if approved, but the selectboard needs to approve it, and they would put the work out for bid. Questions were asked about improvements for parking. Pete said there would be 9 to 12 spaces and lines could be painted for the spots. Cathy noted that preservation work often conflicts with energy resiliency improvements. This needs to be considered. Pete said the improvements to the front of the building are

legally required, and the grant deals with exterior work only. He does not believe the building can ever have be “tight” and wants to temper the desire for insulation. Eileen suggested a new door on the side of the building, and Leigh wants an extension for outdoor gatherings, but Pete said the focus for this grant needs to remain on the front of the building.

**Motion:** To support the grant with the town being the applicant, the selectboard providing whatever support is needed, and the Friends of the Meeting House preparing the grant and overseeing the work if the grant is received. George moved, and all agreed.

**Next Step:** Cathy will provide assistance with the preparation of the grant. The selectboard will provide statements of the town’s support.

**D) Discussion re Meg Staloff/Stacking Grants, etc.** – Cathy Edgerly Fales reported on her research into the grant opportunities for the Meeting House. She said the first step is to establish a clear vision of what we want to accomplish and then the steps toward that end. (The Bruhn grant needs to happen now due to its 3/31 deadline.) The ARPA meeting with others on April 1 is a first step for creating our vision. We can get a mini-grant (up to \$4000) from MERP for community education about energy resiliency in our town buildings. This could be used to hold a community meeting, using the services of Meg Staloff from the Southern Vermont Economy Project, who has helped other communities create plans. We might also create a group that is certified under the state and federal governments to preserve the Meeting House. There are numerous other grant opportunities (see Cathy’s report attached on Stacking Grants).

**Next Step:** To use Meg’s help, we need to complete the intake form with a letter from the selectboard. The selectboard will also need to sign off on the MERP mini-grant proposal, once the guidelines are available for that grant.

**E) Discussion re Village Center Designation** – Cathy explained that grants from the Vermont Dept. of Housing and Community Development require that a “village center” be defined. This would be important for state support for the Meeting House and other areas, as well as for some tax credits. Cathy suggested two areas that are already considered historic areas and could be designated as village centers – the area around the Meeting House and the area in South Windham that runs from Ed Brown’s to Griffin Gardens. The designations would require a letter from the selectboard and changes in our Town Plan. The plan changes would require two public hearings and supporting maps. There are no downsides to receiving village center designation, and the application process is free. (See Cathy’s full report attached.) Abby suggested that the area that includes the school, town office, and cemetery could also be a village center. George and others agreed with that idea.

**Next Step:** Cathy will find out if the area that includes the school, town office, and cemetery can be a village center or if the entire area on Windham Hill Road from South Windham to the Meeting House could be considered one village center. Cathy will also ask the Planning Commission to discuss designating a village center or centers. The selectboard will consider this more at future meetings.

**F) Discussion requested by Allyssa Sebatto** – This item was postponed to a future meeting. Allyssa, from the Windham Regional Commission, is asking the selectboard to answer six questions for the Vermont Emergency Management.

## 10) Old Business

**A) Update on Accounting System** – The switch from Quickbooks to the NEMRC system has begun, with the new system expected to be online by the end of March. This will be a big improvement, as the NEMRC system is specifically designed for municipalities and offers support services, which Quickbooks does not.

**B) Comments on Short-term Rental Registry** – Mac said that there are other ways besides creating a registry to address problems with short-term rentals. Other records show how many rentals there are in Windham and who owns them. To address the concern about corporations buying up properties and taking them out of individuals' hands, we could do what Dorset does and require that buyers be present at closing. About safety concerns, the state already sends inspectors to ensure that rental properties meet safety standards. To ensure that properties are both safe and accommodating, vacation rental sites like Airbnb use reviews from renters, and if properties are poorly reviewed, they do not stay in business. Mac noted that some property owners do not appreciate government oversight. A recent article in the Digger said that in towns that created controls over short-term rentals, doing so created community conflict. Finally, Mac said that she has not found more than four short-term rentals on Airbnb or VRBO that are actually in Windham. She contacted the Vermont Dept. of Taxation, which has employees that scour the internet to find ads for short-term rentals to make sure these rentals are paying their taxes, and they said there are 10 or fewer in Windham. David Lewis said he found eight short-term rentals on Airbnb, and he favors keeping track of them. Imme said she supports oversight.

**Next Step:** Invite a planning person from Chester to attend the next selectboard meeting to talk about the experience there in managing short-term rentals.

**C) Update on Altpfart Property (burned building near Abbott)** – Kord reported that Bob Kehoe does not want to continue as the town's safety officer. We expected his review of the building to be a first step. Bill Dunkel said the building violates our town ordinance on building safety. Kord talked to Bob Fisher, town attorney, who will write a letter to the Altpfarts regarding the situation.

**Next Step:** Provide an update on this at the next selectboard meeting.

**D) Update re Highway Ordinance** – Kord noted that the areas on Windham Hill Road where the selectboard wants to reduce the allowed traffic speed are the same as the areas under discussion as "village centers." Kord said that Bob Fisher has identified the process necessary to enact the changes in speed limits.

**Next Step:** Michael will draft an updated ordinance with the new speed limits. It will be reviewed by Bob, and two community hearings will be planned, as required before enacting the new speed limits.

**E) Update re Highway Dept Property Requirements** – The current location of the town garage is about one-half acre, providing no space to store or stockpile anything. Two to three acres are needed for stockpiling, which would allow us to buy sand and other materials at bulk prices. One option for this is property near Carlton's Corner that is owned by Meadowsend. Another option is finding four to five acres for the garage, salt

shed, and stockpiling.

**Next Step:** Michael will prepare information to be circulated to the town's people to ask for help in finding the necessary property.

**F) Update on Grant Reimbursement Filings** – Kord reported that the three FEMA projects have been completed. We expect \$123,331 from FEMA. The other project on Chase Road will be reimbursed by VTrans for \$168,265.

**G) Update on FEMA Project** – We expect approximately \$341,000 from FEMA for the project on Wheeler Road. The easements are in place, and the work will be done this spring and summer. We have until 12/31/23 to complete it.

**H) Update on Unifirst Uniform Problem** – The town has been charged for laundering uniforms that weren't laundered. Kurt said he told Unifirst Uniform that he would do his own washing, but Kord said UU continued to charge us for that service for more than a year (\$2500 per year). He has asked them for a refund, which they resist giving. George suggested cancelling the service but keeping the uniforms UU provided.

**Next Step:** Kord will work out a solution with UU.

**11) Adjourn the Meeting and Stop the Recording**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting and stop the recording at 7:25 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

**The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 20, 2023 at 5:30 PM**

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk  
*Minutes approved 3-20-23*

Attachments:  
Stacking Grants for the Meeting House  
Village Center Designation