

**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes
April 3, 2023 Regular Meeting
Held on Zoom Only**

Kord Scott, selectboard chair	Barbara Jean Quinn	Russ and Joyce Cumming
Michael Pelton, selectboard	Bill Casey	Abby Pelton
George Dutton, selectboard	David Lewis	Sarah Elderman
Mary McCoy, selectboard clerk	Gail Wyman	Tom and Louis Johnson
Guest: Preston Bristow, Chester Zoning Administrator	Cathy Edgerly Fales Maureen Bell	Kathy Jungermann Bill Dunkel

1. Start Recording and Call to Order

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

2. Additions/deletions and/or changes to agenda

Kord added to the agenda under New Business a discussion about Town Meeting.

3. Announcements/Reminders

- > Kord said he has received several comments from town folks regarding the good work of the road crew and the improved condition of our roads.
- > Mac will write the next selectboard report for the News & Notes.
- > Michael announced that a maple floor was installed at the school, and it will be finished while the students are out for April break. He thanked all those who donated their services.

4. Act on Minutes from the Previous Meeting

Motion: To approve the minutes from March 20, 2023. Kord moved, and all agreed.

5. Public Comment – Abby invited everyone to attend the next school board meeting April 11th.

6. Correspondence

Kord said an email received from the Windham Community Organization (WCO) would be read with the new agenda item about Town Meeting. There was no other correspondence.

7. Payroll/Bills

There was no discussion. Michael said he had not read everything sent to him.

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

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

8. Guest and Staff Reports & Discussion

A) Info from Preston Bristow re Chester's registry for short-term rentals – Preston explained that he had been the town planner for Killington and activated a registration system for the 700-800 short-term rentals there. He is now the zoning administrator for Chester. An ordinance was adopted in Chester for the 80-85 short-term rentals there. Their registry is administered by Host Compliance, one of many professional organizations that provide this service and it costs Chester \$10,000 annually. Out-of-town owners of rentals must pay \$300

per year per rental to be registered, and in-town owners pay \$150 per year. Most of the Chester rentals are owned by out-of-towners. George wondered about the cost of other services like Host Compliance. Preston said they got three quotes, ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000, and went with the lowest quote.

Host Compliance determines who is renting short-term, provides contact information, and sends every owner a letter telling them to register. This is done on an ongoing basis. They also conduct a certified fire and safety inspection of rentals that accommodate more than eight renters. The state also inspects rentals on an infrequent basis. If there is a problem with a rental, the town knows who to contact. Host Compliance has a 24-hour hotline.

In Chester, they were surprised to find there are 80-85 short-term rentals, as they thought it was about 25. Chester has a population of around 3,000 with about 8% of their housing stock serving as rentals. In Windham, we have 415 dwellings, with 200 not permanently occupied. Michael said we have no way of knowing how they are being used.

Registries have been in use in other areas of the nation for years. In Vermont, towns cannot tax rentals, but can set up registries and charge owners to register. The question in Vermont towns is whether to set up a registry through an ordinance or through the town plan. Preston says by ordinance is the more nibble way. He said there was a legislative effort to establish a statewide registry, but it wasn't enacted. A new effort to legislate a state registry is now under consideration.

Abby asked if there was a downside to the registration. Preston said a few owners were unhappy and felt it was an intrusion. Otherwise, there was no downside. First responders were in favor in Killington. The registration helps with public safety; for example, making sure that owners who rent to large groups have a septic system that can handle that.

Kord asked who in Chester provides oversight of the registry, and Preston said he did as their (paid) zoning administrator. He did not know who did the work in smaller towns, as most small towns don't set up a registry. The smallest one he knew of is Dummerston (population of about 2,000) which has about a dozen short-term rentals.

Preston said it takes work to set up a registry, but less work once it is established. In Chester, the ordinance was set up in selectboard meetings. Then the letters were sent to all owners. There is a grace period of 6 to 12 months to register.

With no further questions, Kord and others thanked Preston for his helpful presentation.

B) Report from Road Foreman – Richard Paré was not present to give a report.

C) Report from the ARPA Committee – Mac reported on the ARPA meeting on April 1 to tour the Meeting House to better understand the needs there. In addition to ARPA committee members, there were 11 others there interested in improving our Meeting House. An application has been made for a \$4000 grant to conduct a townwide meeting to create a plan for the Meeting House. This grant funding is available through the state's Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP). The ARPA committee is looking to the Town Meeting House Committee and the Friends of the Meeting House for their leadership.

Next Step: Mac will schedule a time for her to meet with Kord and Imme to complete the annual report on ARPA that is due by 4/30/23 to the U.S. Treasury.

9) New Business

A) Plans for Town Meeting – Mac read for the record the email (attached) from the WCO regarding Town Meeting. The email stated their recommendation to have the meeting in the

sanctuary with a sound system, and not outdoors as planned. They also recommended that there not be a potluck lunch. Instead town folks should bring their own lunches. The memo detailed the work that would need to be done by others. Kathy clarified that the WCO no longer wants to be involved in any way with town meeting, as the WCO no longer has the person-power required.

Selectboard members seemed to agree with the idea of having the meeting in the sanctuary. Maureen suggested dispensing with lunch altogether and ending the meeting at 1:00. The selectboard was not ready to make decisions about this, but needs to determine the plans in time to meet the New & Notes deadline, as the newsletter is a key way to notify town folks of changes.

Next Step: The selectboard will meet on Monday, April 10 at 6:00 PM to make final decisions about town meeting.

- B) Make appointments for town jobs** – The VLCT had posted 4/24/23 as the deadline to make appointments, but we have more time since our town meeting has been postponed. Michael noted that people are serving after their appointments have expired. Kord said that happens every year and is not an issue. New appointments can be made as needed.

Next Step: The selectboard members will sign the paperwork for Imme’s appointment as grant administrator.

- C) Discuss changing accounting system from calendar year to fiscal year** – Kord said that we have been spending money in January and February that was not approved until March. Changing to a fiscal year of July to June would avoid that. Many towns and the state use a fiscal year. It can be complicated to make the change, as some contracts are now based on a calendar year. Michael expressed support for the change. Maureen agreed.

Next Step: Ask Treasurer Kathy Scott to present more information on what would be involved to make the change.

- D) Discuss changing tax payments from once a year to twice a year** – Kord said he has heard that some property owners want this change. George and Michael said it was worth looking into. Abby asked if folks could have the option of once or twice per year. Kord said that would be up to the selectboard to decide.

Next Step: Ask Kathy to research what would be involved and report to the selectboard.

10) Old Business

- A) Discuss questions from Vermont Emergency Management via A. Sebatto** – Kord reported that the answers were provided by our emergency managers, Kathy J. and Imme, and were submitted as requested.

- B) Report on idea of hybrid meetings at the Town Office with Ellen’s help** – Kord reported that Ellen is not interested in setting up and closing down selectboard meetings at the Town Office, as she already has her hands full on Mondays. Kord said that for hybrid meetings to happen, we need an AV system that is simple and easy to set up and take down.

Next Step: Consider further how to handle hybrid meetings.

- C) Review highway ordinance on speed limits** – Michael has made the changes and will send the revised draft to the selectboard.

Next Step: After selectboard approval, the ordinance will be sent to Bob Fisher, town attorney, and then two public hearings will be held.

- D) Update re Altpfart property (burned building near Abbott)** –As was agreed at the last selectboard meeting, Bob Fisher (town attorney) drafted a letter to the Altpfarts, explaining the current zoning violations of their burned property. Bill and Ali Cumming (Windham zoning administrator) reviewed the letter with Bob, and it will be signed by Ali.

George said there was another house in the same flood zone that is not seen as a problem, and he felt the Altpfarts should be offered ways to preserve their home. Bill Dunkel went through the town’s zoning regulations and again stated the reasons a new house cannot be built on the former site due to it being in a flood zone and near a stream. He said compliance would be extremely complicated and would cost a fortune, making that option impossible. In the letter, the Altpfarts are told that they can apply for help from FEMA.

Next Step: George and Michael asked to see the letter before it is mailed.

- E) Update on outreach re Highway Dept property** – Michael said the notice is ready to be sent to Ellen’s email list and the New & Notes. He suggested sending it also the everyone on the grand list. That would cost \$312. Perhaps it could be combined with another mailing or sent by the WCO with their nonprofit bulk permit.

Motion: To send the notice to everyone on the grand list in as economical way as possible. Kord moved and all agreed.

- F) Update on Unifirst Uniform problem** – They have made an offer for the services the town paid for and did not receive, but the issue is not resolved.

Next Step: Resolve this at the next meeting.

11) Adjourn regular meeting and stop recording

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:54: PM. George moved, and all agreed.

There will be a special selectboard meeting on Monday, April 10, 2023 at 6:00 PM

The next regular selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 17, 2023 at 5:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
Approved on April 17, 2023