

**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes
April 17, 2023 Regular Meeting
Held on Zoom Only**

Kord Scott, selectboard chair	Maureen Bell	David Lewis
Michael Pelton, selectboard	Gail Wyman	Tom & Louise Johnson
George Dutton, selectboard	Cathy Edgerly Fales	Abby Pelton
Mary McCoy, selectboard clerk	Kathy Jungermann	Marcia Clinton
	Bill Casey	Tan Bronson
	Pat McLaine	Jim McCandless
	Leigh Merinoff	Barbara Jean Quinn
	Imme Maurath	Jon Gordan

1. Start Recording and Call to Order

Kord called the meeting to order and started the recording at 5:30 PM.

2. Additions/deletions and/or changes to agenda

Kord had two changes. He added an update under New Business re LEMP, and he removed 8B) under Staff Reports as there was no update re changing the accounting year.

3. Announcements/Reminders

There were no announcements or reminders.

4. Act on minutes from the 4/3/23 and 4/10/23 selectboard meetings

Motion: To approve the minutes from 4/3/20. Kord moved, and all agreed.

Motion: To approve the minutes from 4/10/20. George moved, and all agreed.

5. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

6. Correspondence

Michael referred to a complaint received about a dog, and Kord said it would be discussed at the next selectboard meeting.

7. Payroll/Bills

Michael commented that there was a fuel delivery among the bills, so the tanks are full. The decision to move the oil from the school's old oil tank to the Town Office tank will have to wait until autumn.

Next Step: Michael will contact Russ and discuss this, after Michael recovers from Covid.

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.

8. Guest and Staff Reports and Discussion

A) Report from ARPA Committee with recommendation re Fire Company gear – Mac said the ARPA Committee recommends using \$10,894 of the ARPA funds to buy the firefighter gear needed by the Fire Company, with the stated understanding that the money be returned to the town if the Fire Company is able to secure a grant for the same purpose.

Motion: To approve \$10,894 from the ARPA funds for the Fire Company to purchase new gear for firefighters that meet safety standards. George moved, and all agreed.

B) Update re grant administrator position – Kord reported that Imme is off to a great start. She has completed reporting that will bring in \$150,000 and \$120,000. She is working on additional reports that will bring funds in the \$400,000 range. Payment for her time is fully reimbursable by some grantors.

9) New Business

A) Discuss idea of Meeting House planning – Kord spoke with Pete Newton, Tom Widger, and Cathy Fales to gather their thoughts about working with Meg Staloff to create a plan with townwide support for the Meeting House. We want to set priorities and make plans. There will be more to discuss as the matter evolves.

B) New VLCT Municipal Access Portal – Kord urged all town officials to make use of this internet portal where one can easily access information or ask questions. Cathy said she was getting information directly from Katie Buckley at VLCT, who will be reviewing and the information Cathy has found about funding sources. Cathy also mentioned speaking with someone in Tanbridge, VT. That town has a grant researcher, and we might use the same person. Cathy said more possibilities might be available from the Rural Resilience Assistance Program, but it depends on how they see our rating of 61 in terms of our town's needs, as they are focused on towns rated 75 or higher.

C) Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) – Kathy reported that the plan was completed and reviewed by Alyssa Sebetto of the WRC. The plan has a boiler-plate format that is updated annually. Its approval guarantees that we are reimbursed at the highest level for all road work that might be required when an emergency event is declared.

Motion: To approve the LEMP. Michael moved, and all agreed.

10) Old Business

A) Update on plans for Town Meeting – Cathy is working on the Survey Monkey with information about town meeting and a form for people to sign up to volunteer. Mac is writing an article about Town Meeting for the News & Notes. Information will also be posted on the town website. Tom and Eileen Widger will donate water, plates, napkins, etc. They will survey the kitchen first to see what supplies are already there. George said the Duttons will donate 96 cans of the cider they produce.

B) Review highway ordinance – Michael explained that he used previous speed ordinances to create the revised one that he sent to Kord and George to review. It sets 35 mph as the town speed limit with exceptions – Rt. 121 remains 40 mph, and there is a new 30 mph area on Windham Hill Road between the town garage and Carlton's corner. The 30 mph area through South Windham and the 25 mph area near the school will remain as they are.

Motion: To send the draft of the ordinance to Bob Fisher, town attorney, for his review. Kord moved and all agreed.

Next Step: After Bob input is received, conduct public hearings on the topic.

C) Follow up on short-term rental info from last meeting – Michael forwarded to Kord and George the adopted language from Chester and Woodstock that established their registries for

short-term rentals. He sees a compelling case for adopting something similar for safety purposes. Some towns create and monitor the registry with their own officials. Others hire a vendor to provide that service. That cost per year runs from \$3,000 to \$26,000. Kord questioned if we have the personnel to create and manage a registry by ourselves. Michael said perhaps a less expensive vendor could be found. He said the state has considered creating a statewide registry, but it looks unlikely that will happen. Currently, inspections for safety of short-term rentals are sporadic, and Michael said a registry would improve that.

Next Steps: Michael will look for a less expensive vendor. The selectboard will consider who would create and administer the registry if we did not hire a vendor.

D) Update on outreach re Highway Dept property – Michael reported that a request went out to Ellen’s lists. There will also be an insert in the next N&N about this. Abby noted that the phone number for people to call needs to be corrected

E) Update of Altpfart property (burned building near Abbott and WHRd.) – A letter was drafted by Bob Fisher, signed by Zoning Administrator Ali Cumming, and sent to the Altpfarts. They responded quickly and appropriately, saying they were requesting a demolition permit. They want to rebuild, but the problem of the floodplain remains.

Next Step: Ali will send them a follow-up letter as recommended by Bob F telling them that the demolition permit will be issued with the condition that the work needs to be completed by August 1st and instructing them to apply for another permit if they want to rebuild. They will need to hire an engineer to see if they can develop a plan to rebuild that complies with our zoning regulations given the wetlands problem.

F) Update on Unifirst uniform problem – Kord said they offered us \$1400 in credit to eliminate our current balance with them. We can keep the uniforms we have, and Windham and Unifirst will go their separate ways. Kurt, the only one who wears a uniform, was OK with this, as he washes his own uniforms.

Motion: To accept Unifirst’s offer of \$1400 and the uniforms. Kord moved and all agreed.

B) Update re radio license and possible equipment needs – Michael reported that we have a license for the next 10 years for the town crew to connect by radio. Tan Bronson, volunteer operator, said he and others had outlined the possible uses without knowing what is currently being used. Kord said there is a radio in all of the town’s heavy equipment, but connections are not always possible.

Tan and Jim McCandless discussed how to address that. A transmitter or a repeater is needed at a high point, like the Meeting House. Repeaters cost \$2000 to \$3000, or about \$5000 after going through the FCC application. There is the option of connecting via satellite, but that is very expensive. Another option might be using the cell towers on Glebe Mountain; however, the cell tower sometimes loses service. Tan said there are free tools to see what areas of the town are not currently connected.

Abby suggested including the school as a location, which might open up avenues for funding. Tan said the road crew’s chatter would be audible, and it was best used for road crew purposes. Michael suggested that could have the additional function of connecting us to the outside world, should other sources of communication be down due to power outages. He suggested having a station at the Town Office, since it is an emergency center. Tan said that in emergencies, amateurs radio operators would not be able to use the Town Office frequency. He

has to go to the Meeting House to transmit, as it is a higher location. Maureen asked for specification about how high a transmitter would need to be placed on the Meeting House.

Richard Paré told Kord that this is not an urgent matter, as the road crew uses the radio and cell phone connections they have. So we have time to get this right. We should consider setting up a drill to make sure that what we have meets requirements for emergency use. Kord noted that there is nothing in the budget for this work. A grant might be possible. Kord thanked Tan and Jim for their work on this.

Next Steps: Tan and Jim will determine the coverage needed and the best transmitter and/or repeater location(s), including specs for the Meeting House. Tan will call VTrans and the Fire Company for their input.

H) Update re FEMA project – RTM Recovery Transition Meeting – Kord and Imme met with the FEMA & VEM project managers. Three projects have been reimbursed as completed. Two projects remain. The one on Wheeler will begin soon. The other project relates to reimbursement for administrative costs. FEMA allows 100% of admin expenses for damage assessments. Imme is working on that.

Michael asked about the washout on West Windham Road. Kord said the damage didn't qualify for emergency grant support because it wasn't severe and costly enough. The town will have to pay for the repair out of pocket. However, when all the snow has melted, we can re-evaluate. George asked if we could include improving the class 4 road to connect Ingalls and Old Farm and create a second way out of West Windham.

Next Step: Kord will schedule a return by the stream engineer to re-evaluate the situation.

11) Adjourn regular meeting and stop recording

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:50 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

The next regular selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, May1, 2023 at 5:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
Minutes approved May 1, 2023