

**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes
October 16, 2023 Regular Meeting
Held on Zoom Only**

Present:	Cathy Edgerly Fales	Tom & Louise Johnson
Kord Scott, selectboard chair	Maureen Bell	Gail Wyman
Michael Pelton, selectboard	Russell Cumming	Kathy Scott
George Dutton, selectboard	Cathy Stover	Tom Widger
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk	Abby Pelton	Jenna Cramer
	Crystal Corriveau	Ron Cohen & Carrie Tintle
	Barbara Jean Quinn	

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 – There were no changes.

3. Announcements/Reminders – Kord reminded folks that the Window Dressers project will be here soon and to sign up with Bill Dunkel for built-to-fit storm windows. Mac announced that the solar array is being installed this week on the Town Office roof. She also reminded people to sign up for Windham Solar, the community solar field on her and Michael Simonds' land.

4. Act on minutes from the October 2, 2023 selectboard meeting

Motion: To approve the minutes from the 10-2-23 regular meeting. George moved, and all agreed.

5. Public Comments – Russell complained that some zoning applications have been approved although they were not in line with the rules.

6. Correspondence – George referred to the email from the state offering grant assistance. Cathy said she is aware of this and is following up on it.

7. Payroll/Bills

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

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

8. Staff Reports and Discussions

A) Discussion on Planning Commission to-do and support issues (clerk, etc.) – The PC has asked the selectboard to help them set priorities for revising the zoning regulations. Kord asked Michael and George to do so. The issue of RVs parked on people's property is currently a PC focus, as current regulations say no RVs can be parked longer than 90 days. This doesn't recognize that some people park their RVs longer than that in between the times that they are used. Rules about accessory units also need to be addressed. Michael said the importance of affordable housing must be recognized, including allowing for tiny houses and composting toilets. Bill said he and the PC agreed that regs need to support affordable homes.

Kord said Mac and Bill prepared an ad for a PC clerk to be printed in the News & Notes.

Next Step: George and Michael will review the ad; if OKed, Mac will submit to the N&N.

B) Discuss/decide on new copier for Town Office – Selectboard members have reviewed the estimates, and Michael advised approving the option with Brennan Fusco as the Canon rep. Brennan has already helped with copier problems.

Motion: To accept the lease option that is directly with Canon and has Brennan Fusco as rep. George moved, and all agreed.

C) Report on Animal Control Officer’s input on unregistered dogs – Kord reported that Town Clerk Ellen McDuffie, Animal Control Officer Ashley Pinger, and Town Constable Jim Lawler are working on this. All dogs that were registered in the past have registered again.

Next Step: Kord will ask Ellen to give Ashley and Jim a list of the unregistered dogs, so they can contact those dog’s owners.

D) Update on webmaster plans – Vance has been unavailable but plans to meet with Becky & Jordan Eliastam and Howie Ires to explore their interest in the job.

E) Update on “brunch & brainstorm” meeting and grants for the Meeting House – Cathy reported that about 30 people attended the 9/23/23 event, and they offered 150 ideas, although many were duplicates. Of repeated concern were safety issues and ideas for increased usage of the building. Cathy recently attended a conference with many grant providers, and she learned about an AARP grant for up to \$4000 with a deadline of this day 10/16/23. She submitted a proposal for kitchen equipment for culinary events. She asked the selectboard to submit a letter of recommendation, which can be added after the deadline.

Motion: To have Kord sign a letter of support; Kord moved and all agreed.

Cathy said the town now automatically qualifies for municipal development assistance with planning. Previously, towns without planning staff qualified if they were rated at 70 to 100, and Windham was rated at 61. The rating has now dropped to towns rated 50 to 100. Cathy asked if the selectboard wanted her to pursue this, and if so, which areas of town governance might want assistance in planning. Bill said the PC would. All selectboard members were supportive of getting assistance.

Next Step: Cathy will request support, and she will send Bill info on the assistance. Specific use of the planning assistance can be decided later.

F) Discuss giving excess solar generation to a nonprofit – Mac said that the solar array on the Town Office roof will initially generate more electricity than will be needed for the town’s three buildings. When those building move from fossil fuels to electricity, all that is generated will be needed, but in the meanwhile, we can give away the excess. We cannot sell it. She asked the selectboard to select a nonprofit or nonprofits to get credit for the excess. She explained that Windham Elementary School is not eligible because they are a part of their supervisory union’s net metering group, and no GMP account can be a part of more than one net metering group.

Next Step: George will ask the Fire Company if they would like to receive this credit on their GMP bills. Mac will ask this of the West Townshend Community Project and Neighborhood Connections. Abby will find out if the WES board wants to leave their current net metering group to join the town’s.

9. New Business

A) Discuss November 6 meeting plans, due to Kord’s absence – Kord and Kathy will be in Germany in early November, returning 11/8. Options for changing the 11/6 date were discussed.

Moved: To cancel the November 6 meeting, to meet instead on October 30, and to meet as expected on November 20. Kord moved, and all agreed.

B) Discuss Town Office propane tank issue – George reported that we own the tank, which needs to be serviced to re-block it.

Next Step: George will talk to Cota & Cota re work on the tank.

Maureen said she spoke with Bill Otis at Cota & Cota re the tank at the Meeting House. He will inspect it. She expects a call back from him, and she will tell him to contact George.

C) Report on WHR truck accident and request to eliminate/divert overweight vehicle traffic – Kord referred to the recent accident when a trailer truck went off the side of Windham Hill Road near Aspen Woodworking, which blocked traffic on the road for hours. As the school bus driver, Kord is well aware of the dangers of driving down WHR, and he advised that traffic go slowly and stay within the lanes.

Crystal asked if the state could do something to divert large trucks from WHR. Kord said big trucks should have a heavy weight permit, but the state doesn't have the person power for enforcement. Kathy and others wondered if Google Maps and GPS were directing traffic onto WHR. Crystal said rerouting onto Back Windham Road is not the answer, as that road narrow.

Kord noted that only part of WHR is in Windham. Crystal said she spoke with selectboard members in Townshend, and they said signage that warned trucks to stay off would need cooperation of Townshend, Jamaica, and Windham.

Next Steps: Kord will see what can be done. He will talk to folks in Townshend and Jamaica, as well as to VTrans.

D) Approve 2023 Winter Roads Policy – We don't need to change the policy from last winter. **Motion:** To readopt the policy for last winter for this winter. George moved, and all agreed.

E) Discuss Road Crew evaluation plans – Kord said he has done the evaluations in the past.

Motion: To have Kord conduct the Road Crew's evaluations. Kord moved, and all agreed.

Next Step: George and Michael will send Kord their comments for these evaluations.

F) Discuss 2024 TAP (transportation alternatives) grant opportunity – TAP is what funded the new salt shed last year. Kord will see if anything is needed now.

Next Step: Kord will send information to Michael and George. Michael will speak with Colin Bratten at the Windham Regional Commission about possibilities.

10. Old Business

A) Update on Wheeler Road project – Kord reported that the project is completed and the road is open. Imme is working on reimbursement to pay the bill.

Michael said alternative routes need to be prepared to preserve traffic flow from north to south Windham, in case Windham Hill Road washes out. Kord said maybe TAP or a collaboration with Jamaica would make Old Cheney Road more passable.

Next Step: Consider which Class 4 roads can serve as a detour when WHR is not passable.

B) Update on plans for temporary culverts removed from Wheeler Road – Windham Hill Rd by Ed Brown's and the Corriveau's was recently damaged. The temporary culverts from Wheeler could possibly be used for repairs. Everett Hammond is developing preliminary plans and estimates to be reviewed by FHWA for approval

C) Update on Route 121 culvert project, easement plans/letter to go out – Easement letters must go out to property owners whose land abuts this culvert construction. Imme is working on these.

D) Update on FEMA and FHWA projects – The initial damage inventory submitted to FEMA will be updated and finalized by the required deadline. We have been assigned a project manager for our federal highway projects. Concern was again expressed that the culvert by Wheeler and Windham Hill Road will now be unable to handle a larger water flow. We tried incorporating upsizing to mitigate expected damage, but support is only offered for existing damage.

E) Update on Meeting House oil tank inspections – See B) under New Business above for Maureen’s report.

F) Update on Meeting House monitoring system company’s request for contacts and key – Kord was unable to connect with them re why they need contacts and keys.

Next Step: Kord will look into getting a lockbox with a code for keeping the key.

G) Set a date for executive session to follow up on Conflict of Interest complaint – The selectboard agreed to meet in executive session next Monday 10/23/23 at 6:00pm, if the person the complaint is about is able to attend at that time.

H) Update on Altpfart property demolition – The lawyer for the Altpfarts has not responded to our town attorney, Bob Fisher, and there has been no further communication from the Altpfarts nor any from the engineer they said they had hired.

Next Step: Bob will draft another letter for the zoning administrator to send, stating our intention to take legal action.

In addition) Comments from Jenna Cramer – Michael asked that the selectboard allow comments from Jenna, the teacher/principal at WES, and all agreed. Jenna explained that she had gone to the Town Office with a student on an outing last Wednesday. After being warmly greeted by the women in the office, three men from the Listers officer came out and said terrible things to her about WES and its students, tossing out numbers to justify their negativity. Jenna said she is thick-skinned, but felt “gut punched” by the “hostile situation.” Kathy said the selectboard needs to find a way to reign in this and other abusive behavior by some town officials.

Next Step: The selectboard will consider how to address these situations. Kord will speak to the child who was with Jenna.

11) Adjourn regular meeting and stop recording

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:15 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
Approved October 30, 2023