

**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes
January 22, 2024 Special Meeting
Held at Town Office and on Zoom**

Present at Town Office

Kord Scott, selectboard chair
Michael Pelton, selectboard
George Dutton, selectboard
Kathy Scott, town treasurer

Present on Zoon

Mary McCoy (Mac), sb clerk
Maureen Bell
Cathy Edgerly Fales
Kathy Jungermann

Barbara Jean Quinn
Gail Wyman
Ellen McDuffie
Pat McLaine
Phil McDuffie

1. Start Recording and Call to Order

Kord called the meeting to order and started the recording at 5:32 PM.

2. Additions/deletions and/or changes to agenda – There were no changes to the agenda.

3. Announcements – There were no announcements.

4. Act on the minutes from the January 15, 2024

Motion: To approve the selectboard minutes from 1/15/24. George moved, and all agreed.

5. Public Comments – Kathy S. said the Winters Table event on 1/20 was wonderful, and she thanked Cathy for her work in making it happen.

6. Correspondence – There was no correspondence.

7. Payroll/Bills

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

8) 2024 Budget/Town Meeting Work Session

RECOMMENDATIONS – Kathy S. said she had worked the Auditors Pat McLaine and Kathy Jungermann, and with Cynthia from NEMRC to prepare information on the Designated Funds. As a result, she had the following recommendations.

NEMRC Fund: To finish the setup of the new accounting system and ensure it was perfect for future treasurers, \$20,000 was advised.

Fund Name Change: To remove a poorly named fund, change “Rainy Day Fund” to “Emergency Reserve Account.” Maureen said there is a percentage of the annual budget that goes into that account. She thinks it is 15% to 17%.

Motion: To change the name of the account from “Rainy Day Fund” to “Emergency Reserve Account.” George moved and all agreed.

Emergency Reserve Fund – It was recommended that \$25,000 be moved from surplus plus \$5,000 be appropriated from taxes.

Meeting House M&I Fund – The amount recommended was \$10,000

Garage M&I – \$10,000 was recommended.

Retreatment – \$100,000 was recommended.

Bridges & Culverts – No funding for this was recommended, as governmental grants are available for this purpose.

New Small Machinery – No funding for this was needed.

Weatherization – This funding has not been used in the past. It was recommended to transfer \$5,719 now in the fund to be used specifically for the downstairs windows at the Meeting House. Cathy said that funds were requested for this purpose in the Paul Bruhn grant proposal.

New Road Machinery – \$15,000 was recommended.

DISCUSSION and DECISION – The selectboard discussed the amounts needed for the various designated accounts, changing some recommended figures and making the following decisions:

Bridges & Large Structures (Culverts) – \$10,000 (none last year).

New Road Machinery – Michael examined in depth the need for new road machinery, and he determined that in the next five or six years, \$800,000 will be required. There is currently \$27,000 in this account. This year we may need \$245,000. We should add about \$180,000 per year to meet the needs. Otherwise, we will have to get a loan and pay interest. The cost for various equipment was estimated and discussed. Kathy suggested using \$108,703 from surplus for this account and adding more from taxes. It was decided to fund this for \$180,703 with \$72,000 from taxes and \$108,703 from surplus.

Repaving (Retreatment) – \$50,000 (with \$540,000 currently in that account and with FEMA helping when major weather events occur).

Garage M&I – \$10,000 (with \$71,000 currently in that account).

Meeting House M&I – \$10,000 (with \$5,719 moved from Weatherization for window repairs, \$44,000 for the Meeting House in ARAP funds, additional funds possible from grants, and the Friends of the Meeting House covering some major expenses).

Town Office M&I – \$10,000 (as this fund has been depleted).

Audit – \$16,000 from surplus.

NEMRC Accounting Software and Services – No new taxes for this, and \$20,000 for it from surplus.

Townwide Reappraisal – \$10,000 (as this is an ongoing need).

Emergency Reserve Fund -- \$25,000 from 2023 surplus (and nothing from taxes)

It was noted that the expenses are higher this year, but the amounts determined are what are needed, and funds were moved from surplus when that was possible to diminish taxes.

OTHER ARTICLES

Social Services – The list of donation recipients was reviewed. The Brattleboro Development Corporation was added to receive \$750, in recognition of the help they have provided and will continue to provide our town. Also added for \$100 was Vermont Fire Protection. It was decided to present in one Article the list of designated recipients and the amount requested for each, and to indicate which designees are new this year. Barbara Jean was asked if she would offer an explanation at Town Meeting about how the amounts were decided by the Social Services Committee, and she agreed to do so.

Next Steps: The selectboard will establish an ongoing policy for how Social Services requests are presented in the Annual Report, so this will not need to be determined each year.

Petition regarding the Constable's role – If passed, this petition (which must be included as an Article) would prohibit the constable from exercising any law enforcement authority. George suggested removing the constable position completely. Discussion considered who would get phone calls and who would gather info to pass on to the Sheriff's Dept. or other appropriate services. Michael said the constable's job is valuable if used the right way, but currently the constable is not overseen by anyone, as the position is elected.

Motion: To add as an Article, changing the constable position from an elected position to an appointed one with selectboard oversight. Michael moved, and all agreed.

Petition for using the Australian ballot – If passed, this petition (which must be included as an Article) would use the Australian ballot to conduct the election of all town officials and all special elections. It would take effect in 2025, and it would only apply to those two types of elections. Candidates for offices could not be nominated from the floor at Town Meeting – candidates would have to declare their candidacy in advance. These elections would take place through advance voting or voting at the polling place throughout election day.

Changes to the Board of Listers – It was decided to postpone a vote related to the structure of the board of listers until more information could be gathered and discussed.

9) Adjourn regular meeting and stop recording.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:47 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

**Next Regular Selectboard Meeting is scheduled for
Monday, February 5, 2024 at 5:30 PM**

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
Approved February 5, 2024