

**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes
February 26, 2024 Special Meeting
Held at Town Office and on Zoom**

Present at Town Office

Kord Scott, selectboard chair
Michael Pelton, selectboard
Kathy Scott, town treasurer
Cathy Fales

Present on Zoon

George Dutton, selectboard
Antje Ruppert (for Mary
McCoy (Mac, sb clerk)
Ellen McDuffie
David Cherry
Imme Maurath

Gail Wyman
Abby Pelton
Russ Cumming
Phil McDuffie
Tom & Eileen Widger
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 – None

3. Announcements and reminders – None

4. Act on the minutes from the meeting on 2/19/2024 – Postponed

5. Public Comments – None

6. Correspondence – Michael saw one letter from Frank Seawright. Kord asked if George knew anything more about it, but he did not.

7. Payroll/Bills – Postponed, because the open pay order is not to be approved until the next meeting

8) New/Old Business

A) Discuss Town Meeting prep plans – George proposed that the school vote and town vote could be separated and the town vote be held at a later point in time. George had a phone conversation with Susan Senning from the VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns) who confirmed that the SB has the legal authority to do so under the COVID era legislation. She said that after the Covid exceptions expire, in order to have a Town Meeting on Saturday, it must be scheduled for the Saturday before Town Meeting Day. All it would take would take now to separate the meetings would be to send out a letter to inform the public that Town Meeting would be held at a later date. A warning would have to be posted 30 to 40 days prior notifying the public that the town report would still be accurate but not the date. As reasons for not to reschedule, George said that the town historically always held the two meetings together, and the School Board would probably not be ready to take on a separate meeting on their own. If the meetings were to be separated, the SB would have to support the School Board to hold it. Michael thought that separating the meetings would cause great confusion. Kord agreed.

Motion: George moved to postpone Town Meeting until a warmer time of year, e. g. the first or second weekend in May. George was in favor, Michael and Kord opposed. The motion failed.

Discussion about attendance at the Meeting House: Attendance upstairs in the Sanctuary is capped to 150 people. However, there may be more voting members who choose to attend this year. George spoke with Susan Senning about the possibility of holding the meeting in two separate rooms and conduct votes, e. g. have a separate mask-only space for people with health concerns. Michal was concerned about setting up a mask-only zone because it would be segregating people. Susan Senning recommended taking a look at the Secretary of States election website for guidance. George will follow up and inform the Board. Kord noted that due diligence will need to be followed with regard to voting in such a situation and the SOS guidance should be carefully studied in that regard. With the Sheriff's department present, they could tell when 150 people are present. Kathy suggested seating in the choir loft.

Phil noted that it is really important that the moderator at Town Meeting can see hands raised from the public, and in the right order which will be challenging with having the meeting in two separate rooms. He suggested setting up all the equipment the day before and conducting a rehearsal, possibly with Mike McClain (moderator) present. He also pointed out that the logistics of voting for the Town Clerk could become a challenge. Clear guidance from the Secretary of State is paramount. Ellen responded that she'd need 2 or 3 extra helpers to make that work. She asked to be provided the information from the Secretary of State for review. Imme noted that since 2005 she had only once seen more than 120 people at Town Meeting and does not think that there'll necessarily be more this time. Phil thought that this meeting will likely bring out a large crowd of people.

Michael said that he is working on setting up a possible **childcare** venue at the Windham School and had spoken with Beth MacDonald. Beth will speak with Leigh Merinoff to see if two farm interns could help and possibly Mary MacDonald. Abby confirmed that based on a new policy, the School Board is authorized to provide access to the school. Kord told Abby that Russ Cumming is trying to spearhead this effort and could use her help.

George: **Fire watch** is an important point to discuss. The Sheriff will be the dedicated fire watch in charge, but if the meeting is held in two separate rooms there should be one in each room. Kord had spoken with Jon Gordon (Fire Chief), but John was concerned about a possible fire call and not being able to handle the fire watch at the Meeting House. Pete Cop from Londonderry Rescue had informed Kord that they do not provide this service. If there were more than two individuals on fire watch, patrolling the building every 15 minutes would not be required. Kord agreed to speak with the Sheriff's department if they can send a second person.

George asked if **BCTV** will be recording the Town Meeting. Kord said that BCTV is committed to providing television service like they did the year before, and that recording on Zoom or YouTube would also be possible. They have not yet gotten back to Kord about pricing. George asked Kord to find out if they could interface between the two rooms if the Meeting is in separate rooms. The Meeting could be held via Zoom and a laptop be plugged into a large screen TV. George offered to lend a 60" screen for the occasion. Kord suggested to first reviewing the rules and regulations from the Secretary of State with regard to participation on Zoom between the two meeting spaces.

Michael: we need to make sure that there is **fresh air flow** upstairs and downstairs. George noted that the window inserts will need to be removed. Bill Dunkel offered to remove the

inserts so that some windows can be opened. Michael asked if instead of large wood blocks some shorter blocks could be used?

Maureen Bell had noted previously that the seat cushions will need to be in place and the downstairs **space set up**. Imme had offered to take care of the downstairs setup.

The **hood** in the entry way will need to be removed. George offered to bring a trailer where it can be stored temporarily.

George asked if there is an update on the **fire alarm system**. Kord responded that an inspection will be done on Tuesday 2/27/24.

Kord noted that **masks and sanitizer** will need to be available. Imme confirmed that there are 250 masks and plenty of sanitizer.

Potluck: As per the Fire Marshal there cannot be any stove top or oven use during Town Meeting. Only cold foods or crock-pot dishes, microwave and heating plate use are acceptable. George asked if only disposable plates and cutlery should be used. Imme confirmed that the WCO will provide disposable plates and cutlery, but noted that the public should be informed about this. Ellen offered to send out an email.

Abby asked if extension cords should be in place for crock pots. George responded that the Fire Marshal frowns upon their use. They would have to be heavy-gauge and 3 pronged. Events taking place at the Meeting House between March 4 and March 9 that might impair recording equipment setup will be Living Strong on March 4 and 7, Presidential Primary on March 5, Energy Audit on March 6.

Summary: George will follow up with the Secretary of State about rules and regulations, Michael will check on the childcare option at the Windham School, and Kord will talk to the Sheriff's department about a second fire watch person and check with BCTV about recording in both meeting rooms. Ellen will provide George with the contact details for Tammy Sink, the Assistant Director of Elections. Kord said that the SB could meet again if needed before the next regularly scheduled meeting on March 4, 2024. Kathy suggested holding this meeting at the Meeting House as a test. Abby suggested inviting BCTV to that meeting.

9) Adjourn regular meeting and stop recording.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:27 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

**Next Regular Selectboard Meeting is scheduled for
Monday, March 4, 2024 at 5:30 PM**

Respectfully submitted,
Antje Ruppert
(for Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk)
Approved March 18, 2024