

**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes  
May 20, 2024 Regular Meeting  
Held at the Town Office and on Zoom**

**Present at Town Office**

Kord Scott, selectboard chair  
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk  
Michael Pelton, selectboard clerk  
Maureen Bell

**Present on Zoom**

George Dutton, selectboard  
Jessica Savage, VCRD  
Cathy Edgerly Fales  
Antje Ruppert  
Tom & Louise Johnson  
Ellen McDuffie  
Bill Dunkel  
Barbara Jean Quinn  
Abby Pelton

**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** – Michael added to New Business a discussion of the votes on the school.

**3. Announcements** – Maureen reminded folks of the tag sale at the meeting house on Saturday, May 25 from 9:00 to 2:00, with significant proceeds going for the Meeting House.

**4. Act on the minutes from the May 6, 2024 selectboard meeting**

**Motion:** To approve the 5/6/24 selectboard minutes; George moved and Kord agreed. Michael abstained, as he did not attend that meeting.

**5. Public Comments** – Cathy said she learned that the WCO will not be sponsoring its summer BBQ, as it has for many years. Cathy said she regretted this and will try to get others to help her organize the event. Maureen said the WCO will sponsor an ice cream social instead.

**Next Step:** Discuss the status of the event at the next selectboard meeting.

**6. Correspondence** – George said Crystal Corriveau and others from the southern half of town told him they need a better phone/internet service than Consolidated Communications.

**7. Payroll/Bills**

**Motion:** To approve the check warrant reports from the town treasurer. George moved, and all agreed.

**Motion:** To have Kord sign the reports. George moved, and all agreed.

**8. Guest and Staff Reports with Discussions and Possible Decisions**

A) Jessica Savage (VT Council on Rural Development) – Jessica, director of VCRD’s Community Collaboration, and VCRD is a nonprofit organization that provides services to Vermont’s small towns. Jessica has spoken with Cathy about helping the town create a needs assessment plan for the town’s buildings, beginning by meeting here with a small group from town to create a plan of action. Action usually includes reviewing existing plans, determining two or three priorities for each building as a basis for discussion, sending a townwide mailing to get people involved, and facilitating meetings about each building with resource providers. The only cost to the town would be the mailing and any food at meetings. The selectboard expressed support for this project which can begin in the autumn.

**Next Step:** Jessica will send Kord a sample letter of request for support, which the selectboard will use to draft its own letter to start the process.

**B) Grant Strategist** –Cathy said the town has been encouraged to pursue a grant from the Community Trust Initiative. It must be submitted by a 501c3, saying they want to talk about this possibility. This grant would provide expertise and funding to take on a transformational project while bolstering a local nonprofit. Cathy also spoke to Jenna who oversees our Bruhn Historic Preservation grant. Jenna said we need to resolve our fire issues, and she recommended that someone from the state of Vermont come and meet with our fire marshal and an architect. The possible installation of the exhaust hood could also be addressed, as well as the doors, which Jenna said do not have to swing out in historic buildings. The Bruhn staff has been reduced, so it is likely to be 180 days before any construction or outside painting can take place. That pushes work back to next spring, giving us time to resolve fire-related issues. **Next Step:** Ask a local 501c3 to contact the Community Trust Initiative and get on their list. Move forward with Jenna on getting state professionals here to make recommendations regarding fire safety. Draft letter to state reps to request their support.

**C) Webmasters** – Bea was not present to report. The contract with Curly Sprouts Creative has been received.

**D) Road Foreman** – Richard was not present. Kord reported that the RFP for a new truck is in process. He reminded George to include a request for a guaranteed trade-in amount and an extended warranty. Regarding stream erosion in West Windham, it is back on FEMA’s list. A stream engineer has provided input, and Everett, town engineer, will do so too. Then a permit can be issued and the stream can be returned to its normal path with reinforced banks. Regarding the paving project on Windham Hill Road, Kord, Richard, and Everett recommend postponing this until next year, after culverts are replaced and cash flow is available. Regarding possible Town Garage property, the owner has four acres which he’d sell for about \$8,000. The location is not ideal, as it is the far north end of town, but it is on a paved road and is worth considering as a place to stockpile materials. Regarding Christmas Tree Road which runs in Windham and Andover, Andover wants to throw up the road (change it from a Class 3 to a Class 4, which does not have to be maintained by the town). Kord was contacted by Andover’s selectboard chair who wants to meet with Windham’s selectboard, but Kord thinks that is unnecessary at this time and will report back on any developments. We have two houses on the road. **Next Steps:** Mac will send George our template for an RFP. Kord will find out if the funds pledged for the salt shed can be used for property purchase. Michael will look at the land.

**E) Grant Administrator** – Imme was not present; Kord reported that she is wrapping up her work for FEMA and federal highway reimbursements and investigating another possible grant for Hazard Mitigations.

**F) Treasurer** – Kathy was not present; Kord reported that she is working with Mac to prepare an RFP to be sent to prospective auditors for an accounting of our town financial records. Kathy plans to retire after her term is completed this year and is looking for an assistant who might take over her job or stay on as support for a new treasurer. **Next Step:** Look for an experienced person with accounting knowledge and not just bookkeeping experience.

**G) Listers** – Antje suggested that the town consider making the lister an appointed position, not an elected on. That way the lister would be responsible to the selectboard, and someone

could be hired with the expertise for the job. She had expected to be trained by the other two current listers, and they were unable to do so. Regarding grievances, only about 10 people have either called or attended the informal info sessions. Booking for the official grievance sessions on 5/30 and 5/31 is being done by NEMRC, and there have been few scheduled so far. Antje expects that all three listers will attend those meetings.

**Next Step:** Kord will send Antje the name of someone who was upset about her appraisal.

**H) Conservation Committee** – Alison was not present, and she told Kord that she was unlikely to be able to attend the selectboard meetings on Monday evenings as she has work obligations – she will submit something in writing as a substitute. She said Tan Branson has put together an email list of the folks who volunteered to be in the friends group for the wildlife refuge.

**I) Planning Commission** – Bill said the PC met on May 13 with Matt from the Windham Regional Commission. Some of the town’s plans, priorities, and problems were discussed. Our last town plan was in 2019, and the next isn’t required until 2027, so no decisions are urgent. The PC talked about zoning regulations, and Bill asked Matt for feedback on language related to housing density standards, as the current language is unclear and confusing. Matt will review that language and provide verbiage from other towns. Also of concern is a standard for building on slopes, and Matt will also offer help with that. On June 6, the PC and others will gather at a home on a steep slope owned by Michael Simonds and Mary McCoy, and Tom Johnson (an engineer) will explain how to determine the steepness of a slope. Kord asked if the PC could help with permits for putting a utility line under a town road. How deep should the line be? In a pipe sleeve? In concrete? VTrans has standards and a permitting process for state highways. Other towns may already have permits for this.

**Next Steps:** Bill and the PC will consider this issue with input from the WRC. Kord will ask Everett for advice, and he’ll ask for input from other towns via the Municipal List Serve.

**J) Meeting House Committee** – Maureen said the MH Committee will meet this week, focusing on the preparation of a rental agreement for the selectboard to review.

**Next Step:** Kord and Michael will see if the front row of pews can be removed for town meeting election purposes and ask Pete Newton if necessary.

**K) Town Clerk** – Ellen spoke first regarding the WCO BBQ. She said the WCO did not have the person power to sponsor the event. Maureen added that the Mauraths, who do much of the work, will be away, and the tent costs \$600 to rent. With that expense and the cost of the food, the WCO loses money on the event. Ellen said the WCO has no objection to other individuals sponsoring the BBQ. The WCO will instead sponsor an ice cream social, along with the new Windham Historical Society. As town clerk, Ellen acknowledged the new computer for the assistant clerks’ use. She said American flags are available for cemetery commissions to use for Memorial Day. She stated some structural issues with the Town Office. The ADA bar fell out of the wall in the bathroom and has been replaced and reinforced. The basement door is unlocked, due to a missing cable. The door handle on the front door doesn’t work right. The front columns need to be painted, and some window screens need to be repaired.

**Next Steps:** Michael will address these problems.

## **9) New Business**

**A) Discuss upcoming votes on the school** – Michael asked what needs to be done in preparation for the town meeting and vote on June 6. Ellen said she will prepare the name and

number tags. Someone needs to be there for fire safety. Daniel Roth will arrange for BCTV to record. George will help set up the audio-visional equipment. He will send Kord the info on the new equipment the selectboard voted to purchase at the last meeting, so Kord can order it. Maureen volunteered to be the person downstairs to coordinate voting. Michael will come early to set up downstairs. Abby reminded everyone of the informational meeting at the school on May 28 which was set up in case the voting took place by Australian ballot. It was later learned that the vote must be held in-person because that was the way the initial vote was taken. The May 28 meeting remains an opportunity for details to be presented by the school board and for voters to ask questions. Discussion will also be allowed on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Next Steps:** Complete all of the action steps stated above.

**B) Discuss Hazard Mitigation Grant opportunity- application due June 21<sup>st</sup>** – Kord said Imme is looking into this.

**C) Discuss time limits on agenda items/reports** – Kord hopes to keep meetings to two hours or less. We need to hold discussion on any item to around 15 minutes. Dan uses a timer on Zoom for school board meetings, and the selectboard might do the same.

### **Old Business**

**A) Discuss plans to meet with town officials for team building** – Kord said that he wants to avoid any sense that the meetings are for some purpose other than sharing information and building cooperation. They can't take place in executive sessions, nor can they easily be included in regular selectboard meetings. He suggested that the three selectboard members divide the contact list and meet individually with their colleagues. With our new agendas now including staff reports, those folks may not need to be met with.

**Next Steps:** Michael and George need to review Kord's email about this. Mac will resend the questions she and Cathy drafted for the selectboard to use.

**B) US Talc and their pond's overflow maintenance on White Road** –US Talc is in bankruptcy, causing concerned about the future maintenance of the pond's discharge into town drainage, as stipulated in their agreement with the town when their talc mine was closed. Bob Fisher, town attorney, call their attorney, but hasn't received a call back. Bob looked at the bankruptcy statements, and there is no mention of controlling the pond's discharge.

**C) Discuss upgrades for phone and internet services with info on CCI and DVFiber** – George is waiting for a call back from First Light. We want a better system, and First Light offers a better connection than what exists with CCI at the Town Office, but the cost is significantly higher, and we would be locked into a three-year contract. The status of DVFiber is still unknown.

**Next Step:** Continue to discuss this at the next meeting.

## **12. Adjourn regular meeting and stop recording.**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 7:25 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

**Next Regular Selectboard Meeting is scheduled for  
Monday, June 3, 2024 at 5:30 PM**

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk  
*Approved June 3, 2024*