

**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes
July 1, 2024 Regular Meeting
Held at the Meeting House and on Zoom**

Present at the Meeting House

Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
Kord Scott, selectboard chair
Michael Pelton, selectboard
Cathy Edgerly Fales

Present on Zoom

George Dutton, selectboard
Maureen Bell
Antje Ruppert
Tom & Louise Johnson
Bill Casey

Crystal Corriveau
Ellen McDuffie
Barbara Jean Quinn
Tan Bronson
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 – A report from the Conservation Commission was added to the agenda under Staff Reports.

3. Announcements – Kord announced that the RFP for a financial audit of the town’s accounts has been sent to three audit companies and are due on September 3.

4. Act on the minutes from the June 17, 2024 selectboard meeting

Motion: To approve the June 17, 2024 selectboard minutes; George moved, and all agreed.

5. Public Comments – Crystal said she is investigating the background of Windham joining the Leland & Gray Union, and would like the cooperation of the selectboard and the school board.
Next Step: Put this on the parking lot for future discussion.

6. Correspondence – A message was received about the town’s need for low-income housing from Crystal who asked about using delinquent properties for homeless people. Crystal also contacted the selectboard about the new legislation on nuisance animals.

An email was received from Dillon Lowell of the Friendly Gathering, asking the selectboard to sign a letter of support to have the event in Timber Ridge in 2025.

Next Steps: Put on the agenda for 7/15 the request for the Friendly Gathering letter of support. Put on the parking lot the issues of low-income housing and nuisance animals.

7. Payroll/Bills

Motion: To approve the check warrant reports from the town treasurer. George moved, and all agreed. Kord will sign these.

8. Guest and Staff Reports with Discussions and Possible Decisions

A) Road Foreman – Richard was not present, and Kord reported as road commissioner on seven road related issues. 1) The RFPs for the new truck have been sent to five vendors, with a due date of July 22. So far, two vendors have confirmed that they plan to submit a bid. 2) Imme has nearly completed the FEMA work. 3) Everett and a stream engineer are working on the West Windham Rd. erosion issues. Everett wants to do a video inspection with a drone. This project is at the initial costing stage and will be expensive. 4) There has been no action concerning the town garage, except to ask if the grant money received for the salt shed can be used to buy property. 5) Steps are being taken to change the current driveway access permit to a right-of-way permit. 6) Three grant projects are due for completion on September 30. The

grant for Ingalls Rd. has been approved for \$20,000. The other two projects (\$16,500 and \$12,000) need descriptions submitted for approval. 7) The bearings failed on our tow behind vibratory compactor, which is used to pack down our unpaved roads. Richard and Kurt are exploring ways to repair the compactor.

Next Step: Discuss painting the current town garage.

B) Grant Strategist – Cathy sent the selectboard a detailed report on the meeting June 27 at the Meeting House regarding fire issues. Her full report is attached. To summarize, we can hold up to 20 events per year with over 50 people. Maximum capacity upstairs and downstairs is to be determined based on exact measurements. It is not necessary to have a safety officer at gatherings, just a designate responsible person. All building doors must swing out and be at least 32 inches wide. We need to replace the current fire extinguisher in the kitchen with a smaller size K one. The fire suppression hood is no longer required as long as we continue to use residential ranges as opposed to commercial ones. We might sell the hood back to Willy or advertise it for sale. If it is sold, the \$3500 from the AARP grant which was used to buy the hood can be used for other community food-related needs – possibly buying a new refrigerator, eliminating the use of extension cords for warming food during pot luck meals, or conducting more events like Winters Table.

Motion: Michael moved to empower Cathy to talk to Willy about the possible sale of the hood. All agreed.

Next Steps: Postpone a decision about the fire suppression hood until other matters are determined. If the hood is sold, decide how to use the \$3500. Buy a size K fire extinguisher. Cathy will provide the fire marshal with measurements to determine room capacity. Kord will investigate why the town was charged for two fire safety inspections.

On other matters, Cathy said the smallest amount that can be requested for energy planning with an Energy Efficiency Grant is at least \$50,000, far more than we need. We might join with other towns to participate as part of a regional grant. Cathy will discuss this with the Energy Committee. There was a blower test done at the Meeting House, but there was so much leakage, an assessment was not possible. The Municipal Planning Grant has been delayed. It is focused on housing development. The Brattleboro Development Corporation asked for a letter of support, and Cathy drafted that.

Motion: To endorse the Brattleboro Development Corp. by having Kord sign the letter Cathy drafted. Michael moved and all agreed.

C) Listers – Antje reported that she worked with the NEMRC advisors to meet the required deadlines. Although the Grand List must be resubmitted, due to a minor issue, the state will consider that the deadline was met. One grievance has not been resolved, and it will be addressed by the Board of Civil Authority. It is unclear how that will be managed if the property value is changed, as all figures have been submitted and are considered final for tax determinations. The listers' work will now focus on the Grand List for 2025, and any property value changes will be made to it. She is looking for more cooperation and input from the other two listers. Antje will be in Germany July 6 to August 2.

D) Town Clerk – Ellen reported on several issues. 1) She has the ballots for the upcoming Vermont primary, and they are available at the office or by calling to have them mailed. A person must choose to vote in one of the three party primaries. Voters can go to My Voter Page on the VT secretary of state's webpage for more information. 2) The U.S. Dept of Labor told her to change the way the town clerk reports our monthly labor statistics. They want her to report all the time spent by all paid and volunteer workers. Everyone agreed that this is a

problematic request. Ellen will find out more about it, and Michael offered to help her. 3) The BCA hearing date has not been set as the grievor is waiting to receive an independent appraisal. The appeal must be made 44 days from the initial appeal request. At Maureen's suggestion, Ellen will set the day for 44 days after the appeal was made. Ellen has a handout on the role of the BCA that she will share. 4) Ellen has been in contact with Ashley, the animal control officer regarding complaints about short-term renters letting their dogs run free. She is trying to spread the word that all dogs must be leashed and vaccinated. 5) The WCO and the Windham Historical Society will hold an ice cream social at the Meeting House on August 21 from 3:00 to 5:00.

E) Planning Commission – Bill was not present, and no report was given.

F) Meeting House – Maureen said there was nothing to report in addition to Cathy's report. There was not a quorum at their last meeting, so no action was taken.

G) Webmaster – Bea was not present, and no report was given.

H) Conservation Commission – Mac read a report from Alison Trowbridge saying that the sale of the Glebe Mountain property owned by the Nature Conservancy has been sold officially to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She and others are working with Andy French of the USFWS to get the friends group up and functioning.

9) New Business

A) Discuss BCTV's proposal for future services – Michael explained that BCTV is sent a proposal, offering to edit, distribute, and store our Zoom recordings of meetings, which will help us meet the new open meeting laws. The school board uses BCTV for this and also for recording their meetings. Questions were raised about how long we need to post meeting recordings, and what it costs us now for the services BCTV are offering.

Next Step: Put this on the parking list, although it is not a high priority.

B) Update on LHMP Report (due 7/15) and Hazard Mitigation Grant (due 8/16) – Kord said Imme will handle both and is working with the Windham Regional Commission, Richard, and Everett regarding the culvert needed on Chase Road.

C) Discuss Constable's qualifications, duties and compensation – Michael said he received from the VLCT a rough overview of the constable job. We have already agreed that our constable will not have law enforcement duties. Michael wants input on what duties he/she should have. We also need to consider compensation and payment for mileage.

Next Step: Send input to Michael, and he will prepare a draft for the selectboard to consider.

D) Discuss school board's request for a joint meeting re school building – They have asked for a meeting in August or September.

Next Step: Suggest meeting with them in September, and ask them to send their questions or topics for discussion to the selectboard prior to the meeting. If anyone has questions or relevant information, they should send those to the selectboard prior to the meeting.

10) Old Business

A) Update on upgrades for phone and internet services – George said the current speeds at the Town Office are 19 download and 10 upload. First Light says their service is 50 up and 50

down. Latency will make First Light even faster. More research is needed for the phone service. We now pay CCI \$120 per month for phone and internet. First Light is \$350 per month. More research is needed for another phone service, in addition to Ooma's.

Next Step: George will prepare info in writing comparing all costs and services.

B) Update on AV equipment purchase – We've received all of the equipment we ordered.

Next Step: George will look it over to make sure it is what we ordered and that everything is in good shape. The selectboard will decide what to do with old equipment.

C) Discuss the Budget Status Reports/feedback from departments – Kord reported that accounts are closed for June, which is much sooner than before with the old system. Cynthia from NEMRC wants feedback from the selectboard and department heads to know if they are getting what they want in the reports. She is trying to address the issue that there is not a breakdown for some expenses, only sum totals, so it is not clear what individual costs are.

Next Step: Feedback is needed from the town clerk and others.

D) Update on internet speed at the Meeting House – Access to account info has been updated. Speed was 20 up/20 down, but VTel provided a new router and the account has been upgraded 250 up/down speed. The cost remains the same. There is a secure account inside the Meeting House and an open one that can be accessed by anyone, including folks in the MH parking lot.

E) Update of Fire Company's possible interest in moving the firehouse – Kord spoke with Jon Gordan, and he is willing to participate in discussions, but reiterated that he alone is not the decision maker. Michael said it is important that we support them, and that they remain independent. Crystal asked if their contact info is on the town website, and it is, although their main way of communication is Facebook.

F) Update on lack of quiet work space in the Town Office – Ellen said that lack of quiet is not an issue for her, as she expects a lot of talking and noise. The problem is in the backroom where the town treasurer and Imme work and need quiet to concentrate. Perhaps Imme could have a desk in the listers' office to use when they are not there. The Historic Society and Center Cemetery Commission have met in the Town Office which was problematic, but the Historic Society has moved their meetings to the schoolhouse. The need for in-person meetings is affected by the new open meeting law. Any decision-making group (also called "non-advisory") must hold hybrid meetings (in-person and on Zoom), and it is unclear which meet the definition of "non-advisory." **Next Step:** Kord will ask Bob Fisher to determine which of our groups are "advisory" and which are "non-advisory."

11) Adjourn regular meeting and stop recording.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:26 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

**Next Regular Selectboard Meeting is scheduled for
Monday, July 15, 2024 at 5:30 PM**

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
Approved July 1, 2024