

**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes
December 2, 2024 Regular Meeting
Held at the Meeting House and on Zoom**

Present at the Meeting House

Kord Scott, selectboard chair

Present on Zoom

George Dutton, selectboard
Michael Pelton, selectboard
Mary McCoy (Mac), sb clerk
Maureen Bell
Jim McCandless
Ginny Crittenden
Cathy Stover
Gail Wyman

Bill Dunkel
Frank Seawright
Abby Pelton
Crystal Corriveau
Cathy Fales
Marcia Clinton
Barbara Jean Quinn
Daniel Roth
Phil McDuffie

1. Start Recording and Call to Order

Kord called the meeting to order and started the recording at 5:30 PM.

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

3. Announcements – Kord said he hoped everyone had a nice Thanksgiving, and he thanked Antje for taking notes in Mac’s absence. He announced that Will Goodwin has been hired as the new zoning administrator, and he thanked Michael Simonds for serving as ZA.

4. Act on the minutes from the November 18, 2024 selectboard meeting

Motion: To approve the November 18, 2024 selectboard minutes; George moved; all agreed.

5. Public Comments – There were no public comments.

6. Correspondence – Emails from Cynthia Stoddard (NEMRC) will be discussed later on the agenda. Emails regarding a dog issue are being handled by the sheriff’s animal control officer.

7. Payroll/Bills – Treasurer Kathy Scott sent two warrant reports for approval, one for the usual pay orders, and the other for refunds for overpayments of property taxes. These occurred primarily due to both home owners and banks paying the tax for properties in escrow.

Motion: To approve both 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 Commissioner – Kord reported that Richard has reviewed the Winter Road Policy.

Motion: To approve the 2024-2025 Winter Road Policy. Kord moved, and all agreed.

Kord reported that a town truck blew a hose, leaving a stain near Popple Dungeon and Howard Hill Roads. This was reported to the state, as required, and the necessary clean up procedure was followed. No damage occurred to the truck. Kord also reported that plowed snow had knocked over a mailbox, which Richard reported to the home owner.

B) Grant Strategist – Cathy Fales said the group overseeing the revisions to the Meeting House had their first meeting. She will provide the selectboard with a written report with the group’s recommendations. Tim Jeffers, one of group, said we have enough funds to do what is wanted. He has records from his past work on the building, which will be helpful. Michael was also in attendance and said there were creative ideas for balancing the building’s needs and the preservation prohibitions. Cathy said a backup power system is wanted. She also said she and Jenna from the Preservation Trust are tying up loose ends related to that grant.

C) Grant Administrator – Kord reported for Imme Maurath that she is working on the Better

Roads Grant, starting with the culvert needed on Howard Hill Road. The Windham Regional Commission has provided help in the past for this work, but they are turning that over to the towns, so Imme will be handling the submission. The project for replacement of a large culvert on Abbott Road by the Kehoes is moving forward. The bid package for its installation will go out in the next month or two.

D) Listers – Antje was not present. The issue related to errors and omissions will be discussed during New Business.

E) Planning/Energy – Bill announced that the Zoning Board of Adjustment will hold a hearing one week from tonight regarding a request from Jim and Crystal Corriveau to take down a barn attached to their house. The hearing is required because the barn is located in a historic district. Bill said the Planning Commission is considering an adjustment to the regulations for recreational vehicles, including setback from the road. The changes do not affect RVs parked by owners for use when they travel. The Planning Commission is also working to create clearer language in the regs related to property density. The selectboard must approve all changes.

Bill said Tom Johnson will represent the Energy Commission on the group overseeing the Meeting House grants. Tom wasn't able to attend the first meeting of that group, but Maureen reported that Tan Branson gave a report to the Meeting House Committee, which Tom heard. She said her committee didn't discuss or express opinions about the group's work.

F) Zoning Administrator – Kord reported that Will Goodwin is getting familiar with Windham's zoning process. Michael Simonds, departing ZA, will be talking with Will.

G) Town Clerk/Election Officer – Ellen wasn't present, as she was not well. She told Kord she will not be running for reelection. Some questions were asked about the hours and pay involved, which no one could answer. Michael asked about combining the town clerk and town treasurer jobs. This has worked in the past and results in the Town Office being open for longer hours. It might also be easier to hire one qualified person than to find two qualified people. Making this one fulltime job would require the town to pay benefits, but having benefits would make the job more attractive for possible applicants. Kord is researching the possibility of combining the jobs. Phil noted that we traditionally vote separately on the candidates for the two jobs. He also noted that the jobs currently must be filled by residents.

Next Step: Learn more about the hours and pay, etc. for the town clerk's job.

9) New Business

A) Cumming/Hussey errors and omissions issue – Antje explained in an email that the State found that parcel 090012 was listed with incorrect acreage. There was at one point an 84 acre parcel owned by George Havel. It was split up, and Alison and Chris Cummings got 30.4 acres and a Michael Hussey 53.6 acres. Somehow during the reappraisal someone reapplied the 53.6 acres back to the Cummings, and that parcel was taxed twice. Nate Stoddard corrected this issue in NEMRC, CAMA and VTPIE. But since the "As Billed Grand List" is no longer in the listers' hands, the selectboard must approve the correction

B) Motion: To amend the property values as stated in Antje's email and have Kathy issue a new tax bill. George moved, and all agreed.

Next Step: The three selectboard members must sign the Errors and Omissions statement.

C) Imerys: Discussion regarding Town Agreement for White Road Siphon (Hamm Pitt Lake) – Kord said the town has a signed agreement with Imerys regarding the overflow from the pit, a former talc mine. The company is responsible for controlling the overflow to protect town roads and home owners' properties. However, Imerys has filed bankruptcy and is going out of business, and someone needs to take over the responsibility of maintaining the system by the end of 2025. Imerys asked the town to consider receiving the 75 acres involved as a donation, with the town

then also taking of the responsibility of maintaining the overflow control system. Jim lives near the site and the overflow goes through his property. He said maintenance has been weekly or near that. The overflow has contained contaminated water in the past, a problem that could reoccur. The cost of this maintenance has been about \$10,000 per year, including maintaining a 700-foot pipe. There would be liability issues for the town. People swim in the lake, although it contains arsenic, and there are “No Trespassing” signs. Bill said there is a large open area that previously has been considered for a solar array which would have large electricity production. Jim said there is a single-phase line to the area, not a three-phase, as would be needed.

Next Steps: Get input from Bob Fisher and others. Consider the idea of owning the property.

D) APRA reporting and funds distribution – Kord said that he receives help on the required reporting to the federal government from Katie Buckley at VLCT. She said all funds must be “obligated” by 12/31/25. There is still \$51,172.77 that has not been spent – \$7,172.17 plus \$44,000 earmarked for the Meeting House. Katie advised us to transfer these funds to our General Fund in order to meet federal requirements. Clarity on the unspent funds is needed, and Kord asked Mac to get involved, as she previously chaired the ARPA Committee.

Motion: To move \$51,172.17 to the General Fund to be used for Meeting House improvements. George moved, and all agreed.

Next Step: Mac will review with Kathy the funds spent and the funds that remain.

E) REI (Road Erosion Inventory)/Culvert Inventory updates with Jeff Nugent – Kord said we have a complete inventory that was prepared and prioritized by the State of our road-oriented drainage system, including many of the culverts. These address the impact of storms and the runoffs that affect our streams and the communities downhill. The road crew has worked for the past few years to fix the high priority segments listed in the REI, using grant funds received for that purpose. Frank spoke about the issue, saying the separate culvert inventory had not been updated in years and its language is unclear. He said culverts on private property (under driveways) are not on the inventory and should be included. He thinks there should be legislation to correct this, but until there is, Windham needs to expand the inventory to include all culverts. Kord said the State inventory is comprehensive and prioritized. Driveway culverts are not included and that’s OK. The road crew has too much to do to deal with driveway culverts unless they create problems for the roads. Also, maintaining all driveway culverts would be a huge expense for the town. Michael noted that when a driveway installation is permitted, it should look at whether the size of the culvert is appropriate. Frank said again that the town’s inventory of culverts should include all culverts. Kord said he agreed, but currently we have our hands full just fixing what is prioritized in the REI and Culvert Inventories.

F) Discuss Phil McDuffie/Cynthia Stoddard’s input re the Treasurer position search – Phil said he considered running for treasurer, so he got information about the job from Kathy and Cynthia (from NEMRC), eventually deciding the job was not a good fit for him. He learned in the process that the change made recently from QuickBooks to the NEMRC system was a good one, providing much more understandable information and much better reporting for a professional audit. However, the treasurer position is now a more challenging job, requiring a skilled person with accounting skills. He thinks there should be appropriate funds in the budget to hire a capable person. Phil said it worries him that no one is stepping up to run for the job. Since the treasurer will be elected by Australian ballot, if no one runs, a write-in will win, and that person could win with very few votes and may have little or no skills or aptitude for the job. He advised the selectboard to put an article on the warning for Town Meeting to have the selectboard appoint/hire the treasurer. That vote to appoint/hire would be taken during Town Meeting (but after the ballots are printed showing if anyone is running and if so who) and before the votes are tallied after 7:00 PM on Town Meeting day. Kord said he is talking to the VLCT for information on how to handle this situation.

Next Step: Based on further advise, decide whether to have an article for Town Meeting to appoint/hire the treasurer.

G) Discuss installing a Repeater at the Meeting House – Michael said he researched the best way to provide communications in an emergency when usual methods don't work. This could be used by the road crew, selectboard, emergency managers, etc. Based on his research and discussions with Tan, he thinks a General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) repeater located at the Meeting House should be considered. It would cost about \$2000.

Next Step: Consider putting this cost into the 2025 budget.

H) Discuss scheduling (3) abatement hearing requests – Ellen has asked for these hearings to be scheduled next week. She is crucial to the process, and she won't be available for a few weeks after that. It was agreed that next Tuesday evening would be the best day for the hearings.

10) Old Business

A) Discuss outreach letter to residents re town job openings – Michael said the draft Mac prepared needs to be updated. Phil said he can provide mailing labels for all town residents.

Next Step: Prepare the letter and send it as soon as possible.

B) Discuss budget development – Kord said all town officials and committee heads with budgets have been asked to review their budgets from 2024 and request any changes needed for 2025. They will also consider adding costs for the schoolhouse. The costs for road equipment which is set by the replacement schedule must be considered vital. Otherwise, the selectboard wants to keep the budget as trim as possible.

Next Step: Start work on the budget as soon as possible.

C) Update on West Windham Road stream bank erosion mitigation – Kord talked to FEMA again, and they are not helpful. Windham Regional is helping with the application for a Hazard Mitigation grant.

D) Update on Annual Meeting with the Road Crew – Kord said this meeting was held and went well. Both Richard and Kurt are planning to stop working in three years, and we need a replacement/transition plan. Michael said, and Kord agreed, that we need to add the cost of a third person for the road crew to the 2025 budget.

11) Adjourn regular meeting and stop recording.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:37 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

**Next Regular Selectboard Meeting is scheduled for
Monday, December 16, 2024 at 5:30 PM**

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
Approved December 16, 2024