**Windham VT Selectboard Minutes**

**May 19, 2025 Regular Meeting**

**Held at the Meeting House and on Zoom**

**Present at the Meeting House**

Kord Scott, selectboard chair

Michael Pelton, selectboard

George Dutton, selectboard

Mary McCoy (Mac), sb clerk

Cathy Fales, town treasurer

**Present on Speaker Phone**

Everett Hammond, town engineer

**Present on Zoom**

Becky Phillips

Nathan Brauer

Maureen Bell

Bill Dunkel

Barbara Jean Quinn

Crystal Corriveau

Imme Maurath

Tom Widger

Gail Wyman

Abby Pelton

Hilda Cohen

Pat McLaine

Tan Bronson

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/reminders –** There were no announcements or reminders.
4. **Act on the minutes from the May 5, 2025 Selectboard Meeting**

**Motion:** To approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from May 5, 2025; George moved, and all agreed.

1. **Public Comments –** (1) Barbara Jean read a statement thanking the Selectboard for passing the Declaration of Inclusion. She included comments from Gov. Scott about this statewide initiative. Barbara Jean said she received many positive comments from others in town about this. Windham is the 167th Vermont town to adopt the declaration. (2) Imme said she was disappointed to see that the beautiful flax covering in the Center Cemetery was completely mowed away.
2. **Correspondence** – (1) Kord received a letter from Bret Friedli regarding his driveway which is considered a town road as at one time it was the road to a mill. Bret is concerned about heavy trucks on the bridge and over a culvert on the road, as these show signs of deterioration. The Selectboard may consider the option of “throwing up” this road, a term that means having another party become responsible for it. Everett, Richard, and Scott Jensen (the stream engineer) will examine the road and culvert, but it appears that it will be costly to repair. The town has repaired the bridge in the past. (2) Nathan Brauer emailed regarding the Trout Meadows property, and the email was forwarded to Town Attorney Bob Fisher.

**Next Step**: Consider throwing up Friedli’s driveway/road to old mill.

1. **Payroll/Bills –** Cathy said this pay order included a large payment of around $624,000 to the state for education taxes which are due June 2.

**Motion:** To approve the check warrant report as presented. Michael moved, and all agreed.

1. **Discussion/decisions involving Guest Attendees**
2. Update on bids for Abbott Road culvert project – Everett said six bids were received for this work, and all were within the amount that was granted for this. We already have the culvert, the bid bond is completed, and we are on schedule. The low bid for the installation ($98,959) was from P&L Construction, a company that has done good work before for Windham. A.S. Clark, with the next lowest bid, has also done good work for Windham. Everett said Palmer from P&L has not installed a box culvert before, but this project is not complicated, and he and others can provide oversight. He recommended P&L. Imme noted that Palmer received an OK from Bob Kehoe to use his property as a staging area.

**Motion:** To award the contract for the Abbott Road culvert project to P&L. George moved, and all agreed.

1. Convene Local Liquor Board re Frendly Gathering VIP service – Kord reported that the vendor who requested permission at the last Selectboard meeting has withdrawn, and liquor will not be served. There may be a beer vendor, but a permit for that would not involve the Frendly Gathering and would be made by the vendor.
2. **Staff Reports with Discussion and Possible Decisions**
3. Grant Strategist – (1) Cathy reported that the VCRD facilitators met with the town folks on the steering committee and facilitated the planning of two townwide meetings which were scheduled for June 17 and July 24. The purpose of these meetings is to talk about the future of Windham. Maureen said she has put those dates on the Meeting House calendar. Cathy said there will be much publicity about the meetings and a free dinner at both. (2) Cathy is looking for funding for BRELLA’s Phase 2 study of the schoolhouse, as the Windham Regional Committee now has limited funds for this purpose. She is checking with the state for possible funding. She asked if the Selectboard would have any funds to contribute for this purpose.

**Motion:** To use up to $5000 from the Schoolhouse funds for this purpose. George moved, and discussion followed.

The estimated cost of the Phase 2 study and remediation is $40,000. Twenty percent is $5000. Michael said it is unlikely we will need all of the $32,000 voted at Town Meeting for the Schoolhouse maintenance, and $5000 could be taken from those funds. Kord said he would rather not contribute any funds, if possible. No vote was taken, but all agreed to try to find the total needed in grant(s) and to offer $5000 only if necessary.

1. Treasurer – (1) Cathy said the Selectboard needs to sign the agreement with the Nature Conservancy to receive $100,000 in leu of the taxes that will be lost with their sale of the Glebe Mt. property to U.S. Fish and Wildlife. She asked what the Selectboard wants to do with those funds. All agreed that it should collect interest.

**Motion:** To receive the $100,000 and put it into the Emergency Fund with the interest from it going in the General Fund. Michael moved and all agreed.

**Motion:** To sign the agreement with Nature Conservancy, as reviewed by Town Attorney Bob Fisher, and to have Kord sign for the Selectboard. Michael moved, and all agreed.

 (2) Cathy plans to meet with all heads of commissions/committees to review their budget with them and see where they are at this point in the year. This will be helpful when budgeting for next year. So far, expenditures are on track. Cathy hopes to start the 2026 budgetary process in September, rather than later as in the past.

C) Listers – Antje was unable to attend and sent a report, which Mac read. (1) The Grand List abstract was launched before the June 5 deadline. The Grand List has been printed, and the current use and value change notices have been prepared and mailed. Grievance hearings are scheduled for May 27 from 9:00 to 12:00. (2) Antje attended a webinar on the Board of Civil Authority and abatement proceedings, and Bill took a training on mapping. Antje will also take a webinar on the Grand List.

D) Planning Commission – Bill Dunkel said the PC spent their last meeting discussing short-term rentals (STRs). All towns seem to be handling this differently. So far, there have been no complaints or problems in Windham related to STRs, but we need to look ahead at that possibility. The State is considering setting statewide policies, but that has been in the works for several years with no decisions made. The PC will return to this issue, if the State does not set policies. If the town sets regulations, the Selectboard must determine who will create a registry and monitor the STRs to make sure they comply. Michael suggested that a registry is not the only way to approach this. A permit could be required to have a STR in Windham, handled like other permits. Cathy said the PC had a good discussion on this, but it would be helpful if others, especially those with an STR, attend a PC meeting when this is discussed. There have been some claims that limiting STRs will result in there being more long-term rentals in Vermont, but that has not proven to be the case in towns that regulate and limit STRs.

E) Meeting House Committee – (1) Maureen said Bob Kehoe (Sparky Electric) examined the electrical situation in the kitchen and felt there were sufficient outlets. He did not think any upgrades would be needed for new appliances, and he offered to look over the specs on new appliances before they were purchased. He suggested checking the fire marshal’s report to see if there were any required changes. She forgot to ask Bob about the one bad outlet and the need for extension cords. (2) Maureen asked for clarification on the purchasing policy. She felt the MH Committee is a non-advisory committee and can make their own purchasing decisions. Michael felt the committee is an advisory committee and needs the Selectboard’s approval. Kord thought the MH committee can make decisions like Richard does for the roads. He gets three bids or three estimates, comes to Kord, and they make a decision. Maureen said they could do it that way. Kord commented that one of the three bids can be a “no bid”.

**Next Step:** Kord and Maureen will review the town’s purchasing policy.

F) Town Clerk – Bea was unable to attend and sent a written report, which Mac read. Bea said she and Bill Casey met with CAI Technologies regarding our contract with them for tax maps. A savings of $500 was identified and will be applied to next year’s bill. The possibility of expanding the CAI service was considered. CAI is preparing a proposal regarding cost. We already have a mapping service, but Zoning Administrator Will Goodwin thinks the CAI interactive service is better.

**Next Step:** Ask Bea to have CAI provide a demonstration at a Selectboard meeting.

1. Citizens Advisory Committee – Michael reported as the Selectboard’s liaison to the committee, which Hunt Fales now chairs. They are looking for another person to join the committee, which currently has four members. They are discussing their policies and procedures for possible revisions, with a focus now on whether the funds they administer to help residents with housing repairs can be expanded for other purposes.
2. Road Commissioner – (1) Kord and Imme reported that VTrans had encouraged Windham to apply for structures and paving grants for next year even though other towns are higher on the VTrans priority list for both of them. Imme took care of that, and it turned out that the other towns did not want the structures grant – so we will be awarded the grant for a Chase Road culvert replacement. (2) Richard is preparing town roads for spring. He met with M&M regarding their gravel and asked for an estimate. Their gravel is less costly than what we currently pay, and the quality is good. (3) The body of our new truck is still with the vendor. ATG has the cab/chassis.

**Next Step:** Kord will have an updated report on the truck body at the next Selectboard meeting.

1. **New Business**
2. Discuss coordinating Zoom scheduling – There were issues setting up Zoom for the CAC meeting. Currently, others schedule meetings using Kord’s name and password. While scheduling a meeting, it is apparent if another group already has a meeting at that time. Tan suggested having separate calendar that shows when meetings will occur. Abby questioned the cyber safety of several people using the same login.

**Next Step:** Mac will discuss this with Bea, our webmaster, for her advice.

1. Discuss town policy re loose dogs per request by Crystal Corriveau – (1) Kord said the town has a nuisance dog ordinance, as well as support form the Sheriff’s Animal Control Officer Ashley Pringer. She is an animal lover and has been helpful. Michael noted that the town’s regulations require that dogs be “under control” and “not running at large.” If they are in violation, owners are subject to fines. If the fines are not paid, the dogs can be seized. (2) Currently, Bea is contacting dog owners who have not registered their dogs. (3) Cathy said the town received a contract from the Windham Humane Society for housing seized dogs, and the cost has a 15% increase. She will flag this on the next pay order. (4) Hilda commented that she and her husband offer STR visits and allow dogs. She wondered if visitors should temporarily register their dogs with the town.

C) Update on VTrans letters of intent for FY26 funding due by May 23, 2025 – Kord reported that this letter has been completed by Imme and submitted.

**11) Old Business**

A) Update on applying excess FEMA funds to the Equipment Replacement Fund – Imme is securing these funds and needs a formal decision on how to handle them. The funds (around $24,300) are the difference from our estimate for FEMA on the Wheeler Road project and the actual cost.

**Motion:** To place those funds in the Equipment Replacement Fund. Michael moved, and all agreed.

B) Discuss status of Schoolhouse and grounds – Michael reported that the School Board’s lawyer has given his OK to move forward with the sale of the Schoolhouse to the town for $1. Bob is reviewing the agreement. Once the BRELLA application is approved, the Phase 2 can be scheduled and a date can be set for the town to take over the Schoolhouse. Cathy wondered if the school district could pay for the Phase 2 study, but Michael said they do not have any extra funds. He also thinks the town will need to pay the closing costs. We could get approvals to move forward by the next Selectboard meeting.

**Next Steps:** Michael will contact Bob and make a plan. He will ask Bob to attend the next Selectboard meeting.

1. Discuss committees for Capital Planning, Property O&M, and Programming – Michael said the committees need to be created sooner than later, based on the assessment of town needs. He suggested that the Capital and O&M Committees can be small with two or three members, while the Programming Committee can be larger.

**Next Step:** Keep the three committees on the agenda for further discussion and action.

1. Discuss possible hosting of the Summer BBQ – There was no update, but the Selectboard wants to continue to consider how the town can continue this tradition.
2. Update on Imerys’ offer of Trout Meadows property donation – Kord reported that he, Bob, and Cathy met last week with Imerys’ representatives, and Imerys agreed to pay for the Phase 2 study. This requires a change in the proposed written agreement, which said the town would pay for it. The agreement also needs to be amended to state that the town can do whatever is wanted with the property, a change Imerys also approved. Cathy said she will meet with BRELLA and others the next day. Hilda commented that the property she and her husband Nathan Brauer own is surrounded by the Imerys’ property, except for their White Road frontage. She and Nathan have sent the requested documents to the town.
3. Determine new phone and internet services – George said First Light has agreed to transfer its contract for internet service with the School to the Town. When we take over the Schoolhouse, the cost will remain the same, $215 per month, with a three-year contract, and $500 for equipment. The high speed internet transmitter will remain in the School-house and will serve the Town Office with a point to point (wireless) connection. He has worked with Bea on the setup, which he will coordinate. As for new phone service, a seven-line system provided by Ooma will be $224 per month. This will automatically transfer calls and take messages for seven parties (school, town clerk, town treasurer, selectboard, listers, auditors, and town garage). Seven new phones come with the service.

**Motion:** To approve moving forward to establish services from First Light and Ooma. George moved, and discussion followed.

Michael said we need to wait on both of these until we know for sure the town will own the Schoolhouse. If that should fall through, we won’t have the existing access to First Light, and that high speed internet connection is needed for the Ooma phone service. George expressed concern that we might lose the First Light discount, and he said he is available now to coordinate the setup and may not be available later. Kord said he wanted to wait until the next meeting to approve these services. No vote was taken, as it was clear Kord and Michael wanted to wait until we know we are receiving the Schoolhouse.

1. Update on Code of Ethics and Ethics Training for town officials – George said he has worked with Bea to contact town officials regarding taking the Ethics Training.
2. **Adjourn the meeting.**

**Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 7:46 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

**The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for**

**Monday, June 2, 2025 at 5:30 PM**

 Respectfully submitted,

Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk