

Windham VT Selectboard Minutes
May 5, 2025 Regular Meeting
Held at the Meeting House and on Zoom

Present at the Meeting House

Michael Pelton, selectboard
George Dutton, selectboard
Mary McCoy (Mac), sb clerk
Will Goodwin, zoning admin.
Cathy Fales

Present on Zoom

Kord Scott, selectboard chair	Tom Widger
Antje Ruppert	Joseph Monroe
Barbara Jean Quinn	Becky Phillips
Kathy Jungermann	Imme Maurath
Crystal Corriveau	Bill Dunkel
Maureen Bell	Jim McCandless
	Andrew Mutty, guest

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 April 21, 2025 Selectboard Meetings

Motion: To approve the Selectboard meeting minutes from April 21, 2025; Michael moved, and all agreed.

5. Public Comments – Crystal expressed concern about loose dogs and asked that this be added to a future agenda for discussion.

6. Correspondence – There was no correspondence.

7. Payroll/Bills – Michael questioned the \$599 charge for lister training, and Antje explained that there is approved grant money to reimburse this, so there is no cost to the town. Michael also questioned the \$11,920 payment on the John Deere lease. This is the final payment, which he thought was finalized last year. Payment for this will come from surplus funds.

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

Motion: To have Michael sign the pay orders. George moved, and all agreed.

8. Staff Reports with Discussion and Possible Decisions

A) Road Foreman – Richard Paré was unable to attend. Kord reported that Imme has completed the paperwork for the grant for West Windham Road, and she is working on a another possible grant to help with the costs. Richard is working on cleanup from the ice storm that didn't qualify for VTrans funding. Richard wants to complete that work, rather than contract out for it. Richard told Kord that mud season was not as bad as expected, making road repair easier.

B) Zoning Administrator – Will has been reviewing Windham's charges for zoning admin. work. He could not find a cost for logging or access permits. Kord said loggers post a \$500 refundable deposit. The access fee needs to be determined. Will said that there are various costs involved for hearings – fees for legal advice, employee's time to schedule and post the meetings, the cost of the Shopper ad, and the time taken for the hearing. Will advised setting a charge for these. Cathy said she had explored what other towns charge, and the fees vary widely. Discussion followed which showed the difficulty of setting one policy for all hearings. Will said one solution is to give the zoning administrator the ability to approve permits without a hearing. This would require a change in the town's bylaws. Bill noted

that if the fees are too high, a property owner might decide to not do work that is needed. Kord suggested having the Planning Commission review this and provide advice. Will said some fees are basic and do not need to be reviewed, and he made some recommendations.

Motion: To set the following zoning fees: \$25 for a compliance letter, \$25 for a permit extension, \$150 for a variance, and \$150 for an appeal. George moved, and all agreed.

C) Grant Strategist – Cathy reported that an application for protections for the White Road property has been submitted to BRELLA (Vermont Brownfields Reuse and Environmental Liability Limitation Program, a state program designed to help brownfield sites be redeveloped and to protect developers and property owners from certain environmental liabilities.) An application to BRELLA for the School property will also be submitted. Processing is expected to take 30 days. The Phase 2 study for the school should be funded by the WRC. Given BRELLA approval, town liability is limited and resources are available to remediate and fund work for clean land and water. Cathy is monitoring the grants received for the Meeting House and schoolhouse, and she is working with Cynthia Stoddard from NEMRC on grant accounting in that system. Bob Fisher and Kord helped with completing the due diligence items.

D) Listers – Antje reported that our three listers – she, Bill Casey, and Howie Ires – attended a training on open meeting laws, and it seems they are doing things wrong, as they use their time together as work sessions and not as public meetings which require posting an agenda, taking and posting minutes, etc. The listers make decisions that can be defined as “non-advisory” and thus are subject to open meeting laws. Applying open meeting laws to listers is being challenged in the legislature. Kord said he will seek advice from Bob Fisher, town attorney, and he advised Antje to continue as usual until this is resolved by others. Antje said she and Howie will also attend a webinar about the Board of Tax Abatement, and Bill will take a training on mapping. The listers are now transitioning their work focus from the 2025 Grand List to the 2026 Grand List. Antje also noted that she will be serving as an assistant town clerk and possibly as an assistant town treasurer.

Grant Administrator – Imme apologized for not getting on the agenda, but she recently learned that a year and a half ago we received a grant from FEMA for work on Wheeler Road which we didn’t spend in full, and the approximate \$49,000 that we didn’t spend is ours to keep if we use it for highway related items. Imme said she will find out if we can use it for road equipment. Michael advised applying the funds to the Equipment Replacement Fund, and if we need to be more specific, designate it for the ordered truck that will arrive soon with payment required. Everyone agreed that this was the way to go.

E) Planning Commission – Bill reported as a representative to the Windham Regional Commission. The WRC director has advised towns that future FEMA funding may be cut, and towns should think about how to deal with disasters without FEMA help.

F) Road Commissioner – Kord said he had nothing else to report about roads.

9. New Business

A) Update on the office of Town Treasurer – Kord said he met with Cathy Fales regarding taking this position, and she would like to be appointed. Cathy has met with Kathy Scott (former treasurer), Gail Wyman (former assistant treasurer), and Cynthia Stoddard (NEMRC), and they will provide further support for Cathy. Kord noted that Cathy’s work as grant strategist/grant writer works well with the treasurer’s job.

Motion: To appoint Cathy Fales as Town Treasurer. Kord moved and all agreed.

B) Discuss signing the Declaration of Inclusion – Kord said he supports this and tries to behave as the Declaration directs. He wishes making such a declaration was not necessary, but he understands that it is important to others that the town support this statement.

Motion: To approve signing the Declaration of Inclusion. Kord moved, George agreed, and Michael abstained. Michael said he abstained because the declaration is “political.” The motion passed with two positive votes.

C) Discuss the Liquor License application – An application has been received to provide alcohol at the Friendly Gathering. Andrew Mutty spoke as the contractor providing this service. He said this license is needed to offer alcoholic beverages, along with nonalcoholic drinks and food, in the VIP area for the talent, their operators, their guests, and the event organizers. The VIP area will be roped off behind the stage and will require a special pass. It would serve around 250 people over the course of the two-day event. Bill asked him why this didn’t come up at the hearing, and he was concerned that in the past some at the Gathering had been drunk and disorderly. Kord noted that Eddie had attended the hearing before the regular selectboard meeting, and he was expected to return for this discussion, but he had not returned. Michael suggested discussing this further at the next Selectboard meeting when the Selectboard can convene as the Local Liquor Board. He asked Andrew to return for that along with Eddie.

Next Step: Put this on the 5/19/25 agenda and send the Zoom link to Andrew and Eddie.

10. Old Business

A) Update on status of schoolhouse and grounds after votes at Town Meeting – Michael said he had no news. Bob is waiting for input from the school district’s lawyer. Cathy said that after the BRELLA application is approved, there will be a Phase 2 study of the schoolhouse. The \$500 fee for the BRELLA application will be paid for from the approved school building operating budget. We expect the Phase 2 study to be funded by the WRC.

B) Discuss committees for Capital Planning, Property Operations & Maintenance, and Community Spaces & Activities (Programming) – Summer BBQ, Radio Club Field Day – Michael reported that the Radio Club will not be using our grounds. Then he explained his concept of the three committees and what they would each do, with the intent of coordinating the town buildings’ needs and uses in an efficient manner. George said the needs and uses of our roads should be separate and not covered by these three committees. Michael said the committee members would not be doing the actual work maintaining the buildings, but they would hire contractors as needed. Michael said he is not recommending that the Meeting House Committee be dissolved, but expanded into his three suggested committees. Kord said this would be an opportunity to reach out and include more people. Cathy said other towns have set up a similar structure, including Grafton, and we can learn from their experiences. Crystal volunteered to work on a committee. Michael asked George and Kord to review the paperwork he had prepared with the lengthy explanations of the committees. George said he already had, and it looked good to him, except to remove the roads from the committees and focus on the buildings.

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

The Summer BBQ was discussed. Kord said the WCO will not be doing it this year and asked the selectboard to see if others would want to organize this event. Crystal said we should consider a different kind of event and a different location – maybe at the schoolhouse or maybe with a movie. Cathy said the series hosted by the Friends of the Meeting House includes a talent show, and that might be coupled with a meal.

Next Step: Keep a summer event on the agenda for further discussion and action.

C) Update on annual ARPA report due 4/30/25 – Kord reported has been completed.

D) Update on Imerys' offer of Trout Meadows property donation – Kord reported that Bob Fisher is finishing the agreement. Since the WRC will not pay for the Phase 2 study, Bob is seeing if Imerys will pay for it.

E) Update on new phone and internet services – George said the status of the school district's internet agreement has not been resolved. We could get a wireless connection from there. He is still waiting for a bid on the phone service.

F) Update on Code of Ethics and Ethics Training for town officials – George said the Selectboard needs to approve the Code and get town officials to take the webinar. He will coordinate with Bea to arrange for everyone to take the training.

Motion: To approve the Code of Ethics. Michael moved, and all agreed.

G) Discuss Short-term rental registry – Kord said this needs to be discussed, but not this night. He hopes to get the Planning Commission involved before the next meeting. Michael said he has shared his research on this this multiple times. There are 14 short-term rentals in Windham that are advertised on the internet, and there may be more. Currently, there is no oversight on these, and they could be violating safety and sceptic standards. George said Londonderry has regulations for short-term rentals we can learn from. Bill said he and the PC have been preoccupied with other matters. Cathy said a man from Chester has talked to the PC about their short-term regs. Michael said Chester pays for the oversight of a professional service that maintains a registry, and that expense might not be needed in Windham, as it is costly.

9. Adjourn the meeting.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:16 PM. George moved, and all agreed.

**The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for
Monday, May 19, 2025 at 5:30 PM**

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
Approved May 19, 2025