



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 7, 2020

These Minutes are considered a DRAFT until accepted into the public record (with any corrections noted) at a future meeting of the Whitingham Selectboard.

The Whitingham Selectboard held a regular meeting at 6:30pm in the dining hall of the Whitingham Municipal Center on Wednesday, October 7, 2020.

Selectboard members present: Wayne Wood, Scott Reed, and Craig Hammer. Phil Edelstein logged in late attended remotely.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator, Stanley Janovsky, Road Commissioner; Peter Bernard, Municipal Employee; Almira Aekus, Town Clerk; Lyman Tefft and Richard Lemaire, residents. Chris Walling, resident, attended remotely.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Wayne Wood called the meeting to order at 6:30pm reading the remote meeting script. There were a few changes to the agenda since it was posted.

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)

None.

Highway:

Open sand bids: 3 bids were received:

Cersosimo Industries, Inc. \$19.95 per cubic yard delivered

Bazin Brothers Trucking \$20.40 per cubic yard delivered

Zuluzny Excavating Corp. \$25.00 per cubic yard delivered

Mr. Janovsky recommends accepting the Cersosimo bid of \$19.95 per cubic yard

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to accept the Cersosimo ¾" sand bid at \$19.95 per cubic yard delivered, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.

Road Commissioner's vacation pay:

Mr. Janovsky questioned if the board made a decision about his over abundant vacation time available. The board will wait until after the special election when we have a 5 member board.

Purchase of leaf blower:

We are one of the few towns that doesn't have a leaf blower that can be hooked on a tractor, 3 point hitch, PTO driven. Mr. Janovsky searched all over; there is another brand besides Buffalo, the other brand is more expensive and the dealers are far away. Mr. Janovsky said the quote he received from Buffalo is \$5,299 and there should be money in the Equipment Fund. He has sailed the internet and can't find another dealer so he was hoping the

Selectboard would approve the purchase now without going to bid so it can be used this season. The Buffalo product comes with a 10-year warranty. Mr. Janovsky feels he has done his due diligence in researching the options for purchase of a pull behind leaf blower.

A motion was made by Scott Reed to approve the purchase of the Buffalo leaf blower for \$5,299 as a single source item based on Mr. Janovsky's research, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Review access permit:

Mr. Janovsky presented an access permit for Gaetano Moscato on Chapel Hill Road. Mr. Janovsky placed the following conditions for approval: Access shall have a culvert 15" minimum x 30' minimum; access must enter Chapel Hill Road at a LOWER LEVEL than Chapel Hill Road for which water must not run into Chapel Hill Road from the new access. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve the access permit with the conditions written, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.**

Salt Bid: The State of Vermont bids salt for all towns/districts. The winner was American Rocksalt at \$68.60 per ton. Mr. Janovsky contacted the company we used last year (Appalachie, LLC) and negotiated a price of \$65 per ton (last year they were \$70). Mr. Janovsky recommends accepting the Appalachie deal.

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to accept the Appalachie, LLC salt price of \$65 per ton, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.

Highway Garage Committee recommendation to purchase property

A letter was received from the Highway Garage Committee recommending the purchase of the Twitchell farm property on Town Hill Road as the future site of a new town garage. The Committee looked at several properties in town including properties owned by Wayne Corse on Ginny Morse Road, Fowler Road and Route 112; the helicopter pad area of the school property; Jesse Boyd's property on Birdville Road; Roy Corse's property at corner of Faulkner and Maple; and Axtel's property on Allard Road. The Twitchell farm property was determined to best fit the needs, did not have any wetlands, the immediate abutters approve of the project and at a cost of \$20,000 was affordable. None of the field on the lower side of the hill would be used. There is quite a large field behind the house and barn that would likely be used for storage of salt, sand, etc. This is only a suggestion for the board to put the purchase on the Warning for town meeting 2021.

The Committee suggested that the money to purchase the property come out of the \$50,000 that was appropriated for the Highway Garage Fund last year, no matter where the money comes from the purchase still needs to be approved by the voters.

The Committee also suggested that all costs including surveying, attorney fees, etc. for the purchase be paid by the town.

A motion was made by Wayne Wood to accept the Twitchell's offer to purchase the property at \$20,000 contingent on the approval of the voters at Town Meeting 2021, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Personnel:

Hazard Pay during COVID-19 for sewer personnel and Transfer Station attendant Jennifer Herzig has requested hazard pay for hours worked during the pandemic; perhaps an additional \$4 per hour. Gig did some research and found that if an employee interacts with the public and their work is related to COVID response, it **may** be eligible for reimbursement by the Local Government Expense Reimbursement Grant (LGER). Gig already filed our LGER grant application, but we can amend our application. Gig was advised to update our grant application to include the reimbursement of hazard pay but not actually disburse the hazard pay until after our grant is approved. We can apply for retroactive pay and going forward through December. Revised grant application is due October 15th.

Because the Transfer Station was closed for a period of time, but Ms. Herzig was compensated for that time not worked, the board feel that would likely even out for an additional hazard pay.

Flood Hazard Mitigation: review proposals for Archeological Resource Assessment of Kingsley property for FEMA buyout

A step required for the FEMA buyout of the Kingsley property is to have an Archeological Resource Assessment (ARA) performed. We received two bids:

SWCA Environmental Consultants, \$3,600
Hartgen Archeological Associates, \$2,550.

The FEMA grant allows \$2,000 for the ARA however money can be “shuffled around” in the grant.

A motion was made by Wayne Wood to accept the ARA proposal from Hartgen Archeological Associates at \$2,550, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Sewer Department: set sewer rate, review and approve rate increase letter

The sewer rate needs to increase to prepare for the future bond payment on the improvements project. Gig received help from the bond bank, CWSRF and RCAP Solutions in adjusting the sewer budget and setting an appropriate rate now for the November 1st, 2020 billing. The professionals recommended the Selectboard set the sewer rate at \$1,100 per Equivalent Unit which represents an increase of 39.2%. The actual amount needed to cover the current budget is approximately \$824 per EU but we need to build our reserves for the future bond payment. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to set the fiscal year 20/21 sewer rate at \$1,100 per Equivalent Unit as recommended by the professionals, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Two draft letters to include with the sewer bills were reviewed; one is a long version, the second is much shorter; the board decided to use the long version because it provides much more information.

Transfer Station: review and approve letter to resident

Transfer Station staff have had a number of incidents with one resident who does not sort his trash until he arrives at the Transfer Station. Other residents have complained to Transfer

Station staff about the mess this resident leaves behind as well as the way he holds up the flow of traffic. The Selectboard reviewed and approved the letter as written.

Corona/COVID-19: lessons learned/prep for 2nd wave

VT Emergency Management suggested that towns prepare for a second wave of Corona virus infections. Wayne Wood drafted a CONOPS draft; that information was merged into a model draft of a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) which Gig will continue working on with help of many others. The board was asked:

What did we do well during the first wave? We responded well, we made it work, Mr. Hammer got ahold of a subject matter expert, the board was informed about the threat and best practices.

We did what we could to help Senior Meals. We were ahead of state suggestions. We used caution well as a whole. PPE was used appropriately; rescue response was scaled back but still met the public needs. As risk diminished service returned more towards normal.

What could we do better? Fill the storage trailer with toilet paper! We now have plenty of hand sanitizer and masks, the Clerk's office now has a service window and a drop box outside. The records are now going to remote access.

What needs to be addressed for the next wave? If there is a next wave, Mr. Janovsky suggested that the Selectboard communicate with the school so we are aware of what they are doing. Mr. Walling noted that the Superintendent will make the decision to close the school. The Superintendent is Barbara Anne Komons-Montroll. Mr. Walling will provide Gig with an email contact.

What kept you awake at night? We did the best we could do with the information we had at the time. The board was comfortable with how they handled the pandemic and did not have sleepless nights over it.

{{Phil Edelstein signed on remotely at this point}}

Review 2021 property insurance schedule:

It is the time of year to review the property insurance schedule for renewal. The board reviewed and approved of the property schedule as presented. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to approve the 2021 Property Insurance Schedule as provided, seconded by Craig Hammer, three in favor, Mr. Edelstein abstained.**

Approval of Payables Warrant – October 8, 2020

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payables Warrant #W2116 dated October 8, 2020, seconded by Scott Reed, three in favor, Mr. Edelstein abstained.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – October 8, 2020

A motion was made by Scott Reed to approve Payroll Warrant #W2115 dated October 8, 2020, seconded by Craig Hammer, three in favor, Mr. Edelstein abstained.

Review and approve Minutes of September 23, 2020

A motion was made by Phil Edelstein to accept the Minutes of September 23, 2020 as written, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.

Other business / Office Administrator – as needed

Town Clerk Almira Aekus notified the board that she plans on closing to the public on Fridays for the foreseeable future beginning the Friday after the general election. She will likely be in the office catching up on work on most Fridays. The pandemic has made all of our jobs more difficult and time consuming and she needs the day to focus and catch up.

Next week is the local election, Ms. Aekus asked the board to please come and help count ballots.

Ms. Aekus provided the education funding tax bill for the board to review. She also provided a current budget status report.

Review and sign Nido's contract for Town Hill generator fuel The town fire department recently installed a generator at Town Hill to provide backup power for the emergency communications equipment. Nido's found they need to have a signed contract on hand because they have been abused by other accounts. The board reviewed the contract. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to appoint Wayne Wood to sign the contract with Nido's, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.**

Discuss Consolidated's fiber quote error Consolidated Communications provided us with a quote to install fiber optic internet in the Municipal Center. The original quote was \$194 per month for 150Mb service including router. The correct amount is \$253 per month. We could go with 100Mb service including the router for \$203.43. **A motion was made by Wayne Wood to go with the 100Mb service with router for \$203.43, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.**

Household Hazardous Waste Event 17 residents attended the event, Mr. Wood supervised the event, Jen Herzig had it organized very well, it went smoothly.

Sewer Problem Mr. Lemaire heard a rumor that the Brochu residence is not using the sewer, they are relieving themselves in the yard. They are currently living in the trailer not in the house, maybe the trailer is not hooked to the sewer. Ms. Aekus suggested the sewer department check into it first and then it should be addressed by the health officer.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Craig Hammer, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.

Wayne Wood adjourned the meeting at 7:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray