



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF MARCH 24, 2021

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, March 24, 2021.

Selectboard members present: Scott Reed, Chair; Craig Hammer, Vice Chair; and Chris Walling. Wayne W. Wood submitted his letter of resignation at the start of the meeting. Phil Edelstein attended remotely.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer; Jackie Bemis and Terrie Dumaine, residents

Others attending remotely: Brian Sullivan, resident.

(Gig, Craig Hammer and Scott Reed attended VLCT's Selectboard Institute (training) this morning.)

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Scott Reed called the meeting to order at 6:31pm reading the remote meeting script. Wayne W. Wood resigned his positions as Selectboard member, Fire Department member, and Emergency Management Director. **A motion was made by Chris Walling to accept the resignation of Wayne W. Wood as Selectboard member and Emergency Management Director, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)

Almira Aekus questioned if the board was willing to delay dog licensing requirements until June 15th with no late fee. She will send out notices. Licenses are normally due April 1st, Ms. Aekus did not send out reminder letters earlier. The board agreed to the suggested delay until June 15th because the pandemic has made it difficult for some dog owners to get the required rabies vaccinations, unless they hear otherwise, they would like late fee to apply after June 15th.

JC Electric was here today, there is a \$5,000 grant available from Efficiency Vermont, Ms. Aekus suggested that the lighting in the dining hall be replaced if the grant isn't used up by the Fire Department project.

Snowmobile Club request to use municipal kitchen (Jackie Bemis)

The Stump Jumpers Snowmobile Club usually rents the dining hall for their annual property owner's appreciation dinner, due to the pandemic they request permission to use the kitchen to prepare the meal which they will have the property owners come pick up on April 24th. The arrangement will be similar to how Seniors Meals has been serving meals since the pandemic

began. Terrie Dumaine suggested no more than 5 people in the kitchen at one time to allow for social distancing; she noted that the meals must be sealed, she volunteered to help. The board agreed to the Stump Jumpers' request.

Review and sign Act 250 application for Dumaine

The Dumaine House Bed and Breakfast on Academy Road falls under Act 250. Ms. Dumaine would like to subdivide off 3.3 acres of the 33+ acre parcel as a future building lot for a home for herself so she needs to file an amendment to the Act 250 permit. The Act 250 permit application requires signoff from a town official stating the amendment will not place an undue burden on the town or the school. The Act 250 permit will not allow this new parcel to connect to the sewer. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve the Act 250 permit for the Dumaine subdivision and to appoint Scott Reed to sign the document, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.**

Sewer/Flood Resiliency:

WISPr program information: A potential benefit of using the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) for the sewer project is the Water Infrastructure Sponsorship Program (WISPr). We qualify for 10% of our sewer project costs in free money, that's \$390,000! We have a list of flood resiliency projects that came out of the River Corridor Study. Unfortunately, many of those projects require design and engineering which WISPr won't cover. WISPr also won't pay for structures, which is the concrete bridge removal and culvert replacement. Gig is working with the ANR, Windham Regional Commission and Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District (WCNRCD) to figure out the best ways to spend that money. Of course, it's very complicated and the deadline to spend the money is one year after completion of our sewer project so it doesn't allow time for much engineering but Corey Ross of WCNRCD will be applying for grant funding for engineering/design of certain projects and WRC will be applying for grant(s) for scoping of other projects.

Mr. Sullivan owns property that is subject to one of the proposed projects. He noted his support of the project, but he would like to be involved in discussion, especially in how it relates to the future use of his property.

The easiest, and likely least expensive project is to add plantings to the riverbank at the parking lot across from Jacksonville Church. Other possible projects include widening the river to bankful width on the Municipal Center lot and property next door, allowing flood waters to enter flood plain next door, removing a berm along the river on Mr. Sullivan's property, stabilizing the riverbank at First Stop and allowing flood waters to enter flood plain at Honora.

The WISPr team would like to know if the Selectboard is interested in removing the berm along Route 112 on the sewer plant property, that would certainly require engineering to make sure flood waters won't reach the plant. Mr. Janovsky replied that sewer piping is in the berm.

Gig asked Mr. Janovsky and the Selectboard members if they are aware of any projects that are not listed in the River Corridor Plan that could be considered "water quality projects (water supply source project, stream washouts, water crossing the roads) that we might be able to address with WISPr funding.

On another note, Congressman Peter Welch has some sort of grant for Community Projects that WRC thinks we should apply for to cover the entire sewer project. We would lose the WISPr funding but at this point it, with the fact that WISPr won't cover engineering, the WISPr funds might not pay for much in the allowable time frame.

Appraiser price quotes: The next step for the FEMA buyout of the property next door is to get the property appraised. Gig called 4 appraisal companies on Monday morning, only 1 returned the call. She received a price quote of \$800 from Jack Towsley, Vermont State Certified Real Estate Appraiser. That amount falls under the required amount required to get two verbal quotes per the Purchasing Policy. Ms. Aekus suggested that she might be able to get other price quotes because she deals with appraisers often. The Selectboard approved the use of Mr. Towsley, or another appraiser if they can complete the task sooner than mid-May and charge less than \$1,000.

Sewer

Review correspondence The Selectboard received another letter from Ruby Brown stating the same complaints that have been addressed directly to her several times in the past. After review of two response options the short version of a response letter was signed by the board.

Consider quarterly billing Brian Sullivan contacted Gig to suggest the town go to quarterly billing of the sewer user fees. Some things to consider with that suggestion are how would penalties and interest work and the interest could put more of a burden on sewer users. It was decided that because sewer users are able to send in payments on their accounts at any time that bills will include a statement to that effect, and we will send a letter in July when the rate is set explaining that payments are accepted at anytime and perhaps tell them what amount the monthly and quarterly payments would be if they choose to pay that way.

Highway

Review and approve access permit

Mr. Janovsky presented a permit for Sara Martin on the Wilmington Cross Road, Mr. Janovsky approved the permit stating that access shall be lower than apron entering Wilmington Cross Road and brush should be cut if needed for line of sight. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve the access permit for Sara Martin with the conditions stated, seconded by Phil Edelstein, three in favor, Chris Walling abstained due to a conflict of interest.**

Discuss Parsons Road paving

Mr. Janovsky would like to notify the residents of Parsons Road to Stonehouse of the paving project and invite them to share their concerns at the next Selectboard meeting. Gig drafted a letter that was reviewed and approved by the board. The letter will be mailed this week.

Adopt resolution appoint a representative to the Governing Board of the DV CUD

The Deerfield Valley Communications Union District requires the Selectboard to adopt an annual resolution. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer that the Board adopt the following resolution and appoint Scott Reed to sign the document, seconded by Chris Walling , all in favor.**

WHEREAS, as provided in V.S.A. Title 30, Chapter 82, section 3059, the legislative body of each member town shall appoint annually on or before the last Monday in April a Representative and one or more Alternates to the Governing Board of the Communications Union District (District) of which it is a member, each for a one-year term to begin at the District's Annual Organizational meeting on the second Tuesday in May,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Selectboard of the **Town of WHITINGHAM** hereby appoints the following representative and two alternates to the Governing Board of the Deerfield Valley Communications Union District (DVFiber) for a term of one year each:

Representative: **PHIL EDELSTEIN**; Alternate: **CHRISTOPHER WALLING**;
Alternate: **MICHAEL MANDRACCHIA**.

Parks: review and sign non-employee work agreements for mowing

At the prior meeting, the Selectboard accepted a bid for mowing Town Hill from Deerfield Valley Property Maintenance. The bookkeeper needs signed non-employee work agreements for worker's compensation audits. **A motion was made by Chris Walling to sign the non-employee work agreements with Deerfield Valley Property Maintenance for mowing Town Hill for the next three mowing seasons, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Mr. Reed will speak with Seth Boyd regarding the stonewall repair; the project needs to go out to bid.

Emergency Management: review and adopt 2021 LEMP

The Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) must be updated and adopted each year. Now that Mr. Wood has resigned, Gig needs to completely revise it. Adoption of this year's LEMP tabled for tonight.

Scott Reed made a motion to appoint Gig Zboray as Emergency Management Director, as recommended by Wayne W. Wood, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor. Gig will also need to rewrite the delegation of authority letter that is included in the LEMP.

Selectboard Pay – discuss new policy

Gig and Ms. Aekus discussed a new pay policy at the request of a Selectboard member. The current policy requires taking attendance. The proposed new policy addresses the Selectboard term year and the fiscal year and would only require taking attendance if a member is noticeably missing from many meetings or has resigned and a new member fills the vacancy. The board approved the new policy stating that would accept their annual stipend once per year with the new policy (to be finalized and signed at next meeting).

Gig questioned if the board members want their quarterly check in the next payables Warrant or wait until the end of the fiscal year? They will skip this quarterly payment and get paid the final payment in June to finish this year in accordance with the current policy.

Corona/COVID-19

Bone Builders has asked if they can restart. Gig would prefer not to have to take down and set up all the equipment required for hybrid meetings and tables all the time. The board would like to wait a little longer to restart such activities. The Governor has said that we should be back to normal around the 4th of July 2021.

Approval of Payables Warrant – March 25, 2021

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payables Warrant #W2140 dated March 25, 2021, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – March 25, 2021

A motion was made by Chris Walling to approve Payroll Warrant #W2139 dated March 25, 2021, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of March 10, 2021

The Minutes of March 10th indicated Dan Hollister was appointed as Animal Control Officer for a three-year term which correctly ends in 2024, not 2025 as written. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to accept the Minutes of March 10, 2021 noting the correction of the Animal Controls Officer’s term to end in 2024, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Other business / Office Administrator – as needed

Selectboard Vacancy We need to post a Notice of Vacancy. Craig Hammer would like to appoint someone rather than spend the money on another special election. If the voters don’t like the appointment they can petition for an election. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to appoint Scott Reed to sign the Notice of Vacancy to be filled by appointment, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.**

Fire Truck The Fire Truck was sold at auction for \$4,950 to a resident of Whitingham. The hoses will be transferred to the new truck soon.

Broadband There are 9 CUDs in the state of Vermont, only about 3 are ready to move forward. The state has allocated \$150,000,000 to broadband in the State of Vermont.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Phil Edelstein, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.

Scott Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray