



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF APRIL 22, 2020 as corrected

The Whitingham Selectboard held a regular meeting on Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at 6:30pm in the Municipal Center, 2948 VT Route 100, Jacksonville, VT and via Zoom.

Selectboard members present: Wayne Wood, Scott Reed, Craig Hammer in person. Wayne Corse and Phil Edelstein via Zoom.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator and Stanley Janovsky, Road Commissioner in person. Almira Aekus, Town Clerk; Allan Twitchell and Seth Boyd, residents; Joseph Berard, Mike Cole and Bart Howes of Readsboro's Jack Pines Pirates ATV Club, via Zoom.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Wayne Wood called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Hearing of visitors for concerns not on the agenda no comments

Broadband: discuss Consolidated Communications meeting with Broadband Committee at 5:30pm

Phil Edelstein gave a brief overview of what was discussed at the meeting at the 5:30 meeting. Consolidated will provide us with a copy of their presentation. The Broadband Committee Minutes will have more detailed information.

Highway Department

Mr. Janovsky will start with a full crew back on Monday. When COVID began no one really knew much about it. There was a major snowstorm coming just after the COVID began so Mr. Janovsky did what he thought was best for his crew and had them stay home to make sure they were available to plow when needed and weren't sick. He said he would do it again in a heartbeat. He is the boss to protect his crew and protect the towns people. The Governor's decision to begin a slow roll to open up does not require Mr. Janovsky to have his entire crew working and there are specific guidelines to follow to ensure the crew's continued health.

There was abundant discussion regarding procedures, decisions made, lack of communication, etc. this being the first worldwide pandemic for everyone.

Fire Department: fire truck status

Riggs Distler was going to pick up and deliver the fire truck but two crew members can't be in the truck at the same time and they can't stay at a hotel and are not allowed to drive so many hours to do the trip in one day. Mr. Janovsky noted that there are Jaws of Life on the truck that the sellers were going to remove but they offered to sell them to the town with the truck for an additional \$2,000; brand new they can cost \$20,000 to \$30,000. The nearest Jaws are located in Wilmington, Heath and Rowe. During the last major car accident, a Sawzall could not get the roof off, when minutes count it is important to have the right equipment. The money would come out of the budget for the truck. The board agreed to the purchase of the Jaws of Life. Craig Hammer suggested looking into the cost of having the truck delivered to us from another trucking source. Phil Edelstein will contact a trucking company; it was determined that a lowbed with a drop deck would be needed as the truck is 10'9" tall.

Mr. Corse asked if the fire truck had insurance placed on it. Mr. Janovsky said, "no". Mr. Reed said it should be. Mr. Janovsky said he would add it tomorrow.

2020 Local Emergency Management Plan: Review and adopt

This document is required to be updated and adopted each year. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to adopt the 2020 Local Emergency Management Plan, seconded Scott Reed, all in favor.**

Ordinance Regulating All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs): Review, discuss and possible adopt

The draft Ordinance Regulating All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) was edited by Gig and reviewed by Robert Fisher, town attorney. The Selectboard reviewed the final Ordinance. Phil Edelstein questioned the plan to get to Cherry Creek, a member of the Jack Pines Pirates replied that they don't have a complete plan yet, it involves contacting and making agreements with many property owners. As written the Ordinance allows ATV use on Lone Pine Road, Tunnel Street and Bosley Hill Road but can be amended in the future to allow more access. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to adopt the Ordinance Regulating All-Terrain Vehicles with Addendum A to become effective 60 days from adoption (June 21, 2020), seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Sewer Department

Discuss billing Almira Aekus questioned the board if they planned to have the sewer bills sent out as per normal on May 1st and due June 1st. She only questioned this because of the worldwide COVID-19 epidemic. She feels that most sewer users should be able to pay the bill now because of the stimulus package and the extra weekly funds provided through Unemployment Insurance. The board agreed that the bills should go out as scheduled. If there is a problem for account holders to pay their bill they can come before the board to discuss it.

Mr. Edelstein noted that he reached out to 6 different sewer companies asking if they were interested in purchasing our plants, he has had no responses yet.

Transfer Station

Gig noted that commodities prices have changed. In January and February, we paid \$141 per ton for comingled recycling (containers-plastic & glass) and in March \$162. Trash is only \$99 per ton. Payment on metals increased from \$14 per ton in October to \$40 per ton in

March. Gig spoke to Trevor Manse and he indicated that fibers (paper recycling) is rebounding nicely and we might see a change in cost in April from \$29 per ton to \$5. C&D seems to be holding steady at \$99 per ton.

Mr. Hammer noted that the Transfer Station seems much busier than usual and feels that people are taking advantage of the situation. The biggest question is how to collect funds and not endanger our attendant. Almira Aekus suggested that smaller ballot boxes could be used,

and the money can sit in the box for several days before she processes the money for deposit. The attendant would not be able to monitor what funds are put in the box. **A motion was made by Wayne Corse to start collecting Transfer Station fees again on May 2nd, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.**

Corona/COVID-19

Discuss borrowing money if it becomes necessary

Ms. Aekus said that normally the town does not need to borrow money to meet expenses before taxes start coming in. She is not planning to have a delinquent tax sale this June and there might be a short fall, especially with the Transfer Station and possibly the Sewer. Mr. Reed noted it is his opinion that it is better to be prepared and not need it rather than have to wait for a loan when you need it. The board agreed. A motion is not needed at this time because Ms. Aekus is not borrowing money, just preparing for it.

Memorial Day Parade Mr. Hammer is looking for opinions or guidance on what to do for a Memorial Day Parade. Mr. Corse thinks it should still be scheduled, the current guideline for social distancing expires on May 15th. Ms. Aekus questioned if it could be done a little different than normal. The Committee has been thinking about different ways to honor those who died while serving in the US military on Memorial Day. She suggested a parade of cars rather than a marching parade. She also noted that Green Up Day has been rescheduled to May 30th by the state.

VTel Wireless has offered to give the town a free hotspot at Town Hill during the COVID-19 epidemic. Once we get back to normal the town would be required to pay for it. The unit proposed allows the signal to travel 500 feet. Mr. Janovsky said he would like to check with 415 (Keene Mutual Aid) to make sure the Wi-Fi would not interfere with their signal. Mr. Edelstein will coordinate with VTel and Mr. Janovsky. Mr. Boyd suggested a protective fence. Mr. Janovsky answered that they are waiting for a generator and propane tank to be installed before a fence is installed. The highway department can cover the cost of the generator and 415 will cover some of it. The electrical system has been corrected at Town Hill. Mr. Boyd asked Mr. Janovsky to update the Parks Committee on the fence plans.

Town Clerk's Office Almira Aekus has been in the office just about every day during the epidemic so far. She is now planning to be in the office on Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays. Senior Meals is in the building on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She has opened the office by appointment to attorneys. Only two people are allowed in the office at a time. When the office is allowed to open back up for regular business Ms. Aekus anticipates that she will be very busy and will not be able to take a vacation this year.

Approval of Payables Warrant dated April 23, 2020

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve the Payables Warrant #W2044 dated April 23, 2020, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant dated April 23, 2020

A motion was made by Scott Reed to approve Payroll Warrant #W2043 dated April 23, 2020, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Approval of Minutes of April 8, 2020

Mr. Edelstein would like the Minutes corrected to say, “Mr. Edelstein commented that a higher percentage of the road budget should be allocated to dirt roads and that high use thru dirt roads should be focused on and Stanley should decide how to devote more time and money to dirt roads”, seconded by Wayne Corse, four in favor, Craig Hammer abstained.

The January 15, 2020 Selectboard Meeting Minutes indicate how corrections are made to the Minutes and that the board agreed on the procedure. If corrections are made, they are reflected only in the Minutes of the meeting at which they were corrected. We do not change prior Minutes, nor do we post drafts and then repost final.

A motion was made by Phil Edelstein to change the way Minutes are handled going forward (beginning with the April 8, 2020 Minutes): the wording at the top of the Minutes should more clearly reflect that they are a draft until approved; any Minutes that are corrected should be changed to reflect the corrections and reposted, seconded by Wayne Corse, all in favor.

Other business / Office Administrator – as needed

Zoning Gig notified the board that Aaron Dupois is planning to open an automobile repair shop and sell used cars on the Briggs lot. In consultation with Brad Lackey, Chair of the Planning Commission it was determined that both uses are pre-existing on the lot and that a new zoning permit would not be required. Mr. Corse suggested that Gig look up old zoning permits to confirm that the sale of used cars was pre-existing.

Abandoned truck on Municipal Center lot Gig contacted the State Police and Wilmington Police to request a name and address for the owner of the red truck that has been abandoned on the Municipal Center lot for several months. Wilmington told her to call the State Police. The State Police told her to contact the Department of Motor Vehicles. DMV asked Gig to complete a Request for Abandoned Motor Vehicle Certification form which was completed and mailed to DMV today.

Chair’s Guidelines for the Whitingham Selectboard

Mr. Wood addressed the board with the following words:

We have been chosen by the townspeople to act in their best interests as well as that of the town. To help facilitate this, as the Chairman I’d like to try to set out some guidelines for us all to follow.

We need to look forward, not back, what happened in the past can be helpful in avoiding mistakes, but we can't move forward if we're always worried about what we had no control over in the past.

We need to act together as a board, we won't always agree with each other, but we need to work together and support any decision the board makes. As Selectboard members we have NO INDIVIDUAL AUTHORITY, so we must act as a unified board.

We are no longer private citizens, if we speak to a town employee about town business, we are doing it as a Selectboard member and need to have another board member present, this should prevent claims of a hostile work environment as well as prevent possible personal conflicts.

There should be no unilateral actions taken, if a board member believes something in the town is being done incorrectly it should be brought to the entire board via email to Gig so that she distributes it to all.

The board should not conduct business by "remote control". All concerns about town business or its employees should be brought before the board by the concerned member instead of third party.

We owe it to our citizens to work together and do what is best for the town.

We need to support all of our employees and other elected officials. We are all on the same team trying to do our best for the Town of Whitingham.

Town Hill Craig Hammer informed Seth Boyd as Chair of the Parks Committee that there was a complaint about dog poop at Town Hill. Mr. Boyd responded that he would take care of it.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Scott Reed, seconded by Wayne Corse, all in favor.

Wayne Wood adjourned the meeting at 8:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray