



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 3, 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 Selectboard Office of the Whitingham Municipal Center on Wednesday, November 3, 2021.

Selectboard members present: Scott Reed, Chair; Craig Hammer, Vice Chair; Greg Brown, Chris Walling, and James Weber.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer; Maryann Cheveralls and Edie Brigham, Library Trustees, Kristine Sweeter, Librarian; Tyler Lederer of Deerfield Valley News.

Attending remotely: Don Haddox, VT ANR

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Scott Reed called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. There were a few changes to the agenda since it was posted.

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)

Library Trustees spoke to the board about comments that were published in the newspaper. Both boards agree there is a lack of communication between them and the Selectboard is pleased the Trustees are here to address some issues. The library is a separate entity with their own budget, the town makes a donation to them; the other side of the coin is that the library is in a town building and its payables and payroll are run through the town warrants that the Selectboard must review and sign for the Treasurer to disburse the funds. With respect to the employees, it is even more confusing because library employees may get raises or other benefits that town employees don't get, or visa-versa; yet the library employees are on the Payroll Warrant with the town employees. The pay bonus that was recently given to library employees was noted as a COVID bonus, yet a town employee asked for a bonus and the Selectboard refused it. The inconsistencies can make for hard feelings. Mrs. Cheveralls noted that communication is key. Ms. Aekus suggested that the Library Trustees vote to assign a trustee to sign their warrant so that it is presented to the Selectboard as signed and approved and the Selectboard doesn't feel like they are approving it.

The Selectboard will notify the Trustees when they determine the 2022 Cost of Living increase in hopes that the library budget will reflect the same. Both boards will try to keep the lines of communication open.

Highway

Review and approve access permit Mr. Janovsky presented an access permit for Joseph Glorioso on Poverty Row; he recommended the Selectboard approve it. **A motion was made by James**

Weber to approve the access permit for Joseph Glorioso on Poverty Row (parcel 08-0660), seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor. A 911 address will be assigned.

Parsons Road speed limit at the April 7, 2021 meeting a motion was made to begin the process to change the speed limit on Parson Road. WRC recommended that we begin the process after paving is completed. Paving is now done, Gig just wanted to confirm with the board that they are still interested to begin the process, if so, we can combine that process with changing the rules on town trails. The board confirmed that Gig should start the process. The board would like the whole of Parsons Road to be 35mph.

Mr. Walling noted that the speed limit sign on the Cross Road has been knocked over.

Salt The State of Vermont usually includes all towns in their salt bid process; they didn't this year and neglected to tell the towns. Mr. Janovsky called the three companies that sell salt in the area and got the following pricing:

American Rock Salt \$77 per ton
Cargill \$77.90 per ton
Apalachee Salt \$88.40 per ton

All the pricing that Mr. Janovsky got falls within his salt budget.

Over the years he has dealt with all three of these companies, the first two haven't served the town well. Only two loads of salt fit in the storage area, he used just under 360 tons over the winter last year so many timely deliveries are needed. Apalachee Salt is more expensive, but it is dry and they have proven to provide good customer service.

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to get the salt from Apalachee Salt at \$88.40 per ton delivered, seconded by Greg Brown, all in favor.

Stop sign at McMillan Road, new speed limit sign on Gates Pond

Mr. Janovsky will replace many signs in town.

Bridge #43 review and approve response to state Mr. Reed received a letter from VTrans stating that the timber deck on bridge #43 on TH #63 must be properly repaired or replaced to meet loading requirements. The letter received required a response from the town. The board reviewed the response written noting that the Road Commissioner already applied for and received a structures grant from VTrans to make the repairs. **A motion was made by Chris Walling to appoint Scott Reed to sign the letter of response to VTrans regarding the repair of bridge #43, seconded by James Weber , all in favor.**

New driveway on Sadawga Road the access as it is now allows water to enter the roadway the access permit specifically says it may not. Mr. Janovsky will contact the property owner.

Policing – discuss state police coverage issues Mr. Janovsky informed the board that the state police are taking a very long time to show up when called. Recently it took 2 hours for a trooper to show up at the scene of an accident. They actually asked the first responders to secure the scene and look for evidence which our responders refused to do. Accidents are state police jurisdiction, we currently don't contract with Wilmington for ALL policing coverage, but they will come if they have an officer available. That was just one example of the problem, there are many

more. Chief Janovsky recommended that the Selectboard write a letter of complaint to Governor Phil Scott. **A motion was made by James Weber to sign the letter to Governor Scott, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.**

Discuss changing the Social Services Appropriation Policy

Mr. Walling questioned why an agency is required to petition each year for funding, especially if it is the same amount of funding voted on in the prior year. Discussion ensued. Gig will get a copy of the Wilmington Appropriations Policy for the board to review.

Sewer:

Discuss Miller request Lisa Miller purchased 3012 VT Route 100 in October of 2020, she was finally able to vacate her tenants and now asked that the property be charged a sewer rate reflective of a one-family home rather than a two-family home. We need to review the sewer ordinance to see if it addresses her request, discuss with Mark Johnson, look at the land records, and likely she must change the zoning on the property. An inspection will be required to determine that there is only one kitchen. If the change is approved a full hook-up fee will need to be paid if they go back to multi-family.

Follow up, if needed, from Tuesday meeting

Don Haddox called in to explain the difference between bidding as an additive alternate or a deductive alternate. The additive alternate would benefit the town more. It seems the deductive alternate would benefit the engineering firm allowing them to use the full bid schedule to set the maximum fee allowance allowed in the state funding program. The additive alternative gives us a lower price with more control. A letter will be written to the engineers to make clear the town's choice to bid Jacksonville with Wilmington as an additive alternate.

Approval of Payables Warrant – November 4, 2021

A motion was made by Chris Walling to approve Payables Warrant #W2220 dated November 4, 2021, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – November 4, 2021

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payroll Warrant #W2219 dated November 4, 2021, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Approve Minutes of October 20 and November 2, 2021

A motion was made by Greg Brown to accept the Minutes of October 20 and November 2, 2021, as written, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Other Business

Budget prep and COL increase the Cost of Living increase for 2022 is 5.9%. The board requested to go into executive session to discuss the matter and the best way to handle such a large increase. After some immediate research Gig determined that this topic didn't seem to fit into the guidelines of open meeting law. Discussion ensued; the board asked Gig to do some research on COL increases over the last 10 years.

Letter of complaint from Kathryn Anderson the board received a complaint about junk parked on the side of the road on property at 771 Faulkner Road. The issue goes back to June of 2020, the board had seen some improvement, but Ms. Andersen indicates a junk snowmobile has been added. A letter was sent by the board in early October by certified mail, return receipt requested. As of today, there has been no return of either the green signature card or the entire letter. The board wants a price to use a Sheriff to deliver a letter to Mr. Betit.

Transfer Station Jennifer Herzig completed an 8-hour Health & Safety Refresher Training for Hazardous Waste Site Activities.

ARPA Gig and Almira attended an ARPA webinar this afternoon. There are still no hard and fast rules for towns to spend the ARPA funds. We must remember that these are Federal funds, so the rules and the bookkeeping will likely be rigorous. "If you read the guidance, there is no black and white there", leaving a lot of gray area, but we have 3 years to spend the money so we shouldn't jump too quickly. WRC will look into "water quality" guidance, we could potentially use ARPA funds for the Municipal Center culvert/hazard mitigation projects and/or to bring the town into MRGP compliance, if necessary. It was suggested we use the lost revenue calculator to determine if the town lost revenue due to COVID, a new calculator is coming out this week and will be available on the VLCT website.

Policing Discussion ensued around increasing police coverage with Wilmington. Gig will invite Chief Murano to come to a meeting to discuss.

Jacksonville General Store Before the Jacksonville Store closed last Saturday Chris Walling spoke with Jason Klump to see how the board could help them to stay open. Gig contacted the BDCC and the VT Preservation Trust to arrange for them to contact the owners to offer assistance. The board expressed their regret for the community to loss such a long-standing, vital business.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Greg Brown to adjourn, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.

Scott Reed adjourned the meeting at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray