



**Town of Whitingham  
Office of the Selectboard**

**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2020**

*These Minutes shall be accepted into the public record (with any corrections noted) at a future meeting of the Whitingham Selectboard.*

The Whitingham Selectboard held a regular meeting on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 6:30pm in the Dining Hall of the Municipal Center, 2948 VT Route 100, Jacksonville, VT.

Selectboard members present: Wayne Wood, Vice Chair; Craig Hammer, and Scott Reed, members. Wayne Corse attended via Skype.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Almira Aekus, Town Clerk/Treasurer; Richard Lemaire, Phil Edelstein, Dave Dumaine, Donald Boyd, Allan Twitchell, Mary Lemaire, Seth Boyd, Christie Betit, Lise Barus, Leon Corse, Johanna Robohm, Rodney Bemis, Karen Hein, Betsy McKinley, Don McKinley, Craig Aekus, Sharon Berry, Trevor Berry, Steve Morse, Terry Morse and Kristy Corey, residents;

**Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda.**

Wayne Wood called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

**Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)**

Seth Boyd questioned if the board agreed to contract with the Wilmington Police, Mr. Wood responded that the board is speaking with Chief Murano to hire them for 10 hours per month. Mr. Boyd feels that if the town contracts with any police force it should be with Wilmington, but he is not sure that we need it, he cautions about hiring for the service without bringing it to the voters.

**Address questions related to the Annual Town Report**

Johanna Robohm questioned why the ballot wasn't in the town report, saying it has always been, Gig responded that the ballot has never been in the town report since she has worked here.

Mrs. Robohm questioned why the interest revenue has gone up so significantly, Almira Aekus responded that she negotiated with the bank and got a much better rate.

Mrs. Robohm questioned Selectboard Office health insurance, if that was for one employee or more. Gig responded that it was for her family coverage.

Mrs. Robohm questioned why the Assessor's clerk is budgeted for more money than was paid to the 3 elected Listers in the past, Gig responded that moving to professional assessors was never a money saving option, we didn't have listers running for office.

Mrs. Robohm questioned what kind of equipment are we spending \$5,000 on under Contract Law Enforcement – Mr. Wood responded that we are considering purchasing a radar speed sign.

She questioned patrol coverage – do we really have that – yes, we will, we are currently speaking with the Wilmington Police to provide coverage for 10 hours a month. Mrs. Robohm questioned if the Wilmington Police would be called for an emergency, Mr. Wood responded that she should call 911, if the Wilmington Police are in the area they will respond.

Phil Edelstein questioned how many employees are covered on the medical insurance, he calculated that the town budgeted approximately \$230,000 for it. Almira Aekus answered that that there are 9 full time employees on the policy, the budgeted amount includes the very high deductible, in prior years many of the employees did not use their entire deductible and the balance is rolled into the fund balance.

Mrs. Robohm questioned what OSHA training was, Gig responded that Jennifer Herzig took an Occupational Safety and Health Administration training as a result of an OSHA inspection the town had. Some of the folks in the crowd thought that every employee should take an OSHA class.

Mrs. Robohm questioned wages by position, for example transfer station attendant is in the budget as one figure and on the wages sheet as another figure. Almira Aekus responded that she will look into it.

Mrs. Robohm questioned how one is to read page 45, Mr. Janovsky reviewed the entire report. She asked if the town is planning to purchase any new equipment. Mr. Janovsky answered that he is planning to purchase a new backhoe and the Fire Department is considering the purchase of a new truck. There is money in the equipment fund for both pieces of equipment so taxes will not go up for these purchases.

Mrs. Robohm questioned SEVCAs report being in the Town Report but there is no amount in the appropriations. Gig responded that they didn't submit a petition for funding.

Mrs. Robohm questioned SEVEDs being new this year and why is it over \$4,000? Christie Betit who works for BDCC which collaborates with SEVEDs answered the question.

Mrs. Robohm questioned the Parks Committee budget increase, Seth Boyd answered.

Mrs. Robohm questioned on pages 16 & 17 why the computer contract almost doubled, Almira Aekus responded that we have been using the same contractor (NEMRC) since 1995, they are upgrading their cyber security and that increases the cost. Mrs. Robohm questioned if we shopped around for something else. Mrs. Aekus feels that because the state has lots of bids out for software that we shouldn't switch at this time.

Mrs. Robohm questioned the cost increase for ambulance service. Deerfield Valley Rescue increased their fees to us, they purchased some new equipment.

Lise Barus questioned the state fee for the dam. Gig answered that it is for the Gates Pond dam which the town owns, the state inspects the dam each year and requires the fee.

### **Discuss request of \$500 for Greeter Program on Harriman Reservoir**

At the February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting John Widness spoke to the board about a Greeter Program he runs at the Wilmington boat launches and discussed the possibility of having greeters at the Brick House Road boat launch on weekend/holiday mornings. He suggested he might ask for \$500 to fund this service. After the meeting we received an email from him asking for the \$500.

Mr. Hammer feels we should not pay if they cannot guarantee that they will have someone in Whitingham.

The Social Service Appropriation Policy procedure requires all social service agencies that have an appropriation request must submit a petition for an article requesting an appropriation.

The board took the request under consideration and referred to the Appropriation Policy.

**Sewer Department** nothing

### **Highway Department**

**Scoping Study grant agreement** We received a 25 page grant agreement for the scoping study of the river. Gig asked for Selectboard approval to send the document to the town attorney for review before it is signed. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to send the grant agreement to the town attorney for review, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.**

### **Transfer Station**

For the SWIP grant application we need to submit a Certificate of Good Standing. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to appoint Wayne Wood to sign the document, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

### **Prepare for town meeting**

The Warrant for town meeting was reviewed and it was decided who would read each article.

### **Approval of Payables Warrant – February 27, 2020**

**A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payables Warrant W2036 dated February 27, 2020, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.**

### **Approval of Payroll Warrant – February 27, 2020**

**A motion was made by Scott Reed to approve Payroll Warrant W2035 dated February 27, 2020, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

### **Approval of Minutes of February 12, 2020**

There was one correction to the Minutes of February 12<sup>th</sup>, the motion to engage the Wilmington Police Department for coverage for 10 hours per month, not 10 hours per week. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve the Minutes of February 12, 2020 as corrected, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.**

**Other business / Office Administrator – as needed**

Suggestions A resident suggested that the village would be more welcoming if the sidewalks were plowed and sanded. Gig had informed the resident that the sidewalks are owned by the Jacksonville Electric Company, but the resident thought it would benefit the town if perhaps the Highway crew could remove the snow in the winter.

A nurse for Senior Meals suggested the installation of a railing in the hallway from the dining hall to the bathroom because many seniors are unsteady and could benefit from a railing. The board asked Mr. Janovsky to ask Peter Bernard for a cost estimate.

Red Truck Mr. Wood asked if we have made any progress with the red truck that seems to have been abandoned in the Municipal Center parking lot. Gig responded that she has been busy with town report and hasn't had a chance to pursue the matter.

**Schedule meeting with state representatives and Education Funding attorneys**

A "weighting study" has been completed by the Board of Education which might affect our Education Funding Lawsuit. The state has a hearing about the study on March 11<sup>th</sup>. It would be beneficial to discuss the study with our state representatives and attorneys before the hearing. Mr. Corse suggested a meeting any day next week, it would have to be before 6:30 on Wednesday. Mr. Reed is not available next week. Gig will contact our state representatives and senators to see what their schedule looks like. She will also notify the attorneys of that meeting when it is scheduled.

Fire Truck Mr. Janovsky did an on-line search and found a used 1996 truck with a 1,000 tank, 1250 gpm, four door cab, booster reels, a Cummings motor, 10,000+ miles, 900 hours to replace the old Whitingham truck. He will go look at it tomorrow. They are asking \$39,000 for it, nothing is set in stone, the Fire Department officers will come to the Selectboard with a proposal if they feel it is a good purchase. If we had to build this truck tomorrow it would cost close to \$400,000. It will need some refurbishment. When the time comes, they will sell the old truck.

Mrs. Robohm questioned what the town owned at the Transfer Station, the Connex boxes are owned by the town but not listed on the inventory sheet.

**Adjourn**

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

Mr. Wood adjourned the meeting at 7:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
~Gig Zboray