



**Town of Whitingham  
Office of the Selectboard**

**MINUTES OF DECEMBER 2, 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, December 2, 2020.

Selectboard members present: Wayne Wood, Scott Reed, Craig Hammer, and Chris Walling. Phil Edelstein attended remotely.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Howard Dix, Listers Clerk; Almira Aekus, Town Clerk.

Others attending remotely: Mark Hanna of Lions Club; Karen Hein, resident; Chris Curtis of Deerfield River Watershed Association; Rich Lemaire, resident.

**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)**

Karen Hein addressed the board; she was unable to enter the prior zoom meeting for the Vicious Dog Hearing. She provided a run-down of the bite event as it occurred. Her real concern is that the dogs may have harassed others walking on the road, that there might be a pattern of the dogs attacking walkers.

**Lions Club: request to place signage at 3 welcome signs**

The Lions Club recently changed their name to Deerfield Valley Lions Club and they would like to place new signage at the 3 welcome signs and also place one at the bottom of Wilmington Cross Road on Route 100 (that would require VTrans approval if placed within their right-of-way (row) or property owner approval if outside of VTrans row). They are asking for signposts to be provided by the town and they will provide the signage. Mr. Hanna already spoke with two VTrans officials and if the signs are posted 13 feet beyond the fog line it is OK (not in their row). Mr. Janovsky noted then it would be on private property and they would need permission unless they are adding signs to already existing signs. Mr. Hanna will work with Mr. Janovsky on installing the signs. Mr. Lemaire noted that he caretakes for the property owner of the sign near Readsboro, he will speak to the owner and let Mr. Hanna know the result.

**Christopher Curtis to request support of Wild & Scenic River designation of Deerfield River**

Mr. Curtis addressed the board regarding a new initiative to designate the Deerfield River as a national wild and scenic river. They feel the designation could benefit the region by protecting

the river from new dams being built but would not impact any existing dams; it would provide grant funds for restoration or improvement projects. Mr. Curtis is requesting a letter of support for pursuing the designation. There would be no cost to the Town of Whitingham.

Mr. Hammer questioned if the designation would restrict the landowners that abut the river? Mr. Curtis replied, "no".

**A motion was made by Wayne W. Wood to sign the letter of support for the Wild & Scenic River designation of the Deerfield River, seconded by Phil Edelstein, four in favor, Mr. Hammer opposed.**

### Highway:

Ratify sale of old spare town truck Rydemore out of Fitchburg MA will buy the old truck for \$1,250. Mr. Janovsky needed to sign a bill of sale to make it happen and get it out of the way. On Monday board members approved of the sale. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to ratify the sale of the old town truck for \$1,250, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

### Murdock Lane – discuss the town taking over the private road

Mr. Janovsky noted that the town would first OK the takeover of the road and then the Ryder Pond Association would bring it up to specs. Attorney Fisher was not available to meet with the Selectboard on the topic tonight. Mr. Edelstein would like a written legal opinion from the town attorney. When Mr. Fisher is available, we should invite the Ryder Pond Association Board of Directors to the meeting.

Mr. Janovsky noted that a plow would be at the center line of the Cross Road before the plow truck driver would likely be able to see approaching traffic when exiting Murdock Lane, it is a safety concern the board should be aware of.

Gig will try again to schedule Mr. Fisher, and remind him there might be a timeline on the topic.

### Medical Insurance – review options for 2021

Marylee Putnam provided the board with information regarding medical insurance options for 2021. She recommends staying with Blue Cross Blue Shield bronze. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to stay with Blue Cross Blue Shield Bronze Plan with no changes to employee's out of pocket deductible expense, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.**

### Discuss contract policing

Mr. Wood spoke with Chief Murano of Wilmington Police Department, the Chief recommends contracting for 4 hours per month, a slow start to see how we like it. Chief Murano would look into state grants and other funding options. They will do their policing as they see fit, they will not only be in town to issue traffic tickets; they will answer 911 calls and investigate crimes. Four hours per month would keep us well below the budgeted amount of \$10,000.

Mr. Janovsky noted that Wilmington has been responding to incidents which is great because it could be a long wait for the State Police to arrive.

Scott Reed and Wayne Wood will meet with Chief Murano and the Wilmington Town Manager to gather more information and bring the information back to the board for further discussion.

**Hazard Mitigation: review and sign Scoping Study contract**

The Agreement for Consultant Engineering Services with MS&K, Inc. was reviewed. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to appoint Wayne W. Wood to sign the contract in the amount of \$44,988 with MS&K, Inc. for engineering services to complete the Scoping Study for the flood hazard mitigation project at the Municipal Center entrance and to allow Gig Zboray, already appointed as Municipal Representative in Responsible Charge, to sign any other documents attached to the contract, as needed, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.**

**Corona/COVID-19:**

The receipts for Corona related expenses were submitted as part of the LGER grant, final receipts must be submitted by December 11<sup>th</sup>. Gig purchased a projector and new screen earlier this week that will be included for grant reimbursement.

**Library: review and sign air conditioning contract**

At the last meeting the Selectboard approved the bid from Kingsley Plumbing and Heating of \$7,200 for labor and materials to install air conditioning/heat pump units in the library. The quote did not include required electrical work. The board reviewed the contract. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to appoint Wayne W. Wood to sign the contract with Kingsley Plumbing and Heating in the amount of \$7,200, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.**

**Animal Control**

Review and sign letter to unregistered dog owner

**A motion was made by Craig Hammer to appoint Wayne W. Wood to sign the letter, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.**

**A motion was made by Craig Hammer to appoint any one member to sign the dog hearing decision, seconded by Wayne Wood, all in favor.**

**Approval of Payables Warrant – December 3, 2020**

**A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payables Warrant #W2126 dated December 3, 2020, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.**

**Approval of Payroll Warrant – December 3, 2020**

**A motion was made by Scott Reed to approve Payroll Warrant #W2123 dated December 3, 2020, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

**Review and approve Minutes of November 18, 2020**

**A motion was made by Craig Hammer to accept the Minutes of November 18, 2020 as written, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.**

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

Review and sign annual contract for generator at school The Town pays for repairs and maintenance of the generator at the school through the Civil Defense fund because it is a designated shelter. The annual contract for generator maintenance is up for renewal at a cost of \$785, the expense is included in the payables warrant. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to appoint Wayne W. Wood to sign the annual service contract with Brook Field Service to maintain the school generator, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.**

Review and sign Nido's propane agreement We recently switched the propane delivery from Suburban to Nido's at the Municipal Center, Jacksonville Fire House and Jacksonville Sewer Plant. A service agreement was sent by Nido's requiring a signature. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to appoint Wayne W. Wood to sign the propane agreement with Nido's, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.**

Howard Dix The district advisor asked what value is to be used on the Great River Hydro property. Ms. Aekus suggested that Mr. Dix ask Mr. Fisher then she corrected herself saying that the value is already in the court so no changes can be made at this time, but Mr. Dix should confirm her opinion with Mr. Fisher. Gig will work with Mr. Dix to get a written response from Mr. Fisher.

Discuss holiday bonuses

**Mr. Reed added Almira Aekus to the list and made a motion to approve the Christmas bonuses totaling \$1,350, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

**Budget Work**

Before exiting the meeting Mr. Janovsky told the board he was not interested in a raise this year, but if he was going to get one he would rather the money go to the girls that run the town offices, they've saved his hide many times and they deserve a good raise.

**A motion was made by Wayne W. Wood to enter executive session to discuss employee work assignments under the provisions of Title 1, Section 312(g) of the Vermont Statutes, to include Gig Zboray, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.**

With no decisions made executive session was exited at 8:12pm.

**A motion was made by Wayne Wood to increase Gig Zboray's rate of pay for a total yearly salary of \$62,400 (for all three salaried positions she holds) per year beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> (before any cost of living increase) with half of that increase to begin immediately this year in the amount of \$5,286.50, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

**A motion was made by Wayne Wood to increase Almira Aekus' total salary (for all salaried positions she holds) by \$5,000 per year effective July 1, 2020 (before any cost of living increase), seconded by Craig Hammer, four in favor, Scott Reed abstained. Ms. Aekus can decide how to budget the increase.**

**Adjourn**

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

Wayne Wood adjourned the meeting at 8:22pm. Respectfully submitted, ~Gig Zboray