

Minutes of regular meeting of the Whitingham Selectboard

October 28, 2015

These Minutes will be accepted into the public record (with any corrections noted)
at the next regular meeting of the Whitingham Selectboard.

Selectboard members present: Chair, Keith Bronson; Vice Chair, Allan Twitchell; Member, Karl Twitchell; Member, Robin Kingsley. Also present were Gig Zboray, acting Selectboard Administrative Assistant; Town Clerk/Treasurer, Almira Aekus; Bookkeeper, Marylee Putnam. Highway Foreman, Stanley Janovsky. Visitor, Wayne Corse.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to the Agenda.

Chair, Keith Bronson called the meeting to order at 7:30pm

There were a number of changes and additions to the Agenda from the posted version. The first item will be the opening of sand bids. The meeting with Deerfield Valley Sportsmen's Club was cancelled. The listers were not in attendance to discuss the report from the Reading Listers. Other business to include discussion of VLCT Municipal Policy, Carbon Tax, VLCT Auditors Workshop and correspondence received from Dan Hollister, Animal Control Officer. Item 8 was added for approval of updated Ecycling Contract to include a payment of 1 cent per pound. Item 11 was added for approval of Sewer Upgrade project application for inclusion in the SeVEDS CEDS.

Opening of Sand Bids

Zaluzney: 9/16th minus stone at \$17.49 per cubic yard

Corse Excavating: 9/16th sand at \$15.45 per cubic yard

A motion was made by Allan Twitchell to accept Corse Excavating bid, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor.

Approval of Payables Warrant

A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to pay W-1618 Payables Warrant dated October 29, 2015, seconded by Allan Twitchell, all in favor. Robin Kingsley questioned the Keene Monument invoice. Almira Aekus explained it was for repair of monuments and the money will come out of Cemetery Commission fund. Ms. Aekus will not release the check until she receives the proper documentation.

Approval of Payroll Warrant

A motion was made by Allan Twitchell, to pay W-1617 Payroll Warrant, seconded by Robin Kingsley, all in favor.

Approval of Minutes of October 14, 2015

A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to accept the Minutes as printed with typos marked, seconded by Robin Kingsley. Discussion: Keith Bronson corrected that he did not make the motion at 7:54pm to not charge the Homestead Declaration 8% penalty late filing fee – that motion was actually made by Greg Brown and Keith Bronson did not voice a vote at all. At 8:25 pm Allan Twitchell made the motion and Karl Twitchell seconded to pay the Payables Warrant (it was not made and seconded by Allan Twitchell). **Because there are so many typos and errors it was agreed to rescind the original motion.** The corrections will be made and the corrected Minutes will be available for approval at the next meeting. **Gig Zboray will make the corrections.**

Transfer Station E-waste Contract with NCER

A motion was made by Karl Twitchell, seconded by Robin Kingsley for Keith Bronson, Chair, to sign the updated contract with NCER for collection of Electronics Recycling at 1 cent per pound. All in favor.

VLCT Pacif Insurance

Discussion of value of Green Mountain Hall and its contents for insurance purposes. **Karl Twitchell would like to see the lister's card for the property.**

8pm Conference call with Vicki Abare of VLCT Pacif: Historical items are covered on an agreed value basis. They ask for an appraisal of the items. Up to Pacif member to determine value of contents. Almira Aekus thinks Historical Society came up with that number.

Keith Bronson questioned how the value of the building replacement cost was determined. Vicki Abare stated it is based on construction, square footage, utilities, and is done by an outside contractor. Green Mountain Hall is frame construction, 2534 square feet, classified as a museum. Vicki Abare questioned if we feel the value is too high. Keith Bronson is unsure if we would even replace the building. For buildings not being replaced VLCT recommends "functional replacement cost", town could set a replacement value for a smaller building including debris removal or only debris removal.

Vicki Abare brought up that several buildings are covered as "actual cash value" which means replacement costs less depreciation (usually about 20% less than replacement cost). Most towns go with "guaranteed replacement cost". **It is important that the town**

determine that values are up to snuff. Municipal building is currently covered at 1.2 million, but the replacement cost (UIS Estimate) is valued at 1.7 million. An email was sent to Bonnie Jo Radasch with UIS values and scheduled value. Vicki Abare will forward that email to whitingham1@yahoo.com. Gig Zboray will then forward that email to all Selectboard members.

Town garage \$441,000 ACV, UIS value is \$589,000. Keith Bronson asked for an estimate of what changing the insurance basis will cost. Town garage square footage is 4400.

Stanley Janovsky urged considering which buildings have a higher risk of burning down. Stanley was invited to come back to the next meeting to go over the information that will be sent by VLCT Pacif.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Animal Control Officer updates

Selectboard reviewed updates of various animal control issues and the Judicial Bureau reversal of a citizen's fines.

Carbon Tax

Chair, Keith Bronson feels that the Selectboard should be proactive about this issue. He feels that the Selectboard should write a letter to our representatives, senators, and governor that the board is strictly opposed to the 88 cents per gallon tax on gasoline, sending copies to Editors of Brattleboro Reformer, The Commons and the Deerfield Valley News. A copy should also be posted to the Town website. Gig Zboray provided Keith Bronson with 2 proposed Bills pertaining to Carbon Tax (H.395 and H.412) that are in the legislature now. Gig Zboray will draft a letter for review at the next meeting.

VLCT Municipal Policy

Preamble:

Vermont today faces challenges that range from a declining fiscal health and shrinking economy to the need for sustainable infrastructure improvement, economic development and smart growth prospects, environmental resource and emergency management, energy resources, corrections and public safety strategy, and affordable health care. In all of these areas, the state, federal, and local governments must work together to proactively take advantage of opportunities and address challenges.

Neither Vermont nor any other state can rely on the federal government to uphold its obligations to fund programs it has mandated to states and local governments. *The state should refuse to follow in those footsteps and fund all those mandates it imposes on local governments.*

In addition, Vermont has:

- limited taxing capacity and income;

- a small population that is not growing;
- a generally rural and aging population;
- a government and revenue raising structure that was largely developed to meet the demands envisioned and resources available a half century ago; and
- an expanding opiate addiction crisis.

Therefore, Vermont must find ways to deliver government services to its citizens through the most efficient means available. Shifting costs and obligations from state to local governments is not sustainable or acceptable. The state should solicit the opinions and utilize the expertise of the citizens who are being served and who pay for government. Given the extended recession and never-ending pressures on both municipal and state finances, municipal officials must be included in any discussion that assesses the functions of government and seeks innovative ways for Vermont to generate revenues, deliver services, and reduce the cost of delivering them.

Where this Municipal Policy is silent on a public policy issue affecting municipal government, it shall be the position of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns to support provision of authority, autonomy, and resources to cities and towns.

Chair, Keith Bronson would like to respond to VLCT that the Selectboard approves of their policy. **Gig Zboray will draft a letter.**

VLCT Auditors Workshop

Discussion whether Gig Zboray should attend. **Selectboard feels that if Gig Zboray, Marylee Putnam and Almira Aekus are available they should attend the workshop.**

Audit Matters

The Selectboard acknowledges that Old Home Week will run its checkbook using the Town Tax ID Number but those payouts will not be on Town Warrants. Almira Aekus will keep a close eye on the account(s).

Law Enforcement

Robin Kingsley feels that townspeople will be wanting law enforcement in town soon based on complaints that he has seen on Facebook. Discussion about the issue.

Discussion of speed limit on Route 100 in front of school and at the Cross Road intersection.

SeVEDS CED inclusion of Sewer Upgrade Project

An application for sewer improvement project for inclusion in the SeVEDS CED was prepared by Gig Zboray. **A motion was made by Karl Twitchell, seconded by Robin Kingsley to submit the application for the project to be included in the SeVEDS CED, all in favor.**

SELECTBOARD OFFICE REORGANIZATION MATTERS

Town Report/Town Meeting

Almira Aekus and Marylee Putnam came to the table. The Selectboard is looking to reorganize a few things and questioned how we are going to do Town Report. Almira would like to use NEMRC generated reports for the Town Report rather than creating budget spreadsheets as has been done in the past. Almira would like to see the Agency Reports included in the entirety of the Town Report, everything should have page numbers. Almira wants as much transparency as possible.

Keith Bronson would like Marylee to be at Town Meeting if possible, Almira states that Marylee attends Halifax Town Meeting but that Almira will be comfortable without her.

Almira states we should give the Town Report Draft to Johanna Robohm and Claudia Greene to proof read before publishing.

Gig Zboray will be responsible for Warnings, but Almira will help.

Almira would like to start fresh with a consistent format of Town Reports moving forward.

Financial Statements

Almira and Marylee provided the Selectboard with current financial reports that they thought the board had been getting all along. Allan Twitchell feels that once a month would be good to receive the financial statements with either Almira or Marylee attending the meeting to answer any questions.

Miscellaneous

Chair, Keith Bronson questioned if there is a Selectboard Administrators Handbook? It would be important for Gig to know all the Open Meeting Laws and other requirements and time lines.

Almira Aekus reported that about 80% of the property taxes due have been paid.

Budget process can begin at any time now.

Karl Twitchell recommended that Gig Zboray get an app to tape record the meetings.

Old Business: Veterans Memorial on Town Hill needs repairs. Gig will contact Troy Felisko to arrange for repairs before Memorial Day, 2015

Special Payroll Warrant #17#2

This special warrant was for finalization of employment of Bonnie Jo Radasch. A letter was drafted to enclose with the final paycheck. **A motion was made by Karl Twitchell, seconded by Allan Twitchell for Keith Bronson to sign the letter, all in favor. A motion was made to approve the special warrant by Karl Twitchell, seconded by Allan Twitchell, all in favor.**

PERSONNEL MATTERS

A motion to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters with only Selectboard Members present by Karl Twitchell, seconded by Allan Twitchell, all in favor.

10:20 pm Exit Executive Session with no decisions made.

Appointment of Gig Zboray as Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard

An hourly rate was set for a 90 day period at \$19 per hour, not to exceed 40 hours per week for the Administrative Assistant position to start retroactively to October 23rd (the first day of this current pay period). Position and pay to be reevaluated in 90 days because it is unknown what exactly the job encompasses and how many hours will be needed. Also, at this time, the clean-up of the office and filing of years of paperwork will require *many, many* hours. Start employee benefits package on October 23rd. Medical insurance (family plan) to begin on January 1, 2016.

Zoning Administrator and Health Officer Change to Salary

The position of Zoning Administrator and Health Officer will become a salary positions beginning October 30, 2015. Zoning Administrator annual salary will be \$4,000 per year. Health Officer annual salary will be \$750 per year.

Bookkeeper

Bookkeeper hourly rate will remain the same, the number of hours per week can be up to 15 hours. This will be reviewed after 90 days and a salary should be set at that time.

A motion was made by Robin Kingsley, seconded by Allan Twitchell to make the above personnel changes (three items above), all in favor.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Robin Kingsley to adjourn at 11 pm, seconded by Allan Twitchell, all in favor.

Keith Bronson adjourned the meeting. Respectfully submitted, ~Gig Zboray