



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF JANUARY 7, 2026

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, January 7, 2026.

Selectboard members present: Scott M Reed, Chair; James Weber, Vice Chair (remote); Rick Gramlin, Craig Hammer, and Skip Tefft.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Administrator; Rachel Littlehale, Town Clerk; Sara Martin, resident

Call to Order. Pledge of Allegiance

Scott M. Reed called the meeting to order at 6:32pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Additions or Changes to the Agenda

Changes to the agenda were noted on the meeting copy of the agenda

Hearing of Visitors for concerns not on the agenda

Sara Martin, speaking about what she thinks AI will be in the future (following up on her comments at the last meeting). She is concerned about the power needed for AI; can the town help create power sources? "All of our buildings kind of need to be torn down, right? We've got a \$4 million dollar building. I think at the very least, are we just looking at that building and saying, is it built for AI?" Mr. Reed noted that the Town of Whitingham does not own the power company.

Mr. Gramlin suggested that Ms. Martin develop a project that has a scope and the intent of it for the board to consider. Mr. Weber suggested that Ms. Martin speak with him as General Manager of Jacksonville Electric.

Highway:

annual change of traffic patterns for Fishing Derby

A motion was made by Scott Reed to allow the following traffic changes for the annual fishing derby: *Beginning at 8am on Friday morning, January 30, 2026, to 8pm on Saturday, January 31, 2026 (bad weather/ice dates Friday, February 6, 2026, to Saturday, February 7, 2026) the following will be in force:*

Sadawga Lake Road from Town Hill Road to Kentfield Road will be One Way Vehicular Traffic (north to south).

The second lane of Sadawga Lake Road will be reserved for parking.

Head of Pond Road will be open to include Recreational Vehicle travel.

It is anticipated that Recreational Vehicles will be in use on Maple Drive, Sadawga Lake Road, Kentfield Road to Head of Pond Road and on Head of Pond Road.

Seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Annual signing of Certificate of Highway Mileage no changes were made to town highway mileage. **A motion was made by Skip Tefft to approve and sign the annual Certificate of Highway Mileage for the year ending February 10, 2026, seconded by Rick Gramlin, all in favor.**

Highway Garage

Stevens & Associates would like to set up a meeting on Thursday, January 15th at 4pm to present the cost estimate for the garage project. Who is available and would like to attend? Mr. Hammer will not be available. Gig noted that once she supplies the cost estimate to the bond attorney, he might not be able to get us the documents required for the bond vote by the next meeting on the 21st, we might need special meeting.

Sewer

The Jacksonville RBC began spinning (again) yesterday, they think they can begin testing on Monday. Once we pass three consecutive tests, we can begin discharging into the river again and stop hauling. Mr. Hammer questioned who turned it on the last time and why didn't they notice it was spinning backwards? Aqua Aerobics is in charge of the repairs.

Culvert Project

The project has reached substantial completion; there is a list of items that need to be completed in the spring. We have requested an extension of time for the "period of performance", we haven't received an official reply yet, but it seems very likely the state will allow it.

There is a meeting tomorrow with VTrans, DEC, and Hunter to look at the Route 100 side of the river, VTrans doesn't like the way the stone wall is stacked.

Transfer Station: review and approve Amendment 6 to Vermont Standard Plan (for electronics recycling)

This contract related to electronics recycling has been amended each year since 2021 to extend the contract for another year. This amendment is only for a period of six months, expiring on June 30, 2026, because the state has issued an RFP for the program.

A motion was made by Rick Gramlin to approve Amendment 6 and to appoint Scott M. Reed to sign it, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Gig noted that she has replied to the Notice of Alleged Violation resulting from the surprise inspection in the fall.

The Town Report should include information that paint can be brought to the Transfer Station during regular business hours, no need to wait for a HHW Collection Event.

26/27 Budget: review and discuss

Seth Boyd would like the Parks Committee budget to be level funded at \$21,000, the draft budget has an amount of \$19,250. The board approved to level fund it. Mr. Reed would like to know what the Parks Committee's plans are.

Mr. Hammer questioned why the portapotties are still at Town Hill, Gig had called Best Septic earlier in the week, she will call again.

Review draft Warning for Town Meeting

Mr. Reed questioned if the money that goes into the Municipal Facilities Fund is built up, yes, if the money is not spent it stays in the fund, it does not get reappropriated into the following year's budget. Mr. Reed suggested increasing the amount, right now the amount of \$20,000 is written in the article. A new amount was not suggested, and no decision was made tonight. The board is to think about it and let Gig know individually so the Warrant can be ready to sign at the next meeting. They all agree that the less money we need to borrow in the future is better for the town.

Last year it was noted that we should have a separate article for the town website rather than including it in "economic development", do we want to make that change this year? If so, we will need to add an article to create a fund for the town website and then an article to fund it. Gig would also need to do some research to find out if we can transfer money from the economic development fund into a new website fund.

The backend of the website was updated in the last year or two. The front end was created approximately 8-9 years ago. Mr. Weber suggested the front end should be replaced in the next 5 years or so. Gig noted that when the current website was built, we had a committee of volunteer professionals who helped with the organization of the website so that most things can be found in one to two clicks. It was also built by a second homeowner who did it at a very low cost to the town. Mr. Weber thinks rebuilding the front end would be \$30,000 on the low side. He noted that when it gets rebuilt, we would want to do a study of how it should be improved.

After more discussion, it was decided not to make any changes related to economic development/website at this time.

Mr. Weber asked Gig to get an estimate on how much it would cost to build a new website. Mr. Hammer noted that Mr. Weber would be the subject matter expert. Mr. Weber will do some research. Ms. Littlehale noted that she received an email on the listserve with recommendations for website builders.

The Old Home Week Committee is working on a budget of \$75,000 so they won't need to appropriate funds in 26/27, should we start putting funds away for OHW 2036? \$5,000? The board agreed to both.

Mr. Weber questioned the article related to additional funding for Senior Meals; we have not received a petition for that article yet this year.

Approval of Payables Warrant – January 8, 2026

Mr. Reed questioned if we are keeping track of the expenses related to the RBC failure. Gig replied that she is keeping track of the expenses and Ms. Putnam is making sure we have money to cover them. There are several months of invoices for the sewer project that have not been reimbursed by the state yet because we are waiting on the state to approve specific invoices. All other grant project reimbursement requests are up to date.

A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve Payables Warrant #W2628 dated January 8, 2026, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – January 8, 2026

Mr. Weber questioned if there had been a payroll expense for the temporary plow driver who filled in while Peter Bernard was out. That was paid on the prior warrant.

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payroll Warrant #W2627 dated January 8, 2026, seconded by Rick Gramlin, all in favor.

Approval of Minutes of three meetings on December 10, 2025 and Minutes of special meeting on December 17, 2025

Mr. Gramlin spoke about the Minutes of December 17, 2025, noting that Gig was very gracious in her writing in how she presented everything. The Board needs to understand that residents are allowed to come in and say what they want, free speech. But the board should be cautious of age discrimination as was presented by a resident during that meeting.

A motion was made by Rick Gramlin to accept the Minutes of three meetings held on December 10, 2025, and the special meeting on December 17, 2025, as written, seconded by Craig Hammer, four in favor, Mr. Reed abstained.

Other business:

There is a group of residents who want to start having community potluck dinners at the Municipal Center again, as was done years ago. Gig asked if these folks could rent the hall for no charge? Yes, the board has no problem with that.

Flood Hazard Mitigation Gig and Stan attended the kickoff meeting for the Gates Pond Road (Mill Hill area) scoping study with the engineers today. The engineers will be preparing a flyer to notify the residents of the project, they are gathering information now, will come out for a site visit when the snow melts. There was some discussion of what causes the icing at the intersection of Gates Pond Road and Route 100.

Executive Session to discuss employee work assignments in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 312 (g)

Mr. Hammer doesn't feel that executive sessions are needed at this time, it is decision making time. Going way back to when the highway crew received a raise increase that was done in public session. Mr. Gramlin would rather have an honest discussion in private. Mr. Tefft would rather go into executive session. Mr. Weber feels that this board goes into executive session too often. After more discussion it was decided to go into executive session with only the Selectboard members attending.

A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to enter executive session to discuss employee work assignments in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 312 (g), seconded by Rick Gramlin, all in favor.

Gig left the building so the recording of the meeting was completely terminated at this time.

The board exited executive session at 7:53pm.

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to reject the proposal by the town clerk, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Scott M. Reed, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Scott M. Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:54pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray