



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF JANUARY 11, 2024

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 special meeting at 7:00pm in the Selectboard Office of the Whitingham Municipal Center on Thursday, January 11, 2024.

Selectboard members present: Scott M. Reed, Chair; Greg Brown, and Craig Hammer.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Administrator; Travis Wheeler, Marshall Dix, and Seth Boyd, residents; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Scott M. Reed called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Changes to the agenda were noted on the meeting copy.

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)

Seth Boyd commented on the amount of funding asked for in the Old Home Week article of the Warning for Town Meeting. He and his wife will participate in fund raising for fireworks, but the cost will be about \$20,000 (it was \$12,000 in 2016). That's far too much money to raise in bake sales. He would like an additional article on the Town Meeting Warning for \$7,500 for fireworks for this year and next. The board would rather keep one article and increase it to \$20,000 to include the \$7,500 for fireworks.

24/25 budget: review third draft

The board conducted a final review of the budget. Ms. Aekus notified the board about a new Childcare Tax which she added to the budget. Bank interest rates have increased so the interest revenue line has been adjusted. There was some discussion about Clerk/Treasurer salary/hourly rate versus taking the fees/penalties. **A motion was made by Greg Brown to accept the proposed budget for fiscal year July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025, of \$768,209.00 of which \$399,487.00 to be raised in taxes, the balance to be offset by \$267,982.00 in anticipated revenues and \$100,740.00 appropriated from prior year's fund balance, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.**

A motion was made by Greg Brown to accept the proposed Highway budget for fiscal year July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025, of \$1,628,003.00 of which \$1,473,539.00 to be raised in taxes, the balance to be offset by \$138,408.00 in anticipated revenues and \$16,056.00 appropriated from prior year's fund balance, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.

Sewer:

Phone lines for Master Control Panel Currently the two sewer plants share one phone line, and the Jacksonville plant has VTel Wireless for its internet, there is no internet at the Whitingham plant. The new master control panels at each plant will require their own phone line for alarm dial out. A single phone line from Consolidated is currently \$52.76 per month.

One idea was to install VTel Wireless at the Whitingham plant and use a VOIP phone line, but the location of the plant doesn't work with their satellite. Because Jacksonville has internet, we could do a VOIP (Ooma) line for the auto-dialer at \$24.95 per month. Gig looked into DVFiber for internet at Whitingham, the lowest cost plan is \$75 per month, for \$19.99 we could add phone service. Another option is to use the current phone line only at the Whitingham plant hooked to the auto-dialer, if an emergency came up the plant operator could unplug the auto dialer and plug in a landline telephone to call out. That would take away the land line phone at Jacksonville, but we could use an Ooma (VOIP) line there and use cell phones for telephone calls. After discussion the board agreed they would like each plant to have its own dedicated phone line for the auto-dialer. If the 911 address doesn't come up, then we should get phone lines for each location. This should be the case for highway and firehouse phone lines that also use one line for two locations.

Review and approve Project Change Order(s) PCO#9 is for installation of circuit breakers, toggle switches, and associated conduit/wiring to provide power to exhaust fan, well pump and unit heater at a cost of \$10,257. Change Order currently numbered 12.1 (but will likely become PCO#10) is for improvements to the lab including mold remediation above the office/lab at Jacksonville, new fixtures in both plants' bathrooms, PVC wallboards in storage areas/bathrooms, etc. for a total cost of \$168,000. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve both change orders, seconded by Greg Brown, all in favor.**

Hazard Mitigation: review and sign contract with MSK Engineers

Attorney Fisher had some concerns with the first draft of the contract that limited liability to the amount of the contract, after some negotiations he found that MSK holds malpractice insurance with a limit of \$3M per claim.

A motion was made by Greg Brown to approve the contract with MSK Engineers for final design and overseeing construction of the culvert project at the Municipal Center for \$107,286.00, and to appoint Scott M. Reed to sign the contract, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor. Gig noted that this contract and construction project are *fully* funded by a Flood Resilient Communities Fund grant.

Highway

Review and sign annual Certificate of Highway Mileage No changes were made in our highway mileage in the past year, the board reviewed and **a motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve and sign the Certificate of Highway Mileage for 2024, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Review and sign letter of complaint to VTrans This will be our third complaint about the large dip/bump over the culvert near the warehouse at 2037 VT Route 100. Last summer they added some asphalt to the dip, but it is still a problem. This letter also notifies VTrans about the water/ice problem at the intersection of VT Route 100 and Gates Pond Road. After review, **a motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve and sign the letter to VTrans, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Transfer Station

The state had to update our Certification to include proper phrasing for businesses using Hazardous Waste Collection (was called "conditionally exempt generator" – CEG, now called "very small quantity generator" – VSQG). This updated paperwork also requires that we now report our HHW collection quarterly instead of annually. Gig requested that be

changed back to annually because we don't get an official inventory of what is collected until we get the bill to haul it away. The state said no, must be filed quarterly.

Gig noted that we received \$3,000 from the SWIP grant for HHW collection, and we are expecting \$326 from a pesticide grant. The bill to haul away HHW was \$3,049. The total cost of HHW collection including advertising (\$360) and on-site personnel (\$600) was \$4,009 making our out-of-pocket cost \$683.

Animal Control

A letter was written to respond to an animal control/barking complaint. The board reviewed and signed the letter but would also like the ACO to make sure the dog is not in duress.

Approval of Payables Warrant – January 11, 2024

The regular meeting scheduled for January 10th was cancelled due to lack of quorum. Mr. Reed reviewed and approved Payables Warrant #W2428 dated January 11, 2024.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – January 11, 2024

The regular meeting scheduled for January 10th was cancelled due to lack of quorum. Mr. Reed reviewed and approved Payroll Warrant #W2427 dated January 11, 2024.

Review and approve Minutes of December 27, 2023

A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to accept the Minutes of December 27, 2023, as written, seconded by Greg Brown, all in favor.

Other business

We received a check for \$200 from TOPS for use of the meeting room on Tuesdays.

We received \$187.50 for traffic fines.

American Sign Language a request was made to hang posters with the ASL alphabet, numbers and common signs in the Municipal Center. The board approved.

School Board Appointment the school board would like to appoint Ed Dornburgh to a vacant seat immediately; he will be required to get on the ballot to keep the seat. The Selectboard approved the appointment.

2023 Equalization Study Results Our Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is 79.10% and our Coefficient of Dispersion (COD) is 26.9% - a COD over 20% necessitates a reappraisal per statute, we are already in the reappraisal process based on last year's results.

Adjourn

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

Scott M. Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:44pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray