



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF JANUARY 21, 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 21, 2026.

Selectboard members present: James Weber, Vice Chair; Rick Gramlin, Craig Hammer, and Skip Tefft.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Administrator; Rachel Littlehale, Town Clerk; Sara Martin, resident; Heidi Taylor of DV Rescue (with Megan Taylor); Dennis Pike, President of DV Rescue; Howard Dix; Assessors Clerk; Stanley Janovsky, Road Commissioner/Fire Chief.

Attending remotely: State Senators Harrison and Hashim; Ana Guzman-Castillo host of senior meals.

Call to Order. Pledge of Allegiance

James Weber called the meeting to order at 6:30pm 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

None

Conversation with our State Senators Harrison & Hashim

Nadir Hashim and Wendy Harrison, State Senators. Mr. Weber provided an update of the projects going on in town, and our concern for the cost of the sewer project.

Sen. Hashim is on the education committee, saying it is on an unsustainable path that they are working to address in this upcoming session. Ms. Harrison serves on the transportation committee.

Mr. Janovsky noted that southern Vermont towns pay for dispatch but up north they get free dispatch. He has been talking to Sherrif Anderson and others about the topic, including sharing towers, etc. The old system is not working well for toning out and dispatching mutual aid. If the state doesn't help pay for this upgrade, 33 VT towns will have to pay \$965,000 to replace towers, increasing the dispatch costs even more. Mr. Janovsky asked what is the timeline to ask for funding to cover phase 2 on VT side? Sen. Nader noted that if it falls under budgets, it should be in the next 2-3 months.

Sara Martin spoke: if we are not getting our education funds allocated down here, what if for rural towns the education money gets reallocated to infrastructure. She would like the reps to keep that in mind. Sen. Nader to send info about infrastructure and rural education components.

Deerfield Valley Rescue re: annual appropriation request

Heidi Taylor of DV Rescue is here to explain the request for a \$10,000 increase in their appropriation this year. DVR has 21 people on the roster, 15 active volunteers, many over 60 years of age and can't do nights. They have one paid person every single night, the other slot can't be filled with a volunteer anymore. They are looking into a second paid person. One of their ambulances was taken out of service in the fall, they expected its life to last 1-2 years longer, the replacement cost was \$195,000, they have been working on fundraising. They now have a mortgage and there are many strains on their budget. In another 2-3 years they will have to replace another ambulance.

Mr. Hammer questioned the amount that Dover pays (\$40k and Mt. Snow pays \$20K); most of the calls are to Wilmington. Wilmington is \$40k as well. DVR sends out about 14,000 subscriptions to all the towns that they serve and get back about 9-10%.

15% of their calls are to Whitingham. If Dennis Pike (Whitingham's head of Emergency Medical Response) needs something, DVR has it and provides it to the town with no questions asked. Mr. Pike is the new president of the DVR board. Mr. Janovsky noted that as a town we are required to provide ambulance service, if we didn't have DVR we would have to hire Rescue Inc and response time would be much longer.

Senior Meals host re: appropriation request

Ana Guzman-Castillo recently took over Senior Meals; she is seeking to get at least \$1,500 from the town in funding to continue the program (as an appropriation). They feed 30-40 seniors; the schedule has been fluctuating because there is not enough money. The seniors love the meal and the gathering. Mr. Weber thanked Ms. Guzman for taking over. She is looking into establishing a non-profit organization, the board thinks that is great.

The prior host was paying \$300 per month for us of the municipal center. Ms. Guzman-Castillo requested that the rent be lowered. She has reached out to Halifax, Readsboro and Marlboro to see if she could get funding from them as well. She does not have insurance and Senior Solutions does not cover her. This topic to be continued at next Selectboard meeting.

Fire Department: review quotes for floor

The Jacksonville fire house has carpeting that is at least 50 years old that should be ripped out and replaced with flooring. The volunteers have a work session planned for next Monday (depending on the weather) to paint walls, rip out the carpeting, clear out junk. The fire department recommends the board approve the thicker laminate flooring, which is more expensive. The Fire Department did reach out to two other floor installers, but they did not respond. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve new flooring for the Jacksonville Fire House using 14mm laminate at a cost of \$13,335 seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.**

26/27 Budget: final review and approve

Review and approve town budget for fiscal year 26/27 After a final review, **a motion was made by James Weber to accept the proposed budget for fiscal year July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027, of \$822,562.00 of which \$538,493.00 to be raised in taxes, the balance to be offset by \$268,272.00 in anticipated revenues and \$15,797.00 appropriated from prior year's fund balance, seconded by Rick Gramlin, all in favor** (Mr. Hammer reluctantly).

Review and approve highway budget for 26/27 After a final review, **a motion was made by Rick Gramlin to accept the proposed Highway budget for fiscal year July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027, of \$1,715,081 of which \$1,448,478 to be raised in taxes, the balance to be offset by \$146,235 in anticipated revenues and \$120,368 appropriated from prior year's fund balance, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

Final review and sign Warning for Town Meeting

Discussion ensued around the amount of money for the Fire Department Equipment Fund, the FD wanted \$100,000 but thinks \$80,000 would be OK. They will need to replace Rescue 1 in several years and need to start increasing the funds for it now.

Discussion also ensued around increasing the Municipal Facilities Fund to \$30,000 this year because the purpose of the fund is to have money available for repairs and everything is so expense now.

Seth Boyd is the new moderator this year; he requested a change of order of the articles on the Warning in hopes of getting more voter interaction earlier in the meeting. **A motion was made by James Weber to approve and sign the Warning for Town Meeting 2026 as written, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.**

Economic Development Group: appoint members

Sen. Harrison asked a few questions and noted that BDCC would be happy to help us. Mr. Weber and Ms. Martin had a meeting about various topics and came up with an idea of reinstituting the EDG to help businesses connect with students at the school. Ms. Martin has energy and is willing to drive the EDG. **A motion was made by Rick Gramlin to appoint James Weber and Sara Martin to the Economic Development Group, seconded by Craig Hammer, three in favor, Mr. Weber abstained.**

Ms. Martin will not charge for her time on this group in 2026 but will renegotiate in 2027.

EDG can learn about regulating Air BnBs.

Highway:

Nothing

Highway Garage: consider hiring a Construction Manager

The cost estimate for the proposed garage came in MUCH higher than anyone anticipated. At a special meeting with the engineers last week the idea of hiring a Construction Manager for the project was suggested. The manager would put each aspect of the project (plumbing, HVAC, electrical, etc.) out to bid rather than bidding the project out through one contractor. The individual bids should save money. The engineers suggested the cost for the manager

during the design phase would be about \$15,000 and then 2-3% of construction costs during the building phase.

There will be no bond vote at town meeting in March. It will require a special town meeting, probably in the summer.

Sewer

The date of substantial completion for the big sewer project is early March. They have installed generators at each plant, installed the influent metering manhole at Whitingham, installed new exterior lighting, etc.

The catastrophic failure of the Jacksonville RBC has been fixed; we still don't know the official cause of the failure. We received state approval today to begin discharging again, the operators will have to do some repiping and will begin discharging on Friday.

Approval of Payables Warrant – January 22, 2026

A motion was made by Rick Gramlin to approve Payables Warrant #W2630 dated January 22, 2026, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – January 22, 2026

A motion was made by James Weber to approve Payroll Warrant #W2629 dated January 22, 2026, seconded by Rick Gramlin, all in favor.

Approval of Minutes of January 7, and January 15, 2026

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to accept the Minutes January 7, and the special meeting on January 15, 2026, as written, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.

Other business:

Gig spoke with Edee Edwards of Halifax Selectboard recently at an Economic Development conference, asking what they do with trash and recycling, based on a question from James Weber. Halifax currently has recycling collection bins; too much trash is thrown in and around them that they are considering removing them. Ms. Edwards asked if Whitingham would consider opening our Transfer Station to Halifax residents. No costs were mentioned, Ms. Edwards was interested in determining if it was even a possibility before coming up with a plan that could benefit both towns. Gig noted that the fee Halifax would pay us has to be significant to warrant the change of all the documentation and tracking that would be required with the state. The town of Halifax would have to pay a lot of money, but in general we are not interested.

Mr. Janovsky asked if we should change zoning to 2 acre lots from 3 acres. Gig noted that we are working on the Town Plan update right now and that could be a recommendation in the Plan, the zoning regulations is not scheduled to be updated at this time.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Craig Hammer, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.

James Weber adjourned the meeting at 8:23pm.

Respectfully submitted, ~Gig Zboray