



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 7, 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 regular meeting at 6:30pm in the Selectboard Office of the Whitingham Municipal Center on Wednesday, February 7, 2024.

Selectboard members present: Scott M. Reed, Chair; James Weber, Vice Chair; and Craig Hammer.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Administrator; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner/Fire Chief. Travis Wheeler, and Skip Tefft, residents. Kristine Sweeter, librarian.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Scott M. Reed called the meeting to order at 6:31pm. Changes to the agenda were noted on the meeting copy.

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)

Kristine Sweeter addressed the board to discuss grant options for the library. One is a capital grant looking to fund projects for libraries starting at \$300,000. The Library's plans probably won't cost that much, but it was recommended that they try that one first. The other grant is for small rural libraries but won't be open until the fall. The library needs a letter of support from the Selectboard for the project. The proposed project is to build an addition onto the library that will occupy the grass area outside the library's emergency exit and the listers office. The space to be used primarily for a children's room but will be sound proofed in order to allow patrons to use the area for tele-health, job interviews, etc. The board supports the project. Gig will prepare an official letter of support for the grant application.

Personnel Policy: discuss nepotism

Continuing the discussion from last meeting on removing the section on Nepotism from the Personnel Policy. The current policy clearly states that "the Selectboard reserves the right to amend any of the provisions of this Personnel Policy for any reason, at any time, with or without notice." Based on this sentence, the board determined that no action is needed at this time.

Cemetery Commission: Review and sign Notice of Vacancy

Adam Ranslow's term on the Cemetery Commission expires March of 2025, he submitted a letter of resignation. The board reviewed the required Notice of Vacancy and a thank you letter for his service. Because he resigned this close to town meeting, the position can't be on the ballot, the board will have to appoint, Gig suggested making the appointment in March at the annual reorganizational meeting. **A motion was made by James Weber to appoint Scott M. Reed to sign the Notice of Vacancy and thank you letter, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.**

Highway

Nothing

Transfer Station: operator wages/benefits

Almira Aekus figured out Larry Davis's pay. Due to personal reasons, he thought he couldn't accept the last two cost of living pay increases but it was determined he can. **James Weber made a motion to approve a 4% cost of living increase that was given to all employees for the fiscal year 23/24 retroactive to July 1, 2023, as outlined by Almira Aekus, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.** Ms. Aekus suggested that the board allow Mr. Davis to earn vacation and sick time, he works 17.5 hours per week, but is often there early/late without pay. The Personnel Policy allows a part-time employee working 18-29 hours per week to earn paid time off benefits on a prorated basis. The board tabled that decision until next meeting.

Mr. Janovsky noted that JC Electric repaired the compactor switch, but Casella had been working on it. The board would like a quote to move the main service switch, which is currently behind the building, and possibly install an emergency shut off switch.

Sewer:

continue discussion on bid alternates

- Influent metering manhole. We will definitely need, per the Whitingham draft discharge permit – the engineer guessed a cost of \$64,000 for this.
- There are 140 cementous manhole linings per the original bid summary (\$58,800/140=\$420 each)
- There are 20 manhole chimneys to rebuild (\$96,000/20=\$4,800 each)
- 4 manhole benches to rebuild (\$20,000/4=\$5,000 each)
- 4 manhole frames and covers to rebuild (\$37,600/\$9,400)
- 10 exterior chemical MH sealing (\$10,000/10=\$1,000) The original bid price on this was \$15,000 so this new price is less.
- Tank hatches Wham \$44,200 and Jville \$41,500.
- Exterior lighting - \$14,300 for each plant
- We need the auto samplers - 2 at approximately \$10,000 each.
- Discuss generators - do we want permanent on-site generators at \$102,613 or purchase one portable, or just rent if we ever have a very long outage. The board wants a permanent on-site generator at each plant.
- Process tank ventilation vents the sludge tank - good if someone pours gas (for example) into the sewer system the flammable fumes will get vented out (Wham \$89,000/Jville \$107,000).

The board would like to move forward with all items above at this time except the process tank ventilation. They asked Gig to find out if this might become a permit requirement in the future.

-Roof extensions – Kingsbury could not find a sub that could do the work providing certified payroll and AIS certificates. If we want this, we have to put it out for bid outside of the project (no grant money). This is an important project for building maintenance, right now the rain and snow splash off the tank covers and even though the contractors installed weather shield, it will still be a problem leading to rot.

Whitingham draft discharge permit the last we heard on this topic was on December 20th that Secretary of ANR, Julie Moore, was going to ask for a meeting to “best address both the understandable capacity concerns” and “the environmental protections reflected in the draft permit”. Gig asked if the board wants her to reach out to find the status or just be patient? Yes, we need to know.

Project status Gig signed off on the “Certificate of Substantial Completion” of the Jacksonville portion of the project (of work currently contracted as of 1.24.24).

Town Meeting: work on “cheat sheet”

Town Meeting will be in the gymnasium this year. The board reviewed the Warning and discussed who would read certain articles. It is up to the agencies asking for funding to find a resident to read the funding request on their behalf.

Two errors were found in published budget of Town Report:

-on page 19 under “FY 2023 Actual” column: Transfer Station figure of \$124,949.33 was omitted making a new total for that column \$889,624.92.

-on page 25, Highway Revenues in the “FY 2023 Actual” column: Anticipated revenues correct figure is \$133,091.60 making the total for that column \$1,328,565.60.

Town Website

We received a proposal to migrate the current website from Drupal 7 to Drupal 10 including security updates, enhanced features and user experience as well as administrative efficiency. Mr. Weber will have a discussion with Stephen Groundwater about the proposal next week. In the meantime, Gig will ask how much of the proposed cost of \$12,000 relates to Old Home Week needs.

Hazard Mitigation: the kickoff meeting for the culvert project was on January 30th. We may have 25% design in 6 weeks. Long ago there was talk of applying for an arts grant to build and install a decorative railing around the culvert. Do we want to pursue that now? The board replied, “no”, we could dress it up later, wouldn’t want a railing to delay the project. We got the OK from Vermont Emergency Management to move forward with the grant application for a Scoping Study of the Eames Park retaining wall, it will get submitted to FEMA soon. Gig heard, but didn’t get officially notified yet, that funding was awarded (to Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District) to do a scoping study of the berm/removal on Sullivan’s property. Gig inquired and was again told that we will be receiving approval of the FEMA buyout on Route 112, it is just taking FEMA a long time.

Approval of Payables Warrant – February 8, 2024

A motion was made by James Weber to approve Payables Warrant #W2432 dated February 8, 2024 as written, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – February 8, 2024

A motion was made by James Weber to approve Payroll Warrant #W2431 dated February 8, 2024, as written, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of January 24, 2024

A motion was made by James Weber to accept the Minutes of January 24, 2024, as written, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Other business

None

Adjourn

A motion was made by James Weber to adjourn, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Scott M. Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray