



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 8, 2023

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 8, 2023.

Selectboard members present: Scott M. Reed, Chair; James Weber, Vice Chair; Greg Brown, and Robin Kingsley.

Others attending: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator. Andrea Arnstein, Sherry Adams, and Mary Wright, residents.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Scott M. Reed called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Changes to the agenda were noted on the meeting copy.

Hearing of Visitors

Sherry Adams would like town meeting in the gym instead of the auditorium, she spoke to the Secretary of State's office and they told her we could have the meeting in a different room at the same address. The board is fine with it, Gig will confirm with state and call the school tomorrow.

Discuss potential FEMA buyout of 568 VT Route 112:

We have 2 cases in court systems against the property at 568 VT Route 112. The owners say they have no funds to bring the property into proper compliance. Attorney Fisher mentioned a potential FEMA buyout to them. Gig spoke with VT Emergency Management, this property is within the Special Flood Hazard Area and qualifies for the buyout. The next funding round has a project review of March 10th so we would have to move fast. The state has a general fund allocation that would cover the full local match requirement.

Ms. Arnstein is not willing to vacate the property before a judge rules that they must vacate. The board is not willing to start the process for the buyout until the property is vacated.

Discuss 1% options tax:

Mr. Reed is interested in the 1% options tax. At this point Gig is not certain the town qualifies to implement such a tax. Before lots of time is spent on research, she wanted the board to discuss if they are interested in the idea. We could assess the tax on any or a combination of sales, meals and alcohol and/or rooms. The process will require a vote at a duly warned annual or special town meeting.

The board would like to know how much would it raise and who would pay the most? How much are we looking to gain? Ms. Wright says we can find out online how much tax the state collects in our town collects and what our portion would be.

Highway:

Mr. Janovsky asked the board to review and sign the annual Town Road and Bridge Standards and the Certification of Compliance for Town Road and Bridge Standards. These documents are required to be filed annually with VTrans. After review, **a motion was made by James Weber to adopt the Town Road and Bridge Standards and to sign both documents, seconded by Robin Kingsley, all in favor.**

Transfer Station nothing

Sewer:

Mr. DiCantio got a price quote of \$5,280 for a 3” pump for Jacksonville. He recommends purchasing the pump now but not installing it until absolutely needed. Installation is a 2-3 hour job. This pump can be used with the new equipment when that gets installed. The board is OK with waiting to install it until needed.

Mr. Brown wants to know why the new design has the pumps down in the pit.

Town Meeting: work on cheat sheet

Gig provided a draft cheat sheet, the board discussed who would announce which Articles on the Warning.

The board asked Gig to find out if we can make a statement at town meeting: All commentary will be limited to ___ minutes per person, per question.

Approval of Payables Warrant – February 9, 2023

A motion was made by James Weber to approve Payables Warrant #2332, dated February 9, 2023, seconded by Greg Brown, three in favor, Mr. Kingsley abstained.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – February 9, 2023

A motion was made by Robin Kingsley to approve Payroll Warrant #2331, dated February 9, 2023, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of January 25, 2023

A motion was made by Robin Kingsley to accept the Minutes of January 25, 2023, as written, seconded by Scott M. Reed, three in favor, Mr. Brown abstained.

Other business

Review and sign thank you letter A donation of \$250 was made by Todd and Aysha Wahlstrom towards the pavilion improvements. The board reviewed and signed the thank you letter.

State’s ARPA money Gig notified the board that she attended a meeting on Monday to learn of funding opportunities. At the meeting she made contacts to help us with a few projects.

Vermont Emergency Management says they have money for our flood hazard mitigation project at the Municipal Center, it sounds like engineering only; but that is another step closer to getting it complete. Gig has a meeting with them on February 13th. Gig also learned that if the Sander's Congressionally Directed Spending money requires a local match, we can apply for a state grant to cover that amount. The state grant will require a local 20% match but that will bring the local match on \$1M down to \$40,000 rather than \$200,000.

Regional Policing Gig will be attending a meeting about regional policing tomorrow morning to learn more about it. There is chatter about the state switching to both regional policing and regional fire/rescue.

Adjourn

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

Scott M. Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray