



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF APRIL 7, 2021

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 dining hall of the Whitingham Municipal Center on Wednesday, April 7, 2021.

Selectboard members present: Scott Reed, Chair; Craig Hammer, Vice Chair; Phil Edelstein and Chris Walling.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer; Dennis Pike, Sr., candidate for Fire Warden; Peter Bernard, and Richard Lemaire; residents; Dan Hollister, Animal Control Officer.

Others attending remotely: Darlene Betit, and Craig Wasilefsky, residents.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Scott Reed called the meeting to order at 6:30pm reading the remote meeting script.

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)

Darlene Betit requested use of the Municipal Center parking lot on behalf of the Lions Club who would like to hold a fundraiser tag sale with a 50/50 raffle and bake sale on May 22 with a rain date of May 23, 2021. The Selectboard approved their request.

Ruth O'Hearn would like to hold a drive-through baby shower on the Municipal Center parking lot on May 1st (Green Up day). Because COVID restrictions are being lifted the board thought they might want it inside. The board approved the use of the parking lot on May 1st.

Highway

Hearing of concerns regarding proposed paving of Parsons Road

A letter to notify residents along Parsons Road between Gates Pond Road and Stonehouse Road was mailed on March 26th to inform them of the proposed paving project and inviting them to either attend this meeting or send an email or make a phone call to state their concerns regarding the project. Gig heard from Armond Roy (owns old schoolhouse) who is in favor of paving. Craig Wasilefsky wrote in the zoom chat that he is "in favor of paving # 372. Request replacement of driveway ahead of sign". Gig received 3 notes against the paving (one was from a resident of Gates Pond NOT Parsons). It was Mr. Janovsky's idea to hear from the residents. What he heard was people saying if the road was posted during mud season the road would be in better condition. However, he can't stop oil trucks or farm trucks, etc.

The most recent road to get paved was Hebard Hill Road in 1998. Parsons Road is especially muddy and gets a late thaw, it is consistently a mud problem requiring a lot a material. The project will require drainage on the upper end, tree cutting and stone lining the ditches. Discussion revolved around speed; right now it's a 50mph zone, the Selectboard could post it to a different speed limit.

Chris Walling made a motion to start the process to set a speed limit of 35 miles per hour on Parson Road in conjunction with the paving project, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Pick-up truck status

A new pick-up truck was ordered for the Municipal Employee. It will be a Chevy single cab, with 8-foot bed, and should hopefully arrive before snow flies. Mr. Janovsky shopped around and found that because of the pandemic there is not much inventory to choose from, especially for a single cab, no frills model that we need.

Fire Warden: accept resignation of Allen Twitchell, appoint new

Allan Twitchell notified the state of his wish to resign the position of Forest Fire Warden for the Town of Whitingham. **A motion was made by Chris Walling to accept Allan Twitchell's resignation, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.** A thank you letter was reviewed and signed by the board members.

The vacancy was posted; Dennis Pike, Sr. expressed his interest in filling it. A state Forester interviewed Mr. Pike today and agreed with the recommendation of Mr. Pike to fill the position. **A motion was made by Chris Walling to recommend Dennis Pike, Sr. as Forest Fire Warden for the Town of Whitingham, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.** Mr. Pike's term expires June 30, 2023.

Animal Control issue

The Animal Control Officer notified the board of an ongoing issue with a barking dog owned by Christian Yobst on Route 8A. There have been multiple complaints about barking and running at large. The Selectboard directed Mr. Hollister to issue tickets for barking and running at large as Mr. Yobst deserves for his dog.

Dan Hollister has been in contact with the Judicial Bureau, he received an email stating that outstanding municipal complaints (tickets) are now being referred to a collection agency and/or the Vermont Department of Taxes. Mr. Hollister no longer needs to file a report of non-payment. That is great news because the Judicial Bureau was not providing any information on who paid or didn't pay tickets. This gives the town the "teeth" it needs in ticketing.

Review and approve annual Liquor Licenses

Ms. Aekus presented 5 liquor licenses for review and approval; one for Jacksonville General Store, one for First Stop and 3 for Remedy Bar/ Spoonwood Cabin Creamery/outdoor dining.

A motion was made by Chris Walling to approve the 5 liquor licenses as presented, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.

Emergency Management:

review and sign Delegation of Authority letter At the March 24th meeting Wayne W. Wood resigned as Emergency Management Director. Gig Zboray was appointed in his stead. A “delegation of authority” letter is needed to complete the Local Emergency Management Plan. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to sign the Delegation of Authority letter, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.** Gig will add the letter to the final LEMP before it is sent to the state.

Review and approve annual update to LEMP **A motion was made by Chris Walling to adopt the annual update of the Local Emergency Management Plan as written with the inclusion of the new Delegation of Authority letter and to appoint Scott Reed to sign on behalf of the Selectboard, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.**

Junk: discuss next steps

People on the list will be given until June 15th to clean up their properties or tickets will be issued. Dan Hollister will be appointed to issue those tickets when the time comes. Gig will take photos and write notification letters.

Selectboard Pay – review and sign new policy

At the meeting on March 24th the board agreed to a new pay policy. The final document was presented for signatures. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to adopt and sign the new Selectboard Members Compensation Policy, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.**

Transfer Station: review SWIP Work Agreement and appoint Chair to sign

This work agreement is to meet the requirements of the SWIP grant and lays out our responsibilities. The Chair of the Selectboard must sign the document electronically. When payment requests are filed Gig usually completes the documents and then the state sends an email to the Chair to electronically sign those as well. The board approved the agreement.

Hazard Mitigation: review and sign amendment to extend agreement with WRC to September 30, 2021

The Windham Regional Commission has been hired to help us with our flood hazard mitigation projects; much of the expense is covered by a Municipal Planning Grant (MPG). Due to the pandemic the state has allowed an extension of time to complete the requirements of the MPG; therefore, we need to update the contract with WRC to agree with the new deadline. **A motion was made by Chris Walling to approve the contract extension with Windham Regional Commission and to appoint Scott Reed to sign the document, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.**

Corona/COVID-19 nothing tonight

Approval of Payables Warrant – April 8 2021

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to amend the Payables Warrant to show the payment to Southworth-Milton was for the purchase of a Caterpillar backhoe (not John Deere) and to approve Payables Warrant #W2142 dated April 8, 2021 as amended, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – April 8, 2021

A motion was made by Phil Edelstein to approve Payroll Warrant #W2141 dated April 8, 2021, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of March 24, 2021

The Minutes of March 24th indicated that Jackie Bemis represented the Deerfield Valley Stump Jumpers snowmobile club, the correct name is the Jacksonville E-Z Riders snowmobile club. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to accept the Minutes of March 24, 2021 noting the correction of the name of the snowmobile club, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.**

Broadband: general discussion of CUD status

Phil Edelstein made a motion to remove Mike Mandracchia as an alternate representative on the Deerfield Valley CUD and appoint Keith Thompson in his stead, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

A motion was made by Phil Edelstein to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the CUD's contract negotiations would clearly place the town and the Deerfield Valley CUD at a substantial disadvantage if its strategy was made public, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.

A motion was made by Phil Edelstein to enter into executive session to discuss Deerfield Valley Communications Union District contract negotiations as they pertain to the Town of Whitingham under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(A) of the Vermont Statutes to include Gig Zboray and Almira Aekus, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor.

With no decisions made, executive session was exited at 8:12pm.

It was noted that the CUD is expecting to choose a fiber vendor in the next month or so. There is a lot of grant money available for this project. Whitingham is in a good position to be early in the project.

Other business / Office Administrator – as needed

The board reviewed and signed a thank you letter to Wayne W. Wood for his service as a Selectboard member and as Emergency Management Director.

Gig noted that we are scheduled to meet at Murdock Lane on April 21st at 5:30pm to continue the site inspection for the proposed takeover.

Craig Hammer asked what is going on with the Economic Development Group. Mr. Edelstein responded that the meetings have not been well attended recently. He feels the most important project in the works is finding a company to do social media advertising of Whitingham. Seth Boyd is trying to decide if he has time to work on the project. That will likely determine the fate of the EDG in the future.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Craig Hammer, seconded by Phil Edelstein, all in favor.

Scott Reed adjourned the meeting at 8:26 pm. Respectfully submitted, ~Gig Zboray