



**Town of Whitingham  
Office of the Selectboard**

**MINUTES OF APRIL 30, 2025**

*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 30, 2025.

Selectboard members present: James Weber, Vice Chair; Rick Gramlin; Lyman (Skip) Tefft, Jr.; and Travis Wheeler.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Administrator; Marylee Putnam, Treasurer; Justin Corey, Valley Youth Sports; Brad Lackey, Planning Commissioner Chair; Marshall Dix, ZBA Chair; Donny Boyd; Elaine Foster; Steve Foster; Richard Lemaire; Allan Twitchell; Linda Cardone; Ed Metcalfe; Doug LaPlante; Seth Boyd; Darlene Betit; Katheryn Andersen; Karen Landers; Brent Betit; Laura Allen; Martha Phelps and two illegible sign-ins.

**Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda**

James Weber called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. We will not start the discussion about container homes until the Town Attorney arrives around 7pm, other changes to the agenda were noted on the meeting copy.

**Hearing of Visitors for concerns not on the agenda** none

**Treasurer: internal control discussion**

Marylee Putnam, Treasurer, emailed budget status and fund balance reports. She reached out to Rick Gramlin to ask if he would be the person who would look at online bank statements to compare the online bank statements versus what she submits with the bank reconciliations. The board approved the request to allow Rick Gramlin to have online access to view the bank statements.

**Highway:**

Mr. Janovsky had nothing for the agenda; he went to a Mutual Aid meeting in Keene.

**Parks: Request from Valley Youth Sports to install a shed at Town Hill**

Justin Corey would like to have equipment stored to keep the field in good condition, a baseball father offered an approximately 8x10 or 12 shed to be installed at Town Hill. Mr. Corey would like to store the equipment there all year.

Mr. Allan Twitchell suggested the cameras at Town Hill be checked. Donny Boyd volunteered to help work on the field at Town Hill.

After discussion it was decided the building will be a Valley Youth Sports building maintained by them (not the Town). Mr. Corey should check with Mr. Janovsky and Mr. Seth Boyd about the location to install it.

### **Hazard Mitigation: Addendums to RFP for Culvert Project**

Since the last meeting Addendum #1 was issued on the RFP. It does not allow extension to complete the project next year. If we allowed the extension, the low bidder could have come in at \$1 less than the next bidder who may have been able to do the project this year, but we would have to accept the low bid. If possible, we want this project completed this year. Addendum #2 was also issued; it just states that a non-AMPPL producer could make the culvert. Addendum #3 changes the length of the sidewalk and requires some sort of signage, pushing the bid opening to Tuesday, May 6 at 10am.

### **Sewer: discuss final change order and how to move forward**

The EPA will allow us to hire the roofing company on our own because Kingsbury never gave us a bid number for that aspect of the project. Mr. Reed has more information but was unavailable for the meeting tonight.

The proposed final change order pricing was issued by Kingsbury. There was some talk in town about finding local contractors that could do the work at a lower cost. Gig had a meeting with Don Haddox, we could do some of the work as a “small purchase”. However, the collection system work is directly tied to the main project and the state would like that completed by the contractor. It was a long meeting; at the end it was concluded that the town would be better off signing the full change order rather than risk Kingsbury pulling out all together because of a smaller project than they anticipated.

The state’s funding formula is complicated, Gig’s best determination is that with ALL the work done, including adding generators and the influent metering manhole for the Whitingham plant, which were not in the original scope of the project, the approximately project cost will be about \$2.6M (with roof work and engineering), which is significantly less than the \$3.9M estimated cost when we started the project.

The change order is to state that the work is to be completed by December 31, 2025.

**A motion was made by Travis Wheeler for Gig to sign the final change order, seconded Skip Tefft, all in favored.**

### **Zoning:**

Discuss need for a zoning enforcement officer When Gig was appointed Zoning Administrator over 12 years ago, it was understood that she has no means to measure nor knows where property lines are; she would not be seeking out zoning violations but if a complaint was received it would be investigated and addressed as necessary. That has worked well all these years. Now there are many zoning complaints about three specific properties in town. The complaints have been addressed but not in a way that pleases the public. Gig spoke to town attorney, we can’t hire a “zoning enforcement officer”, we can hire an assistant Zoning Administrator whose main focus is zoning enforcement. If we go this route, every property in town would have to be looked at and all violations gone after.

There was a lot of discussion on the topic. The Selectboard will take the recommendation under consideration; prepare of a job description for an assistant zoning administrator and look at the budget for how this position may be paid.

**A motion was made by Rick Gramlin to close discussion on this topic, seconded by Travis Wheeler, all in favor.**

Discuss container homes

Donny Boyd submitted a letter that was signed by many residents and was read out loud. A copy of the text of the letter is inserted here, not including the signature pages.

**We, the undersigned, strongly encourage the Town of Whitingham Selectboard to enact whatever means necessary to control current and further development that is uncharacteristic of the neighborhood and the surrounding community located at 6492 VT RTE 100 and adjacent Lot 1 Tyanoga Road in the Village of Whitingham – specifically lands owned by Two Lakes, LLC and Christopher Roberts.**

The current and intended further development is uncharacteristic of a rural Vermont village, the immediate neighborhood, the surrounding community, and drastically interrupts the protection of the scenic landscape of Sadawga Lake, Whitingham Village Center designation, and the historical significance of the Sawyer Mansion and Mill properties.

The current and intended further development is in violation of Whitingham goals and regulations:

*Town Plan Goals:*

**#4 To maintain the town's characteristic pattern of settlement typified by villages within a rural setting.**

**#9 To protect lake shores, stream banks, and other significant natural areas and locations of special educational, scientific, historical architectural, archaeological, or scenic significance.**

*Whitingham Zoning Regulations:*

**Section 1.2 Intent The Whitingham Zoning Regulation is designed to direct the future growth of the Town of Whitingham so that such growth will 1) conform to the wishes of the citizens, 2) avoid the adverse and sometimes irreversible effects often associated with purely random development, and 3) be in harmony with the planning measures of the state, the Windham Region, and adjoining towns. 24 VSA § 4401 authorizes a town to adopt bylaws for the purpose of implementing the town plan and such bylaws shall be in accord with the policies set forth therein.**

*Whitingham Historical Significance:*

**The Sawyer Mansion is located at 6492 State Route 100, Whitingham, VT 05361. It is a historic property built in the 1700s and rebuilt in 1896 and holds an important component of Whitingham's history.**

The majority of the visitors at tonight's meeting do not like the container home on Tyanoga Drive (which is in the "Rural Residential" zoning district); the zoning permit was approved several years ago. There are potential zoning violations including height (although Attorney Fisher noted that our definition of height extends to the roof, not what might be on the roof), and the several decks added that were not on the permit. Gig had requested that the Assessor's Clerk measure the height, the decks, and the setbacks; he has been busy with the town wide reappraisal.

Regarding the construction of a new container home on the Sawyer Mansion property, which is located in the “Village” zoning district: the property owner applied for a zoning permit for an accessory dwelling unit (ADU), it was returned by the Zoning Administrator because proof of residency is required (property must be owner occupied) and it is well known by the town that the property had an issue with the septic system, a state water/wastewater permit is required.

Despite the return of the zoning application, the property owner continues to work on ADU without a permit.

Attorney Fisher noted that on page 26 of Town of Whitingham Zoning Regulations under “Additional Village District standards” building design – buildings shall be designed to be compatible with New England style architecture (which is not defined in the Regulations). “Building materials – buildings shall be sided with wood, brick, stone or sided with aluminum, cement, or vinyl clapboard style siding.” An unsided container home would not fall into traditional New England style architecture, nor are there known plans to put siding on the ADU to meet the “building materials” criteria.

The Selectboard would like a cease-and-desist issue ordered. Gig will work with Attorney Fisher to issue a Notice of Alleged Violation and a cease-and-desist order.

**Health Officer: potential health hazard at 1570 Wilmington Cross Road**

The Town Health Officer wrote a letter to the property owner of 1570 Wilmington Cross Road requesting voluntary compliance to clean up the property, to be looked at again on May 8<sup>th</sup> to check that progress is being made. Gig contacted SEVCA looking for assistance for this property owner. If no progress has been made the Board of Health will have to discuss next steps.

**Assessors: review and sign Stipulation Agreement with state Division of Property Valuation and Review for 2024 Equalization Study Results**

On January 22, 2025, the Selectboard wrote a request to the state for a redetermination of its Education Property Value. The state agreed to five out of 15 comments made. Nate Stoddard, our NEMRC assessor, reviewed the documents sent by the state dated April 4<sup>th</sup> and recommends that the Selectboard sign the Stipulation Agreement to set the Equalized Education Property Value at \$391,109,931; the Common Level of Appraisal at 71.06% and the Coefficient of Dispersion at 23.01%. **A motion was made by Travis Wheeler to approve the Stipulation Agreement dated April 4, 2025, and to appoint James Weber to sign it, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.**

**Approval of Payables Warrant – May 1, 2025**

**A motion was made by Travis Wheeler to approve Payables Warrant #W2544 dated May 1, 2025, seconded by Rick Gramlin, all in favor.**

**Approval of Payroll Warrant – May 1, 2025**

**A motion was made by James Weber to approve Payroll Warrant #W2543, dated May 1, 2025, seconded by Rick Gramlin, all in favor.**

**Review and approve Minutes of April 16, 2025**

**A motion was made by James Weber to accept the Minutes of April 16, 2025, noting the correct spelling of Joanne Toomey's name under sewer is TOOMEY (not Twomey), seconded by Rick Gramlin, all in favor.**

**Other business:**

**Town Clerk** Andy, the Dover Town Clerk, suggested that Rachel go to him for training once a week on Thursdays.

**Chairs for dining hall** over 10 years ago we purchased chairs for the dining hall that were to replace the very old orange chairs. Those new chairs turned out to be too large and heavy for everyday use. Gig suggested we order some new chairs now. There is currently \$4,944 available in the Municipal Center repairs and improvements budget and over \$5,000 in repairs to equipment that we could use. **A motion was made by James Weber to approve the purchase of 50 chairs and the appropriate number of dollys, to be purchased out of the repairs to equipment budget line, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.**

**Adjourn**

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

James Weber adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray