



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF MAY 3, 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, May 3, 2023.

Selectboard members present: Scott M. Reed, Chair; Greg Brown, Craig Hammer, and Robin Kingsley.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer; Dave DiCantio, Chief Operator.

Attending Remotely: Michael Smith, Weston & Sampson Engineers; Power Donnelly, Kingsbury Construction.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Scott M. Reed called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Ms. Aekus asked to discuss some topics during hearing of visitors.

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)

Opioid Settlement: The town attorney recommended that the board approve of signing on to the Opioid class action suit. In the past they didn't want to participate. The town might get a small settlement. The board approved.

Bank failures: Due to the recent spat of bank failures, Ms. Aekus is concerned about all the town money being held at one bank, she recommends that some funds be transferred to another bank, she suggested \$700,000 to M&T. Although all the town funds are in FDIC insured accounts this transfer would allow the town to continue to function if one bank went under. The board approved.

Tax Sale: Six properties will be sold during the tax sale on June 6th. The official notice has been posted.

School tax: The 2023 Final Cash Flow Report was received from the state of Vermont showing the total education tax dollars sent to the school district by Whitingham were \$3,770,771.31 for fiscal year 2023. Ms. Aekus noted that the school actually owes us \$20-30,000 due to an overpayment.

Sewer:

Discuss temporary by-pass Kingsbury is requesting permission from the town to set up the temporary treatment system at the Jacksonville plant soon to start flowing wastewater through in order to begin to build the necessary biomass. They are asking for this to happen in advance of the state approved "Treatment Process Maintenance Plan". ANR gave verbal approval of this plan today, we should get it in writing soon.

The board approved of the plan, Gig must write a letter to the state requesting this option. The board approved and appointed her to sign the letter. It should be sent as soon as possible.

Do we need someone on site throughout construction? Not a town person, a Weston & Sampson engineer must be on site when construction is happening, but one was not there when the RBCs were delivered last Wednesday. Mr. Smith claimed that they were saving the town money by not showing up, but we have a contract with them.

Discuss coverage moving forward after the resignation of assistant Laurie Fox Brown has resigned from the 30 hour per week position, but she is willing and able to cover weekends and early mornings or evenings during the week if Dave is out. Dave suggested that if she is offering to take the part-time position that the town should keep her. His personal situation has changed, he is more than willing and able to go back to the full-time position and work-out with her who will cover weekends. The board will discuss employee work assignments in private session just before the meeting adjourns.

Discuss potential new connection(s) The new owner of Sawyer Mansion is working with an engineer to design a connection. They will ask for the appropriate allotment. There will be a ZBA hearing on June 1st to determine approval of an apartment in pre-existing portion of the new general store building, that will create a new equivalent unit to the sewer billing. Discussion ensued around that new apartment, the 4" sewer line on the property might not be large enough, but that is not a town issue. A request for sewer allotment will be needed for the new apartment.

Mr. Brown mentioned that the house that burned on Route 100 diagonally across from the Sawyer Mansion (parcel ID 08-0575) was connected to the sewer at some point in the early 90s. Dave was not aware of it. The property is not being billed by the sewer department. He will look in the manholes to see if he can find any proof of that.

Bernie funds Gig heard from the EPA, she provided a lot of information on the phone and followed it up with an email. There was talk of EPA attending a future Selectboard meeting to discuss the project and parameters.

Highway Garage

Mr. Janovsky looked over the plans, measuring things and feels that none of the options provided by the engineer are the best. He thinks the best option is to get an engineer to inspect the beams and add on in the back, go higher in the front, add on closer to the dump road. The curb cut change is the biggest concern to Mr. Janovsky. Mr. Reed will discuss with the engineer.

Highway

Mr. Janovsky mentioned that the retaining wall at the Eames Village Park is collapsing into the river and should be repaired soon.

School Board: accept resignation of Kristen Breeden, review School Board recommendation to fill the vacancy

The school board conducted interviews and recommended Katherine MacLean to fill the vacancy created when Kristen Breeden did not accept the position after she was elected. The Selectboard supports the School Board's recommendation.

Transfer Station

Schedule HHW events for May and October HAZWOPER training should be available this fall, in the mean time we need to host an event this spring. Mr. Reed will ask Wayne Wood if he is available to help us out again until Mr. Davis can get trained.

Junk cars at the dump Mr. Hammer asked why they are there. Mr. Janovsky said they are for training purposes for the fire department, they will be cut up during training on Monday.

Discuss comp time The transfer station attendant is limited to a certain amount of money he can earn. There is a training coming up that will exceed his regular hours. Discussion ensued around "comp time", Mr. Janovsky said it is not legal, he had to forfeit his accumulated comp time years ago. Gig checked with Mr. Davis, the 4% COL pay increase scheduled to begin July 1st will put him over his limit.

Personnel Policy: discuss potential updates

The board had asked Gig to find examples from other personnel policies about criteria for when and how raises would be awarded. The board reviewed information provided by the VLCT.

Mr. Kingsley made a motion to award a pay raise to the sewer assistant of \$1 per hour effective immediately (this current payroll period), seconded Craig Hammer, all in favor, Mr. Brown abstained.

Gig will prepare a new draft policy to incorporate something about raises being awarded at the discretion of the Selectboard and that requests should be made before budget season begins and not awarded until the following fiscal year.

Approval of Payables Warrant – May 4, 2023

A motion was made by Greg Brown to approve Payables Warrant #W2344 dated May 4, 2023, seconded by Robin Kingsley, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – May 4, 2023

A motion was made by Robin Kingsley to approve Payroll Warrant #W2343 dated May 4, 2023, seconded by Greg Brown, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of April 19, 2023

A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to accept the Minutes of April 19, 2023, as written, seconded by Robin Kingsley, three in favor, Mr. Brown abstained.

Other business

Town Facebook account a town Facebook account has been created, so far no troubles.

In Remembrance of the Holocaust Jim Dassati of the Living History Museum provided passes to Selectboard members, town staff, and fire department volunteers to attend a holocaust remembrance event at the TVMHS on May 12th and 13th.

Planning Commission Meeting The Planning Commission is meeting Tuesday, May 9th at 7pm. The Windham Regional Commission will be here to discuss our local planning needs and how they can assist us. WRC is hoping Selectboard members and the public will attend.

Private Session

A motion was made by Greg Brown to enter into private session to discuss employee work assignments to include only board members, seconded by Robin Kingsley, all in favor.

The board exited private session at 8:45pm. They would like a letter drafted to the sewer plant operator with suggestions. Mr. Brown will discuss with Gig in the morning.

Adjourn

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

Scott Reed adjourned the meeting at 8:46pm.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray