



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF JUNE 26, 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, June 26, 2024.

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

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer; Justin LaSelva, resident; Emily Carris Duncan, Whitingham resident running for state representative.

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 for concerns not on the agenda

None.

Candidate for State Representative: Emily Carris Duncan

Emily Carris Duncan will be running for state representative because Tristan Roberts will not run for another term. Many topics were discussed.

Approve and adopt updated Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Our Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) must be updated every 5 years, we won grant funding and contracted with Threat Owl, LLC to prepare the update. We have gone through the public meeting process and had Vermont Emergency Management review and make comments on it, those comments were addressed for this final version. Once it is adopted it will be sent to FEMA for approval. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve, adopt and sign the 2024 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

Ratify decision to support 10.6 acre parcel going into Land Trust

At the last Selectboard meeting a motion was made and passed to put this issue before the Planning Commission because they create the Town Plan and the Zoning Districts. Brad Lackey, Chair of the Planning Commission reviewed the Land Trust proposal and approved of it. Upon receipt of Planning Commission approval, the letter to the Land Trust was signed by Scott M. Reed. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to ratify the signing of the**

letter of support to the Land Trust regarding the 10.6 acre parcel that is currently zoned Village going into the Land Trust, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor. The parcel has since been accepted by the Land Trust board.

Open Meeting Law changes effective July 1st

Non-advisory boards (Gig's understanding is that means any board with a budget they oversee) are now required to record their meetings and the recordings must be posted for 30 days. These boards must also provide remote access to the public if it is requested (for each meeting). The easiest way to meet this requirement for the Selectboard is to use a voice recorder. Gig has notified the town boards and committees that have a budget they oversee of these new requirements.

Legislative changes to local option tax

Effective July 1, 2024, H.546 authorizes (allows) municipalities to adopt a local option tax of one percent (1%) on any combination of sales, rooms, meals through a vote at an annual or special town meeting. This could be a new revenue source to address local needs without taxing local residents if the town were to implement it on rooms. Mr. Weber does not support this in general, he does not like the idea of implementing a tax without a purpose for it. It was discussed that the new income would go into the general fund to reduce the tax burden. The board requested that Gig contact the state Department of Taxes to find out how much we would earn with a 1% tax.

Animal Control: next step?

At the last meeting it was decided that the next step would be to secure a warrant from a judge to search for the dog to be humanely destroyed owned by Brianna O'Hearn and Bradley Boyd. Since that time Ms. O'Hearn informed the Town Clerk that they had put the dog down though no proof of that was provided. Attorney Fisher recommended that they swear to and sign a legal document stating that they put the dog down. Gig will contact Attorney Fisher to prepare the document, Doug Dix can bring it to them to sign.

Highway

Review and approve access permits The board reviewed an access permit for Gary and Susan Tracey at 1213 Kentfield Road, no conditions were set. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve and sign the access permit, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Zoning: review and sign updated stipulation

Joseph Autuori has signed the updated stipulation and wrote down his credit card number on it to charge his fine to. Upon receipt of the signed stipulation, he was immediately notified to call the town treasurer about payment, apparently he spoke with Marylee but never put his credit card through the town system. When Gig returned from vacation on Monday, she emailed him to say that he must pay his fine on the town website if he wants to use a credit card and we must receive his new zoning application for the house he built by Friday, June 28th or it will go back to court. Because we have not received the payment yet, Gig suggests the board does not approve and sign the updated stipulation yet.

Lori Williams: Gig received a call from Lori Williams today, the deadline given on the Notice of Zoning Violation is June 27th. She said her grandson will rent a dumpster to clean up the junk in the flood zone. We agreed to a new deadline of August 31st. A new written agreement was sent to her today to sign and return.

Policing Contract

No changes to the contract, the hourly rates stay the same. **A motion was made by Travis Wheeler to approve the new contract and appoint Scott M. Reed to sign it, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Approval of Payables Warrant – June 27 2024

A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve Payables Warrant #W2452 dated June 27, 2024, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – June 27, 2024

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payroll Warrant #W2451 dated June 27, 2024, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of June 12, 2024

A motion was made by James Weber to accept the Minutes of June 12, 2024, as written, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.

Other business

We received \$990 in municipal fines in May 2024.

Sewer: Penn Valley Pump is coming tomorrow to determine why the pumps (old and new) won't self-prime. Lynde Well Drilling is also coming tomorrow to send a camera down the Whitingham well casing to determine what the problem is. Rust in the water lines has done something to the toilet, it won't flush anymore. The contractor suggests adding a filter to the pressure tank and we will need to replace the flushing unit in the toilet.

Gig notified the contractors that the PH sensor at Whitingham is not installed properly and the new sink at Whitingham has paint and cement residue in it.

We received 3 complaints from the operator about possible design failures. One is the sludge tank/weir– he is not happy with the weir on sludge tanks and that there is no way to easily isolate tanks (to clean them). The wash pump stirs up floaters that can pass over the weir into the EQ tanks. The second is the crane at Whitingham plant doesn't function well. The third is the sample tap at Whitingham, right now they have to turn off the outflow to do a grab sample. The outflow should not have to be turned off for such a simple test. With the help of the town attorney Gig has prepared a notice of alleged breach of contract to Weston & Sampson about these 3 items. **A motion was made by James Weber to approve of the notice of alleged breach of contract and to appoint Scott M. Reed to sign it, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Letter of complaint to VTrans at the last meeting Greg Brown requested that we write another letter of complaint about the culvert in front of 2037 VT Route 100 in Jacksonville. Gig drafted

a new letter and will send copies to VTrans, the Secretary of Transportation and the Governor. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve and sign the letter of complaint to VTrans, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

Whitingham Village traffic study the traffic counters will be put out early next week by the Windham Regional Commission.

Tax Sale Three houses will be sold at the tax sale tomorrow, Ms. Aekus asked the Selectboard if the town would be interested in bidding on any of them. No.

Adjourn

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

Scott Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:31pm.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray