



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF JULY 8, 2026

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, July 8, 2026.

Selectboard members present: Scott M. Reed, Chair; Craig Hammer, Vice Chair; Dennis Pike; and Lyman (Skip) Tefft.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Administrator; Marylee Putnam, Treasurer; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Rachel Littlehale, Town Clerk; Sara Martin (remote), Howard Dix, Katherine MacLean; Donny Boyd, residents.

Call to Order. Pledge of Allegiance. 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)

Sara Martin spoke about the discussion last week about the highway garage.

Set the municipal tax rate for 2026/27

Marylee Putnam, Treasurer, suggested the Municipal Tax Rate be set at \$.5999 per \$100 and the local agreement rate at \$.0017 [a decrease of \$.0017 over last year (\$.6009 and \$.0024)]. She provided a spreadsheet to show her calculations. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to set the 2026/2027 municipal tax rate at \$.5999 per \$100 and the local agreement tax rate at \$.0017, for a combined tax rate of \$.6016 per \$100 as recommended by the Town Treasurer, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.**

The Vermont Department of Taxes provided the Education Tax Rates for Fiscal Year 2027 – the Non-Homestead Tax Rate is \$1.1145 (last year \$1.293) and the Homestead Tax Rate is \$1.1142 (last year \$1.1001).

Last year the residential/school combined rate was 1.7034. The projected 2027 rate would be 1.7158, an increase of .0124.

Last year the non-residential/school combined rate was 1.7326. The projected 2027 rate would be \$1.7161, a decrease of .0165.

Marylee questioned if the board would want to waive the late filed Homestead penalties. The board agreed to not waive the penalty.

Town Clerk: determine election assistant wages

At the last meeting Rachel Littlehale requested funding approval to hire an election assistant. The board has now considered an hourly rate for that position. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve the request of the Town Clerk to hire an election assistant at \$20 per hour, making clear that the responsibility for elections is entirely on the Town Clerk, anticipating that the assistant will work about 15-20 days per year depending on the number of elections per year, seconded by Dennis M. Pike, all in favor.**

Highway

A grant was won to replace the steel structure on Frank Dix's bridge, the design was approved, Mr. Janovsky signed the grant agreement. The decking is good; the structure underneath will be replaced. The grant is 90% funding with 10% local match (will likely be in-kind).

Stan spoke about repairs going on for a piece of equipment.

Highway garage: status update

Mr. Reed, Mr. Janovsky and Gig met with Gordon Bristol, Brud Sanderson & Jon Saccoccio of Stevens & Associates, and Matthew Wheaton of DEW this morning. DEW presented a new simple drawing showing the 6 bays with the same roofline and no small setback at the far bay, which may save about \$50,000 in construction costs. The most recent estimate came in at \$3,962,381 including contingencies and winter conditions, etc. They will continue to work on design plans that may lower the cost. We still plan on having a bond vote in November. The board approved Stevens & Associates to continue moving forward with design. Mr. Boyd noted his opinion that he would rather have a \$5M building on a parcel of land that is large enough for building expansion in the future if needed. Many years ago, we sought properties, and there was outcry from the neighbors of the one potential property. The board does not want to go backwards at this point. Mr. Boyd will be looking for property.

Old Home Week: traffic flow changes and permission to use ATVs and golf carts

A motion was made by Dennis Pike that Town Hill Road will be one way for the parade; ATVs and golf carts will be allowed on Allard Road, Ginny Morse Road, Town Hill Road, Maple Hill Road, Goodnow Road and on Route 100 from Ginny Morse Road to Goodnow Road, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.

Sewer: review and sign generator maintenance contracts

Now that the sewer plants each have new generators, they should have annual maintenance contracts to keep them in prime condition. As part of the sewer project, the generators were installed by Kinsley Power Systems, Inc. They provided a contract for each plant:

- For Whitingham two inspection/service visits at a cost of \$945 per year but this first year one visit at \$315 will be complementary (1st year total \$630).
- For Jacksonville two inspection/service visits at a cost of \$1,125 per year (equipment is larger than Whitingham) but this first year one visit at \$365 will be complementary (1st year total \$760).

After review and discussion, **a motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve the two contracts from Kinsley Power Systems, Inc. for one year, and to appoint Scott M. Reed to sign them, seconded by Dennis Pike, all in favor.**

The state will be inspecting the two plants in August, including all paperwork, test results, etc. Dylan recommended that Charlie apply for the license required for him to be the assistant, Charlie has filled out the application and will be filing it soon.

Dylan questioned what we want to do with the manual transfer switch cabinets and electrical connector boxes? He recommends selling them, and would be willing to post them on Facebook market place for us. The board said yes.

Do we know when the roof is starting? Two weeks (is the text response received today).

Fire Department: discuss Act 162

Act 162 went into effect on July 1, 2026. This law now requires that the Fire Chief will automatically serve as Forest Fire Warden but may appoint a deputy to assist with the responsibility of issuing burn permits. Fire Chief Janovsky appointed Dennis Pike, Sr., as Deputy Forest Fire Warden. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve the appointment of Dennis Pike, Sr. as Deputy Forest Fire Warden, seconded by Skip Tefft, three in favor, Mr. Pike abstained.**

Cyber Security grant: appoint authorized representative

Gig applied for and won a 2025 Homeland Security Grant to transition the town website to a .gov for enhanced security. The value of the award is \$70,251.72 with no local match required. In order for work to begin on the project/grant an authorized representative must be appointed to sign the grant paperwork. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to appoint Gig Zboray as the Authorized Representative on grant agreement #02140-7H25100-510, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.**

WISPr project – contract change

The original contract to address knotweed along the riverbank across from Jacksonville Church and by the sewer plant was approved and signed on March 5, 2025. The original contract was \$25,942.71, this amendment #1 increases the project cost to \$42,513 and changes the payment schedule. The cost change was approved by the state in January, but it was never signed off by the town. Costs have increased in the past year, and this amendment also adds project management by WCNRC and oversight by WRC. **A motion was made by Skip Tefft to approve the contract amendment #1 and to appoint Scott M. Reed to sign it, seconded by Dennis Pike, all in favor.**

Approval of Payables Warrant – July 9, 2026

A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve Payables Warrant #W2702 dated July 9, 2026, seconded by Dennis Pike, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – July 9, 2026

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payroll Warrant #W2701 dated July 9, 2026, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.

Approval of Minutes of June 24, 2026

A motion was made by Skip Tefft to accept the Minutes of June 24, 2026, as written, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Other business

Jacksonville Electric battery storage site – James Weber walked the area around the Transfer Station with an engineer and didn't find a good potential site, but they think perhaps the town owned property across the street from the Whitingham sewer plant is a good option. If the board has no objections, the next step would be 10% design and then they come present it to both boards for approval.

Poisonous Parsnip - James Weber texted Gig today asking if the Jacksonville sewer plant field would be mowed soon before the poisonous parsnip goes to seed. We are in the midst of a project to try to eradicate the knotweed, and we were asked not to mow until the area has been treated. Mr. Weber suggested he might mow the parsnip down. I suggested he speak with Mike Boyd because Mike has been mowing that for years. I also said it would be a liability to the town if Mr. Weber was injured while doing that. The board says no, leave it alone.

Culvert there are a few issues with the culvert project – the sidewalk on the upstream section is pitted already, there are weeds growing through the new asphalt in the parking lot and on Monday before the rain a section of the river was dry. Jess from MSK Engineers came down on Tuesday (during the heavy rain) to look at the problems. She is not concerned with the river, she feels there must have been a low spot in the gravel with other sediments above it. She is certain the water was not going under the retaining wall. MSK is reporting the other two issues to Hunter Excavating for them to address.

Adjourn

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

Scott Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:19pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray