



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF JULY 10, 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, July 10, 2024.

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

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Keith Thompson, DV Fiber; Justin LaSelva, resident.

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.

DV Fiber: approval of pole installation on Faulkner Road

Mr. Thompson provided information on poles/conduit on Green Road. Conduit will cross the road in two places. Mr. Janovsky should be notified when the work is scheduled.

On April 3, 2024, DV Fiber requested permission to set poles on Faulkner Road for their fiber internet project. At the time a motion was made to approve the request contingent on the town attorney's review and any suggestions he might make. Attorney Fisher recommended that DV Fiber contact the property owners in question to notify them that poles would be installed and to find out if the existing underground conduit could accept fiber lines. DV Fiber sent out letters, no response received. **A motion was made by James Weber to approve new poles and/or conduit where needed on Green Road and Faulker Road, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Animal Control: next step

Affidavits were sent to Brianna O'Hearn and Bradley Boyd to swear and sign that they put the second dog down. They were given a deadline of July 12th to submit the notarized documents. If these documents are not received by the end of day Friday, the next step is for ACO Doug Dix to sign and swear to an affidavit in order to get a search warrant to search the property and seize the dog to be euthanized. The Selectboard suggested asking if Boyd/O'Hearn would sign affidavits stating the dog was rehomed outside of Whitingham.

Highway: review and approve access permit

The board reviewed an access permit for Jeremy Ouellette at 988 Chapel Hill Road, Mr. Janovsky noted on the application that no culvert is needed. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve the access permit for Ouellette on Chapel Hill Road, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

Zoning: next step on zoning fine

Joseph Autuori who built a new structure on Maple Hill Lane has not properly responded to the court ordered stipulation, paid his fine, or submitted a new zoning application. The next step is to go back to court again. The board would like a cease-and-desist order on the property.

(Post meeting note: on 7/11/24 Mr. Autuori paid his fine and submitted a zoning application.)

Set the municipal tax rate for 2024/25:

Almira Aekus suggested the Municipal Tax Rate to be set at \$.9032 per \$100 and the local agreement rate at \$.0047 (last year \$.756 and \$.0036). She provided a spreadsheet to show her calculations. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to set the 2024/2025 municipal tax rate at \$.9032 per \$100 and the local agreement tax rate at \$.0047, for a combined tax rate of \$.9079 per \$100 as recommended by the Town Treasurer, seconded by James Weber, all in favor (feeling we have no choice).**

The Vermont Department of Taxes provided the Education Tax Rates for Fiscal Year 2025 – the Non-Homestead Tax Rate is \$1.7585 (last year \$1.6188) and the Homestead Tax Rate is \$1.7742 (last year \$1.7927).

Last year the residential/school combined rate was 2.5523. The projected 2025 rate would be 2.6821, an increase of .1298.

Last year the non-residential/school combined rate was 2.3784. The projected 2025 rate would be \$2.6664, an increase of .288.

Sewer

Financial Capability Assessment Gig signed an agreement with RCAP Solutions to perform the Financial Capability Assessment (FCA), there is no cost to the town for this FCA. The purpose of the FCA is to determine if our sewer users can afford the many new testing and future construction requirements that may be required in the Whitingham discharge permit.

Set the sewer rate Ms. Aekus suggested the sewer rate be set after the 23/24 audit is complete. The board agreed.

Engineering required for the Jacksonville discharge permit we are required to submit an engineered plan to the state (was due February 28, 2024). Gig contacted the engineer to ask for a cost estimate.

Whitingham well casing Lynde Well Drilling sent a camera down the well casing, they say it looks good but recommended raising the pump above the bad spot. The next step would be

to add a filter after the bladder and replace the toilet flusher parts. The board agreed, and asked if the well pump that was installed last year was covered by warranty.

Review and sign two non-employee work agreements

For the purposes of Workers Compensation Insurance audits, we have created non-employee work agreements. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve and sign non-employee work agreements for RSI Premier Cleaning & Restoration Services, LLC and Pioneer Timber Frames, LLC, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

Approval of Payables Warrant – July 11, 2024

A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve Payables Warrant #W2502 dated July 11, 2024, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – July 11, 2024

A motion was made by James Weber to approve Payroll Warrant #W2501 dated July 11, 2024, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of June 26, 2024

A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to accept the Minutes of June 26, 2024, as written, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Other business

Tax Assessor Clerk Howard Dix is ready and willing to train a new Tax Assessor's Clerk. The bulk of the work in the office is contracted with NEMRC. Gig will post the job opening, \$15-20 per hour to start.

July 24th meeting Gig will be on vacation during the next scheduled meeting, the board agreed to cancel the meeting, a member will sign the payroll and payables warrants when they are ready.

Adjourn

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

Scott Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray