



**Town of Whitingham  
Office of the Selectboard**

**MINUTES OF JULY 23, 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 Selectboard office of the Whitingham Municipal Center on Wednesday, July 23, 2025.

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

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Administrator; Marylee Putnam, Treasurer; Ed Donelan, Dallas Berard, Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Brud Sanderson and Jon Saccoccio of Stevens & Associates.

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

Scott M. Reed called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. We moved Mr. Donelan's request to before the highway garage discussion but left the rest of the sewer discussion for after Fire Department topic.

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

**Set the municipal tax rate for 2025/26**

Marylee Putnam, Treasurer, suggested the Municipal Tax Rate be set at \$.6009 per \$100 and the local agreement rate at \$.0024 (last year \$.9032 and \$.0047). She provided a spreadsheet to show her calculations. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to set the 2025/2026 municipal tax rate at \$.6009 per \$100 and the local agreement tax rate at \$.0024, for a combined tax rate of \$.6033 per \$100 as recommended by the Town Treasurer, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

The Vermont Department of Taxes provided the Education Tax Rates for Fiscal Year 2026 – the Non-Homestead Tax Rate is \$1.1293 (last year \$1.7585) and the Homestead Tax Rate is \$1.1001 (last year \$1.7742).

Last year the residential/school combined rate was 2.6821. The projected 2026 rate would be 1.7034, a decrease of .9787.

Last year the non-residential/school combined rate was 2.6664. The projected 2026 rate would be \$1.7326, a decrease of .9338.

### **Back to school bash, Dallas Berard**

Dallas Berard, youth minister of Jacksonville Community Church, is again planning a back-to-school bash at Town Hill. Last year almost 100 students attended, had fun and received school supplies. This year the bash is scheduled for August 24<sup>th</sup> from 1-4.

### **Sewer**

**North River Property Management Request for sewer allocation** Ed Donelan, owner of North River Property Management at 64 Gates Pond Road, is requesting a sewer allocation for a 7-unit apartment building. In order to file for a state wastewater permit they need the allocation letter. The request included a check in the amount of \$175 (7 units at \$25 per unit). **A motion was made by James Weber to approve the sewer allocation for a 7-unit apartment building at 64 Gates Pond Road and to appoint Scott M. Reed to sign the allocation letter and everyone to sign the “building sewer application”, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.**

On the well for drinking water, we received a “Notification of Presumptive Isolation Zone” which would prevent a leach field from being located on town property known as Jacksonville Cemetery.

### **Highway: ~~review garage plans,~~ review and sign contract with engineer**

Stevens and Associates put a proposal together for architectural and engineering services regarding the highway garage. Next step is schematic design, then design development, construction documents, bidding and construction administration services. Gig questioned if they will help us with the bond process, they said it wasn’t included in this contract, but the next contract will include that.

Standard AIA contract will come when we are ready to move forward which will address Attorney Fisher’s concerns about this contract.

The contract price, as written is \$343,250, at 6/30/24 the garage fund had \$322,783. Another \$50,000 was approved at Town Meeting 2025.

**A motion was made by James Weber to appoint Scott M. Reed to sign the contract for \$343,250 with Stevens and Associates, seconded by Skip Tefft, all in favor.** AIA contract will come next.

### **Fire Department: improvements to fire house**

The Jacksonville fire house carpeting is about 50 years old, they would like to remove it and install some sort of flooring, not carpeting. Mr. Reed suggested that there is good indestructible laminate flooring available now. It would be installed in the kitchen, office and shower area. They would also like to install mini-splits, it is so hot and humid in that building, and it would be a relief to first responders when returning from a call. Chief Janovsky received a verbal estimate from Kingsley P&H for \$10,000. Efficiency Vermont offers a rebate, Green Mountain Power also offers a rebate, and Webb will offer a discount to municipalities. Chief Janovsky should get some prices on the flooring.

## **Sewer**

Update on sewer loan and project Our current loan balance on the sewer project is \$2,177,162 plus WISPr funds of 10% of phase 3 amount of \$189,352, which brings the total current loan to \$2,366,514. The WISPr money is to be used for natural resource projects – we are working on several flood hazard mitigation projects. The WISPr money is functionally free money, but it is added to the principle of the loan and forgiven through the reduction of the interest rate during repayment. We can think of this part of the loan as the portion that will be canceled out by the reduction in interest rate. The loan that we are closing out now and transferring to the bond will have a 20-year repayment term, 1% loan administration rate, 0% interest rate.

The project will continue with a new loan number.

Gig questioned what response do we want to give to Don Hettrick about Two Lakes sewer expansion? Mr. Janovsky suggested that Mr. Roberts go through the process on his property. Gig will discuss with Attorney Fisher. Richard Tefft told Mr. Weber that the pipe from the schoolhouse apartments is a 6" pipe, which is not feasible as a collection system. Gig should ask sewer operator to verify the size of the pipe at the schoolhouse. Mr. Weber can go with him.

Gig questioned if we know when Jancewicz & Son is going to work on the roofs? Mr. Reed answered October.

## **Review holiday schedule in Personnel Policy**

It was suggested that the town award ALL Federal holidays (including any that may be added in the future) and Town Meeting Day for employees, perhaps giving up a floating holiday or two. A memo of amendment to the Personnel Policy was prepared. After review and discussion, the board decided to make no changes at this time.

## **Approval of Payables Warrant – July 24, 2025**

**A motion was made by Rick Gramlin to approve Payables Warrant #W2604 dated July 24, 2025, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.**

## **Approval of Payroll Warrant – July 24, 2025**

**A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to approve Payroll Warrant #W2603, dated July 24, 2025, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

## **Review and approve Minutes of July 9, 2025**

**A motion was made by James Weber to accept the Minutes of July 9, 2025, as written, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.**

## **Other business:**

Solar panel contraption Mr. Weber would like Jacksonville Electric to remove the entire structure from the municipal center property; they will use the batteries as backup power at their plant. The board approved.

Repairs needed to Whitingham plant behind meter box the siding is rotted out, the meter is just floating in the air. Gig asked Pete Bernard if he could make the repair needed.

Hometown Heroes have received no information on anyone currently serving, what's our next step? Keep poking. Gig will prepare a post for Facebook.

BDCC annual report BDCC would like to feature Gig and the sewer project in their annual report this year to showcase how they can help other small towns with big projects.

Culvert project Substantial completion date remains at October 31<sup>st</sup>, we should get a more detailed project schedule soon.

Flood resiliency We are participating in a free program that WRC put together for a 4-town flood resiliency review by students at UMASS. There will be public discussions on September 15 and 17 at OSEC in Wilmington at 6pm.

Transfer Station there is a mandatory training for all operators collecting any electronics, mercury lamps and thermostats, batteries and/or paint. The closest training is in Brattleboro on Monday, October 6 from 4-6pm. Larry and Charlie should attend.

Status of power pole at culvert First Light will move their lines from the old pole early next week, Consolidated is next, then the old pole will be cut down.

Mowing Mike Boyd annually mows the sewer plant property, the whole field that the town just obtained ownership of due to a FEMA buyout is covered with poisonous parsnip. It was suggested to mow it before the poisonous parsnip goes to seed. Mr. Janovsky will speak with Mr. Boyd.

### **Adjourn**

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

Scott M. Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:49pm

Respectfully submitted,  
~Gig Zboray