



**Town of Whitingham  
Office of the Selectboard**

**MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 8, 2021**

*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, September 8, 2021.

Selectboard members present: Scott Reed, Chair; Craig Hammer, Vice Chair; Chris Walling, James Weber, and Greg Brown.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer; Stan Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Tyler Lederer from Valley News; Phil Edelstein, resident.

Others attending remotely: Wayne Graham, VT Rural Water Association; Lynnette Claudon, ANR Waste Water Division.

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

Scott Reed called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. There were no changes to the agenda since it was posted.

**Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda)**

None

**Sewer: next steps to move the project forward**

Introductions were made. Greg Brown gave a run-down of his prior experience with the sewer project and he asked Wayne Graham to zoom in tonight to help us. The biggest problem with Jacksonville is that we need to replace the media and bearings, etc. Mr. Graham suggested that the tank needs to be looked at, as well as the shaft.

Lynette Claudon suggested that we could focus on critical process elements to keep costs down, electrical and heating gets tricky because of code requirements. Bridgewater has a similar plant, and their project estimate came in right around the engineer's estimate. We could break the facilities into 2 different contracts because many contractors are insured for a million dollars so they might not have submitted a bid for that reason. We could also cut the collection system out. The pollution control grant is \$1,046,072 and we have SRF funding. We could pay out of pocket for "value engineering" to determine what part(s) of the full project are most important and cost effective. It seems we all agree that Jacksonville RBC is the most critical need.

Mr. Graham asked who we would speak to if we wanted to take a step back and change the scope of the project, Ms. Claudon noted that it would be her and Don Haddox. If we back out,

we would have to pay for all the engineering (after 5 years for a term of 5 years with no interest), if we do a “small purchase” engineering would roll in.

There is a difference between sewage and gray water, if we had to bypass the plant during the repair it’s just raw wastewater, not septage, we should only pay pennies, not dimes per gallon plus trucking. It would take weeks for the biomass to grow and stick on the new media, trucking would be required during that time.

We could focus on the Jacksonville Plant and put Whitingham on the back burner.

**Fiber Optics: discuss location of proposed “hub” building and cost sharing**

The fiber hub building will now be installed in Wilmington, it does not need to be here in Whitingham. We will need a small box like Consolidated has at locations in town, but it will need a generator. There is no need for cost sharing with the town, the CUD will pay.

Putting the box at the transfer station seems to make sense. It needs a cement pad; electricity and they need room for a generator. The board agreed to allow it to be installed to the left of the Lyons shed at the Transfer Station, unless a better option near the cell tower is available. There will be no cost to the town for any of this. Mr. Janovsky asked if there will be a lease to pay the town for use of town property. Mr. Edelstein responded no (but later sent an email that there is a provision in the law for towns to be paid a reasonable rent).

**Highway:**

review and sign access permit

Mr. Janovsky presented an access permit for Andrew and Karen Kupinse with the recommendation that the board approve it. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to approve and sign the access permit for Andrew and Karen Kupinse at 803 Lake Hill Road, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

Discuss complaint on Cross Road

Glenn Toole complained to Mr. Janovsky about the speed sign not working, he would like it fixed or upgraded. Mr. Janovsky informed Mr. Toole about patrol coverage we now contract for with the Wilmington Police Department. The board suggested that Mr. Janovsky take it down and look into trying to fix it.

Pickup

The auto factory has been shut down again, the pickup truck won’t be coming very soon. The board approved that if Mr. Janovsky found a truck that is available sooner, he can act on it with a down payment hold on it, so that he has a chance to discuss any new purchase with the board.

**Approval of Payables Warrant – September 9, 2021**

**A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payables Warrant #W2212 dated September 9, 2021, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

**Approval of Payroll Warrant – September 9, 2021**

**A motion was made by Scott Reed to approve Payroll Warrant #W2211 dated September 9, 2021, seconded by Chris Walling, all in favor.** Discussion ensued around the library offering COVID-19 bonuses to two employees. A lot of people in town don't understand that the library board is completely separate from the Selectboard. The Selectboard did not plan to give town employees a bonus.

**Approve Minutes of August 25, 2021**

**A motion was made by Chris Walling to accept the Minutes of August 25, 2021, as written, seconded by James Weber, four in favor, Mr. Brown abstained, motion passed.**

**Other Business**

**COVID-19** Ms. Lavern McIntyre suggested that the town host a vaccination clinic for those who were unable to figure out how to get vaccinated so far. Gig noted that Rescue, Inc. had a clinic here at the Municipal Center on May 21<sup>st</sup>, she tried to find out how many had attended but the information was not readily available. She was told that Rescue Inc. is not scheduling any new clinics at this time because guidance is changing, and booster shots will soon be coming out. Ms. Aekus said there was a clinic at the school all day today. The board doesn't think hosting a clinic is necessary, there are plenty around or people can just walk into Walgreens to get a vaccination.

**Dumaine Act 250** The state approved the creation of a 3.04-acre lot from the Dumaine's 33.4 acres on Academy Road. The Municipal Center is an abutter, so we were notified.

**Proposed buyout of cell tower at Transfer Station** We received an offer from SBA Communications that holds a lease for the cell tower at the Transfer Station, they are offering to buy out their lease for a lump sum payment of \$270,000. Gig provided a rental stream schedule showing that over a 35 year lease the town would earn \$834,376.73. We are currently at year 9, by year 10 the town will have earned \$158,201.53 on the lease. The board questioned if we can we offer a counter proposal? Ms. Aekus will look at the numbers to determine what that counter proposal might be.

**Adjourn**

**A motion was made by James Weber to adjourn, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Scott Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray