



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 16, 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 dining hall of the Whitingham Municipal Center on Wednesday, October 16, 2024.

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

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer/Tax Collector; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner.

Mike Eldred, DV News; Jess Rizzio, MSK Engineers; Laura Allen, Brian and Rebecca Green; Paula and John Ferguson; Andrew Rodriguez, MSK Engineers; Marie Caduto, ANR; Kyano Frost, MSK Engineers; Alyssa Sabetto, WRC; Evan Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald Environmental; Josh Carvajal, ANR; Frank Piasecki, Fitzgerald Environmental; Terrie Dumaine; Craig Hammer.

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

Jacksonville flood resiliency alternatives (downstream project)

Jess Rizzio of MSK Engineers presented a Feasibility Analysis of Flood Plain Alternatives for the properties downstream of the municipal center. Four alternatives were presented; 1-FEMA buyout of the Kingsley home and flood plain restoration of the west side of the bank; 2-flood plain restoration only; 3-replace undersized culvert at intersection of 100/112 (VTrans); 4-replace VTrans culvert and FEMA buyout of Ferguson home. Many questions were asked and answered. No decisions were made at this time.

Highway

Gig submitted a document to include the future Highway Garage renovation on the BDCC CEDs report. It might provide us with grant options in the future.

FEMA buyout of 568 VT Route 112: review and approve FEMA Voluntary Transaction Agreement

After accepting the appraised value of \$54,000, the next step in the buyout process is for the property owners to sign the voluntary transaction agreement and counter signed by the town's "authorized agent". At the October 2nd meeting Gig Zboray was appointed as the authorized representative specifically to sign grant agreement and reimbursement requests. Would you like to authorize her to sign all documents needed to complete this project? **A motion was made by James Weber to appoint Gig Zboray to sign all documents in relation to this project, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.**

Town Clerk, Treasurer, Delinquent Tax Collector: continue discussion to determine pay rates for these positions for newly elected official(s)

Discussion ensued around changing these positions to being appointed rather than elected; that would require the voters to make that decision at a regular or special town meeting.

No decisions on pay rates were made tonight.

Assessors: review and approve annual contract with NEMRC

A motion was made by James Weber to approve the contract and to appoint Scott M. Reed, to sign it, second by Travis Wheeler, all in favor.

Review and sign annual generator contract

It's time to renew the contract for the generator at the school, it comes under the town's authority because the school is designated as the town's emergency shelter. **A motion was made by James Weber to approve the contract with Brook Field Service for \$971 and to appoint Scott M. Reed to sign it, seconded by Lyman Tefft, all in favor.**

Transfer Station

Review and discuss letter from Casella Casella suggested we combine recycling of containers with paper in the compactor for a proposed savings of \$5,491.34 per year. Right now, we are paying \$30 per ton for paper recycling and \$148 per ton for containers. Gig questioned Casella how much it would be to rent a compactor – they answered \$600 per month if we cover the cost of installation. They estimate compacting containers will save us 24 hauls at \$240 per haul per haul (\$5,740 savings in hauls but \$7,200 in rental of compactor). Last year we recycled 46.13 tons of paper at \$25/30 per ton for a cost of \$1,291.55. That amount of paper at \$148 per ton (if combined with containers at \$148 per ton) would cost \$6,827.24 an increase of \$5,535.69. There is no cost savings by going single stream. No changes will be made at this time.

Gig would like to write a letter of complaint to the Governor and our state representatives about the cost of recycling. We are currently paying \$148 per ton to recycle containers and \$115 per ton to dispose of trash. When the universal recycling law was created it was supposed to be "free".

Backup attendant Charlie Rinaldi has agreed to be the backup attendant at the Transfer Station for the same rate that he receives as sewer assistant. The board approved.

Sewer: set the sewer rate for 24/25

The budget set in Town Report for the fiscal year 24/25 is \$377,297.00, we have 243.84 equivalent units, therefore the rate should be set at \$1,548 per EU. Last year's rate was \$1,351.34 an increase of 14.5%. Gig noted that we have lost sludge revenue and testing requirements by the state have increased significantly (\$14,700/215%). **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to set the sewer rate at \$1,548 per EU for the fiscal year 24/25, seconded by Travis Wheeler, three reluctantly approved and Mr. Weber opposed.**

Gig attended a presentation about the Deerfield River Basin Action Plan last night, she learned that a push for sewer plants to address their nitrogen levels is a part of the plan. She immediately sent an email to an ANR employee asking that our sewer plants be added to the list of fundable projects. This should allow us grant money when we are forced to address any problem we might have.

Approval of Payables Warrant – October 17, 2024

A motion was made by James Weber to approve Payables Warrant #W2516, dated October 17, 2024, seconded by Travis Wheeler, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – October 17, 2024

A motion was made by James Weber to approve Payroll Warrant #W2515, dated October 17, 2024, seconded by Lyman Tefft, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of October 2, 2024

A motion was made by James Weber to accept the Minutes of October 2, 2024, as written, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.

Other business

Appointment of Julie Muller to Housing Rehabilitation Committee Julie Muller, who is currently a Justice of the Peace, is interested in filling the vacancy on the Housing Rehabilitation Committee. **A motion was made by Scott M. Reed to appoint Julie Muller to the Housing Rehabilitation Committee, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

Renewal of all VLCT insurance policies renewal is due Friday, October 18th. All policies will be renewed with no changes. The property values have been looked at several times in the last few years; the only major changes were at the sewer plants, but they are insured for replacement value. The board approved the renewal.

Adjourn

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

Scott Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:36pm.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray