



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 16, 2022

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, November 16, 2022.

Selectboard members present: Scott M. Reed, Chair; James Weber, Vice Chair; and Robin Kingsley.

Others attending: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator. Kathryn Andersen, resident. Phil Edelstein, CUD member. Tyler Lederer, DV News. Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer. Erica Johnson, 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

None

Phil Edelstein with a CUD update

Phil Edelstein provided an update of activities by the Deerfield Valley Communications Union District (aka DVFiber) which was created to bring fiber optics internet to every address in the Deerfield Valley. They have \$25 M dollars to spend. There is 300 miles of fiber in storage. DV Fiber is non-profit, community owned. The pole ready study is still in the works. The volunteers have been putting in hundreds of hours on this project. Road Commissioners will be provided contact information for who to call if a tree falls on the fiber line.

Determine cost of living increase for budgeting purposes/treasurer's question regarding Municipal Employee in current fiscal year

Last year the Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), which has traditionally been used to base employee annual COLA increase, was at 5.9%. At the time that seemed like a huge bump for the taxpayers, so a three-year plan was made to slowly increase it to that amount. However, the 2023 COLA is 8.7%. If you add 2022 COL of 5.9% and 2023 of 8.7% that is a total of 14.6%. The 22 COLA increase given was 2.5%. The board deferred this decision until next meeting when we expect all members to be available.

Regarding the recent pay raise for the Municipal Employee; part of it comes from the Municipal Budget and get transferred into Highway Department. There was a budgeted amount. Ms. Aekus questioned how the board would like to adjust that to reflect the new pay amount. The board would like the same percentage of his pay transferred to the Highway Department.

Highway

There was recent discussion to purchase an AED (automatic defibrillator) for the highway garage. We received a price quote of \$1,875.54 for the machine and storage cabinet. **A motion was made by Robin Kingsley to accept the quote from McKesson for the AED, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.** They would like the funds to come from Municipal Equipment budget.

Transfer Station: review and approve application for Recertification / discuss inspection report

The state conducted a surprise inspection of the Transfer Station on September 13th. Most of the alleged violations in their report relate to lack of training as a result of our main employee being out sick and coverage provided by the back-up attendant. However, two of the items related to conditions in our certification. We collected more trash and C&D than our certification allows. Gig provided the board with an application for recertification that increases the tonnage for those items. The second item is that we are apparently required to update the Closure Plan every two years and the Closure Cost Estimate every year. These items were updated and provided to the state. Gig also updated our Facility Management Plan/Operations Plan to submit with the recertification application. The board reviewed and approved of all the documents. Gig won't know until Friday if they must be submitted to the state. In case they are required, **a motion was made by Robin Kingsley to approve the updated Facility Management Plan and the Transfer Station Recertification application and appoint Scott M. Reed to sign where required, seconded by James Weber , all in favor.**

Gig recently received the WSWMD town assessments for fiscal year 2024. Townshend, with the most similar population to ours (1,291 to our 1,344), is being assessed \$8,906.08 for their membership. In comparison, we pay approximately \$1,500 after SWIP grant for our HHW and that is about the only benefit we got out of membership with WSWMD.

Sewer: computer needed

The new assistant was having great difficulty with accessing her email on the sewer department computer. Our IT professional found the computer to be a "dinosaur", a very old Mac computer. A new Dell computer will be ordered, and that computer will be added to our contract with VT Cyber. The cost of that computer (estimated at \$600) will come out of the municipal budget.

Approval of Payables Warrant – November 17, 2022

A motion was made by James Weber to approve Payables Warrant #2320, dated November 17, 2022, seconded by Robin Kingsley, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – November 17, 2022

A motion was made by James Weber to approve Payroll Warrant #2319 dated November 17, 2022, seconded by Robin Kingsley, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of November 2, 2022

A motion was made by James Weber to accept the Minutes of November 2, 2022, as written, seconded by Robin Kingsley, all in favor.

Animal Control issue on School Street

Erica Johnson of School Street has complained numerous times about a neighbor's dog barking constantly. The Animal Control Officer investigated and could not confirm. Gig went to the area and found no disturbance at the time she was there and spoke to a neighbor who indicated the dog is much better than it was several years ago. Ms. Johnson was not happy with the results of the investigation and came to the board to determine exactly what proof is required for the ACO to address this problem with fines. However, since her request to be on the agenda, Ms. Johnson spoke with the dog owner, the owner agreed to purchase a bark collar. Ms. Johnson is optimistic that that will alleviate the problem. If it does not she will ask her neighbors to submit a complaint to the ACO.

Other business

We received thank you notes from SEVCA and DV Community Cares for the annual appropriation checks.

Adjourn

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

Scott M. Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray