



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF MAY 5, 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 *special meeting* at Town Hill Common at 5:30pm on Wednesday, May 5, 2021.

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

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Stanley Janovsky, Road Commissioner; Seth Boyd, and Aysha Peltz, of Parks Committee; Brad Lackey, land surveyor.

Discuss plans to prevent vandalism

The group attending discussed plans to use boulders to block off green areas from vehicles, to increase the green area on the ballfield side, to keep some sort of wall around the war memorial but center the wall around the memorial, etc. The Parks Committee will draw up plans and discuss them with the Selectboard when ready.

The Whitingham Selectboard held a regular meeting at 6:30pm in the dining hall of the Whitingham Municipal Center on Wednesday, May 5, 2021.

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

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer; Wilmington Police Chief Matt Murano and Seth Boyd, resident.

Others attending remotely: Karen Hein and Jenepher Burnell, residents.

Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Scott Reed called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. There were several changes to the agenda since it was posted.

Hearing of visitors (for concerns not on the agenda) none
none

Policing update with Chief Murano

Days of verbal warnings are long gone. Every stop will receive a written warning or a ticket. Chief Murano feels everything is going well. Before July he will sit down with his staff to discuss how it's going and if/how it should continue.

Financial report review with Treasurer

Revenues are in good shape and right on target. Of course, municipal center rentals is low because of COVID-19.

Seven properties are going to tax sale, two are sewer delinquencies.

We normally talk about the annual audit at this time of year. Ms. Aekus suggests not putting auditing out to bid this year and next because of the sewer project. The current auditing firm is familiar with our process. There are also quite a few grants open now.

ARPA funds might be \$~126,000 or possibly double that. Perhaps ARPA could pay for the paving at Town Hill.

Economic Development Group-current standing (Karen Hein) / discuss Honora Winery

Karen Hein feels that the energy of the committee has waned, they have been having a difficult time even getting a quorum for meetings. If left as is the committee isn't able to function any longer. She is asking what the Selectboard would like to happen with EDG. She feels there are lots of grant opportunities out there that might benefit the town, but feels the committee has hit a wall. Seth Boyd agrees with everything Ms. Hein has said. Craig Hammer noted that EDG has roughly \$27,000, he suggested creating a video about Whitingham after broadband comes to town and the education funding lawsuit is settled, as these will hopefully help sell the town better. James Weber noted that as a business owner in town he doesn't have any connections with other business owners in town. Jenepher Burnell agreed that going back to the strategic plan and updating it is a good idea and to try to get EDG members out of the local business owners. She mentioned that the town could benefit from a part-time grant writer.

It was agreed that EDG will be paused, everyone should think about who would be a good addition to the group and go out and ask them personally to join.

Mr. Weber mentioned that the Honora Winery tasting room in Jacksonville is now for sale, he is not aware of the plans for Jville Brewery or the Winery property in Halifax.

Town Hill: follow up from special meeting at 5:30pm

No follow up necessary.

Highway

Review and sign Decision on Petition to Layout Murdock Lane

At the April 21st meeting the board voted against taking over Murdock Lane. Attorney Fisher prepared the written decision which was reviewed and signed by board members. Gig will mail out copies by certified mail to the interested parties. **A motion was made by Phil Edelstein to sign the written decision against the town takeover of Murdock Lane, seconded by James Weber, three in favor, motion passed.** Chris Walling and Scott Reed abstained from the original vote so they also abstained from this vote and signing the document.

Pick-up Truck status Mr. Janovsky hasn't been able to get any prices on other trucks other than the truck that has been ordered. Dylan Chevrolet gave an estimate, but it might be less than that. No money has been put down. Mr. Janovsky has tried several other dealerships and can't

get any information. Mr. Reed agreed, he wasn't able to get pricing either. The new truck should be here "before snow flies". The difficulty is that the factories have been shut down because of the pandemic. Stanley Janovsky called approximately 15 dealerships all over the country and had no luck. **A motion was made by Craig Hammer to continue with the process to purchase a new pick-up from Dylan Chevrolet, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.**

Review and approve 2 access permits

Christopher Roberts of Two Lakes LLC applied for 2 driveways on Lot 1 Tyanoga Road. After review **a motion was made by Chris Walling to approve and sign the two access permits for Lot 1 Tyanoga Road, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Mr. Janovsky noted that right now would be a perfect time to add on to the sewer system.

Hazard Mitigation:

Review and sign Amended Resolution for Municipal Planning Grant

The Town won a 2020 Municipal Planning Grant to help us with our Hazard Mitigation Projects. The original documents list two Selectboard members who resigned so the paperwork needs to be updated. **A motion was made by James Weber to adopt the Amended Resolution for Municipal Planning Grant appointing Scott Reed as the Authorizing Official; Craig Hammer as the Alternate Authorizing Official and continue with Gig Zboray as the Grant Administrator, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

FEMA grant paperwork

Today we received a "State of Vermont Standard Subrecipient Agreement" for the FEMA buyout of 2984 VT Route 100 in Jacksonville. This is a 27-page document reiterating our understanding of the grant requirements. It needs to be signed by an "authorized representative". Gig has already been appointed grantee, she questioned if the Selectboard would like to appoint her "authorized representative" to sign the Subrecipient Agreement after she reads it in full. **A motion was made by Scott Reed to appoint Gig Zboray as authorized representative to sign the FEMA document, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.**

Gig noted, again, if the property owner decides to continue the process after the property appraisal comes in (due mid-May) the town would arrange a closing, bid for a subcontractor to demolish all structures on the property within 90 days of closing. The demolition phase would include a lead and asbestos survey, abatement if necessary. It would also include the removal of any impervious surfaces and capping of sewer lines at least one foot below grade. The required local match of \$40,437.50 is to come from Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission. Post demolition would include filling, grading, seeding, and mulching of the property. Not included with this grant is widening the river to bankful width and lowering access to the flood plain.

Corona/COVID-19

The Library would like to know the Selectboard's plans for reopening the Municipal Center. The Vermont Forward Phased Reopening Plan calls for no capacity restrictions beginning July 4th. Masks and social distancing would likely still be required. Beginning June 1st indoor gatherings would allow 1 unvaccinated person per 50 square feet up to 300, plus any number of vaccinated

people. The Selectboard replied that the Municipal Center will be fully reopened on July 6th (July 4th is a Sunday and Monday is the holiday).

Review lighting proposals for dining hall

A motion was made by Scott Reed to accept the proposal from JC Electric for replacing the lighting in the dining hall, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Annual pre-buy of fuel

Scott Reed will get pricing and Gig will send an email to all board members for immediate response so we are able to lock in the best price.

Sewer

The construction project finally went out for bid on Thursday, April 29th. There will be a pre-bid meeting for contractors to ask questions and see the sewer plants on Wednesday, May 12th from 11am to 2pm. The bids are due Tuesday, June 1st by 1pm. Bid opening is scheduled June 1st 1-2pm.

The funding application still has not been submitted because the state has not yet approved the Engineering Services Agreement. If the numbers on the ESA do not agree with the application, it will create a longer delay in approval so the engineers prefer to make sure the numbers are the same before filing. **The board signed the signature page again with today's date.**

Junk: update

Helena Queenie's letter was read, Gig will respond with a letter that says something along the lines of if there is anything that can be stored behind the house to clean up the porch a little. Thanks for trying to cooperate.

Approval of Payables Warrant – May 6, 2021

A motion was made by Chris Walling to approve Payables Warrant #W2146 dated May 6, 2021, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Approval of Payroll Warrant – May 6, 2021

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payroll Warrant #W2145 dated May 6, 2021, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of April 21, 2021

A motion was made by Chris Walling to accept the Minutes of April 21, 2021 as written, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Other business / Office Administrator – as needed

Letter from Greg Brown Mr. Brown declined the offer to serve as special projects manager. His letter is attached to these Minutes.

Memorial Day per state guidelines, if anything is done, it will be done at Town Hill to honor the new war memorial.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Phil Edelstein, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Scott Reed adjourned the meeting at 8:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray

Gregory Brown

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April 28, 2021

Whitingham Selectboard
PO Box 529
Jacksonville, VT 05342

Dear Whitingham Selectboard,

I am writing this letter after much consideration to the "special projects manager" position offered after being passed over for the open Selectboard position.

It has come to my attention that the consensus of the board members was that I was the most qualified candidate and would be a good source of knowledge and experience with my past 15 years of service to the town as a Selectboard member. But the decision was made by a majority of the board to appoint Mr. Weber.

I am not opposed to Mr. Weber being a board member. I truly believe he will grow into the position and be a productive part of the current board.

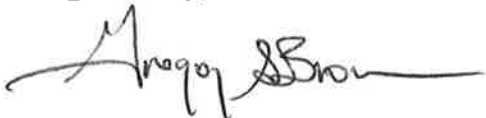
My concern for the decision against me is that I believe it was solely based on personality, not on principle. If future decisions are not based on principles and facts, the credibility of the town as a whole will be called into question at some point. The old adage, "the few shall not rule the many", should be taken into consideration every time a few opinions may try to sway an important decision that will affect the many.

If I could make myself believe that by agreeing to take on the responsibility of a project in town, I would be shown respect of my time and knowledge by the board I could agree to help. I do not feel, at this time, that would happen. Any advice or input to the board on any such projects, I feel, would be stifled by a few outside interests.

I also feel that the duties of board members are to be the projects managers; to make themselves involved and educated on those special projects. That's how it used to work.

Please enter this letter into the Minutes of the meeting for record of my response.

Respectfully,



Gregory Brown

