



**Town of Whitingham
Office of the Selectboard**

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 7, 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, September 7, 2022.

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

Others attending: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; Stanley Janovsky, Jr., Road Commissioner; Almira Aekus, Clerk/Treasurer. Other attendees on the list attached.

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 (scratch discussion of ATV Ordinance update, add discuss HHW collection).

Hearing of Visitors

Sherry Adams had a question about noise; state statute says quiet between sunset and sunrise, she complained about fireworks, etc. and was told she could call the Wilmington Police. She also addressed the board about her letter to the editor that was published in the September 1st edition of the Deerfield Valley News. She wished the board had better control over the last meeting; people were rude, and she was offended by the swearing. Greg Brown responded that he felt the people in attendance approached the meeting as though the board were public enemy number one. Most of the people attending that meeting were only concerned with one agenda item, they were not concerned with anything else the board takes care of. Ms. Adams also took offense from someone threatening the town at that meeting.

ATV Ordinance Mr. Robohm believes that we have in force today an ATV Ordinance. Yes, we do have an ATV Ordinance in place.

It was noted that after the last meeting the ATV Club pulled their request that we change our ATV Ordinance to add more roads. That is why the topic was scratched from the agenda tonight.

Other discussion about ATVs ensued.

Reappraisal: Review and sign agreement

The state has ordered a town wide reappraisal. NEMRC has provided an agreement to be signed indicating the cost will be \$117,600 based on 1,148 parcels, which does not include exempt parcels, postage, software or supplies. Beyond this number, parcels will be charged

at \$100 per parcel. Hearing requests beyond BCA hearings will be billed at \$150 per hour. We currently have \$87,208 in the reappraisal fund. The state will provide some more funding, but we will likely need to add some money to the fund on the next town meeting warrant.

At the March 9, 2022, meeting the board signed the state's "Stipulation" notice which was provided after some property sales were adjusted for various reasons. The changes brought our COD down from 21.4% to 20.54% for 2021. We are only over the state limit by .54% but that requires a reappraisal.

Per the town's Purchasing Policy, professional services are not required to go out to bid. NEMRC has been our assessor for several years, it makes sense to hire them for the reappraisal.

A motion was made by Greg Brown to approve and sign the reappraisal agreement with NEMRC, seconded by Robin Kingsley, four in favor, Craig Hammer opposed, motion passed.

Highway: Review and sign updated Traffic Ordinance to set a speed limit on Parsons Road

On April 7, 2021, a motion was made to begin the process to change the speed limit on Parson Road. The paving project on Parsons Road delayed a traffic study and some of the equipment used in the first study was not functioning correctly. A final traffic study was conducted in 2022 indicated that the 85th percentile of speed on the dirt portion of the road was 37mph and on the newly paved portion was 44mph. The traffic counter on the newly paved portion of the road was on a straight-away. The board feels that 35mph is a reasonable speed for the entire length of Parsons Road, a motion to that effect was made on July 27, 2022.

Updates to the Traffic Ordinance include:

- Rearranging the ordinance to bring the definitions to the beginning
- Article IV, Section 3 updates the locations of all stop and yield signs which were not in the prior ordinance
- Article IV, Section 4 changes the term "traffic lights" to "traffic signals or signs"
- Article VI, Section 1(b) sets a thirty-five mile per hour (35 mph) speed limit the entire length of Parsons Road
- Article VI, this update removes Section 5, Operation in a School Zone, due to the fact that the school is on a state highway
- Article X, Section 5, clarifies that the Ordinance Regulating All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) is a stand-alone ordinance.

A motion was made by James Weber to adopt and sign the updated Traffic Ordinance to become effective November 6, 2022, seconded by Craig Hammer, all in favor.

Gig noted that within forty-four days (October 21, 2022) a petition may be filed for a vote on the Ordinance at an annual or special meeting as provided in 24 V.S.A. § 1973.

Sewer: start discussing budget

Ms. Aekus discussed the upcoming bond payment and fund balance. Mr. Brown suggested we stay on the same track. At the first meeting in October we should set the sewer rate. Gig and James Weber will review and possibly suggest changes to the EU chart.

Mary Wright questioned the sewer budget and rates, much discussion ensued.

Mr. Robohm questioned if there were 2 extra funds in the sewer, Ms. Aekus answered his question, other discussion ensued.

Transfer Station:

Attendant wage A motion was made by Greg Brown to increase the wage for the Transfer Station Attendant to \$20 per hour, seconded by Scott Reed, all in favor. The increase begins with the current pay period.

HHW collection Scott Reed will contact Wayne Wood to request that he help us out with HHW this year, Mr. Hammer suggested a Tuesday because we would have day and evening hours.

Approval of Payables Warrant – September 8, 2022

Mr. Hammer noted his concern about the cost of heating oil. Mr. Brown noted that since 2008 we have been budgeting high for oil, fuel and propane due to the volatile nature of pricing. Our budgets should be OK even with this increase. **A motion was made by Greg Brown to approve Payables Warrant #2310, dated September 8, 2022, seconded by Scott M. Reed, all in favor.**

Approval of Payroll Warrant – September 8, 2022

A motion was made by Craig Hammer to approve Payroll Warrant #2309 dated September 8, 2022, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Review and approve Minutes of August 24, 2022

A motion was made by Greg Brown to accept the Minutes of August 24, 2022, as written, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Other business

Review and approve two letters regarding junk A letter was written to a property owner at the bottom of Gates Pond Road asking to properly store items that were removed from another building. Another letter was written to remind a property owner of Faulkner Road that the town will not be responsible for damage to vehicles/junk parked in the town's right-of-way. The board approved both letters as written.

Mr. Hammer questioned if we should write a letter to the property across from the gas station and Mr. Reed questioned the property across from Riggs Distler. Mr. Weber would like a letter written to Allan Twitchell about his tractor in the town right of way and the sign ordinance. Gig will write letters for the next meeting.

ARPA We received \$56,060.24, the second (and final) installment of the town portion of ARPA money. We are still expecting the second installment of the county payment. A request was

made to donate some of it towards the field improvements; the board asked for a written letter. Ms. Aekus spoke to the auditors who suggested that at some point the board make a motion to allocate the money to wages, to wipe out the money. Mr. Brown pointed out that it is good to have a cushion in the event that Federal money is not available after a natural disaster. No decisions were made regarding ARPA funds.

Gig noted that board members are invited to the BDCC & SeVEDS annual meeting on Thursday, September 15th 4:30-6:30pm at the Cotton Mill Facility in Brattleboro. Laura Sibilila is planning to attend the next Selectboard meeting to give the annual BDCC presentation.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Greg Brown, seconded by James Weber, all in favor.

Scott M. Reed adjourned the meeting at 7:29pm.

Respectfully submitted,
~Gig Zboray

9/7/22 Kenneth M. Bernard

Judith A. Bernard

Martin J. Stueck

Duncan Hegg

Sarah + Justin LaSelva

John + Johanna Robb

Sherry Adams

MARY WRIGHT

Kathryn Andersen

Almira

Martha Phelps

Ron Pastore

Clean Gelover

DAN PURSES

Tyler Leach

Jan Winte Jan Winte