

ABSTRACTS OF MINUTES

TOWN OF WHITINGHAM ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

March 4, 2025

The Annual Town Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. e.s.t. at the Twin Valley Middle High School in the Town of Whitingham, Vermont agreeable to the warning.

At 10:00 a.m. Moderator Leon Corse led the Pledge of Allegiance. Town Clerk, Almira Aekus declared the polls open. He asked the members of the Board of Civil Authority to introduce themselves: Selectboard members; Scott Reed, Lyman Tefft, Jr., Travis Wheeler, James Weber, justices of the peace; Terry Morse, Susan Johnson, Abigail Corse, Rosemary Tefft, Seth Boyd, and Town Clerk Almira Aekus.

Announcements:

Old Home Week sign-up sheet in the foyer

The Moderator thanked Mackenzie and his wife Linda for helping him with the farm chores so that he could attend the meeting.

At 10:15 a.m. the moderator declared the meeting open for business. The Moderator asked if there were any objections to dispensing with the reading of the warning. There were none.

James Weber thanked Moderator Leon Corse for serving as the Town Moderator for 40 years and presented him with a plaque in appreciation. He stated there would be an identical one that would be placed at the Whitingham Municipal Center. He thanked Almira Aekus for her 32 years of service in the town. Both officials had announced in 2024 that they would be stepping down after the 2025 annual town meeting.

Article 1

Voted to authorize general fund expenditures for operating expenses for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026, of **\$821,444.00** of which **\$425,246.00** to be raised in taxes, the balance to be offset by **\$257,371.00** in anticipated revenues and **\$138,827.00** appropriated from prior year's fund balance.

Article 2

Voted to raise and appropriate **\$161,986.00** for the operation of the Town Fire Department for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

Article 3

Voted to raise and appropriate **\$21,000.00** for the Parks Committee for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

Article 4

Voted to raise, and appropriate **\$60,000.00** to the Fire Department Equipment Fund for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

Article 5

Voted to authorize **\$1,684,613.00** for the maintenance and repair of town highways for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026, of which **\$1,470,503.00** to be raised in taxes, the balance to be offset by **\$18676.00** in anticipated revenues and **\$72,434.00** appropriated from prior year's fund balance.

Article 6

Voted to raise, and appropriate **\$125,000.00** to the Highway Equipment Fund for fiscal year July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026.

Article 7

Voted to raise and appropriate **\$50,000.00** to fund the Town Highway Garage Renovation and/or Replacement Fund for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

Article 8

Voted to authorize **\$103,290.00** for the operation of the Whitingham Free Public Library for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026, with **\$85,265.00** to be raised in taxes, and the balance to be offset by **\$18,025.00** in anticipated grants and donations.

Article 9

Voted to raise, and appropriate **\$20,000.00** to the Municipal Facilities Fund for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026, for continued maintenance.

Article 10

Voted to raise and appropriate **\$40,000.00** for improvements to the Historical Society buildings for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

Article 11

Voted to raise and appropriate **\$23,350.00** for the operation of town cemeteries for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026, with **\$18,682.00** to be raised in taxes, and the balance to be offset by **\$1,100.00** in anticipated revenue and **\$3,568.00** appropriated from prior year's fund balance.

Article 12

Voted to raise, and appropriate **\$6,000.00** to support economic development in Whitingham for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

Article 13

Voted to raise and appropriate **\$25,000.00** for support of Old Home Week activities for 2026.

Article 14

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$20,000.00** for the continuing support of ambulance operations by Deerfield Valley Rescue for fiscal year July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

Article 15

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$2,500.00** for Deerfield Valley Community Partnership, an organization that provides programming and activities for youth and families that promote healthy behaviors and prevent youth drug and alcohol use.

State Representative Emily Carris Duncan to address the electorate and gave an update on her participation in the legislature, answered many questions from the voters. The moderator stated it was the first time in his 40 years as moderator that he did not have to seek permission from the electorate to have a state representative speak as she is a Whitingham resident.

Article 16

Voted to raise, and appropriate raise and appropriate the sum of **\$500.00** for Deerfield Valley Food Pantry for the purpose of providing supplemental food assistance to area families in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 17

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$305.00** for Green Mountain RSVP for support of senior volunteer program with training and support for the volunteers who teach Bone Builder classes and who deliver meals in Whitingham in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 18

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,203.00** for Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Inc. to help support outpatient mental health and substance abuse services, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 19

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,500.00** to offset the cost of providing Senior Meals, to Terrie Dumaine, who provides the meals to the senior citizens in the valley.

Article 20

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$750.00** for Senior Solutions -The Council on Aging for Southeastern VT, Inc. to serve elders and assist with funding the community meal, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 21

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,200.00** for Southeastern Vermont Community Action, Inc. (SEVCA) to assist Whitingham in responding to the emergency needs of the community and providing all available and applicable services, including crisis intervention, housing, fuel assistance, weatherization, tax preparation, financial coaching, Head Start services, thrift stores, and micro business development, to families and individuals in need in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Article 22

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$4,071.00** to Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) to provide workforce and economic coordination services to the Windham Region.

Article 23

Voted to raise, appropriate and expend the sum of **\$1,000.00** for the support of Southeast Vermont Transit/The MOOver to provide transportation services to residents of the town.

Article 24

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$6,000.00** for Twin Valley Youth Sports, an organization that provides all students in Whitingham, grades pre-k through 6th, the opportunity to play the organized sports of soccer, basketball, baseball, and softball.

Article 25

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$250.00** for the Windham County Disaster Animal Response Team ("WinDART") to assist in the care and sheltering of pets in the event of a local emergency.

Article 26

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,795.00** for Wings Community Program's summer programming providing four weeks of academic, enrichment, and physical activity for students entering grades K-8 in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2691.

The Moderator recessed the Annual Town Meeting at 12:00 p.m. and announced that LBS was providing a lasagna lunch, salad, garlic bread, and homemade pie for \$10.00. The meeting will be reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

The Moderator called the meeting back to order at 1:05 p.m.

Article 27

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$11,000.00** for Wings Community Programs that provide after school programs for Whitingham students Kindergarten through 12th grade.

Article 28

Voted to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$850.00** for the Women's Freedom Center for general operating support to provide services to survivors and their children who are experiencing emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse and are residents of Whitingham, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2691.

Article 29

Voted to authorize payment of real estate taxes on or before November 1, 2025, with ninety-days' notice; to be made by physical delivery to the tax collector before 2pm on that date or with a first-class postmark on or before that date.

Article 30

Voted to make overdue taxes bear interest at a rate of one percent (1%) per month or fraction thereof for the first three (3) months and thereafter one and one-half percent (1 ½%) per month or fraction thereof from the due date of such tax pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5136.

Article 31

Defeated a motion to approve and access a 1% local options tax on rooms, meals & alcoholic beverages, and sale pursuant to 24 Vermont Statutes Annotated, section 138.

Article 32

Voted Objection to Consideration. The article read "Shall the Town establish a reserve fund to be called the Beautification and Improvements Fund to be funded by the 1% Options Tax in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2804."

Article 33

To transact any other business that may legally come before this meeting.

Moderator Leon Corse said he mostly enjoyed the job of moderator and that it was bittersweet that he was getting done but he was looking forward to participating in the meeting from the other side. He thanked his wife Linda for her unwavering support, which was not always easy when running a farm.

Michael Mandracchia spoke on behalf of the Whitingham, Halifax, Marlboro Housing Rehabilitation Committee, which provides low-cost income-based loans. There are funds available and encouraged the electorate to reach out for information.

Article 34

To elect all Town Officers required by law. Polls were open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Twin Valley Middle High School Auditorium, 4299 Vermont Route 100, Whitingham, Vermont with the following results:

Moderator, 1 year	Seth D. Boyd
Town Clerk, 3 years	Almira Aekus
Selectboard, 1 year	Rick Gramlin
Selectboard, 2 years	Lyman "Skip" Tefft
Selectboard, 3 years	Scott Reed
Cemetery Commissioner, 3 years	Vacant (No one was elected)
Library Trustee, 1 year	Angela Dornburgh
Library Trustee, 3 years (Vote for 2)	Judy Bernard & Tanya Bernard
School Director, 3 years (TVUUSD)	Kristy Corey

The floor meeting adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

Dated at Whitingham, This 5th day of March 2025

Attest: *Almira L. Aekus*
Almira L. Aekus, Town Clerk

NUMBER OF VOTERS ON THE CHECKLIST – 1070
NUMBER WHO VOTED BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT – 148
HIGHEST NUMBER VOTED FROM THE FLOOR – 57