**Minutes of regular meeting of the Whitingham Selectboard**

**January 18, 2017**

These Minutes shall be accepted into the public record (with any corrections noted)

at a future meeting of the Whitingham Selectboard.

The Whitingham Selectboard held a regular meeting on Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at 7:30pm in the Selectboard Office of the Municipal Center, 2948 VT Route 100, Jacksonville, VT.

Selectboard members present: Chair, Keith Bronson; Vice Chair, Allan Twitchell; Members Greg Brown, Karl Twitchell and Robin Kingsley.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Administrative Assistant; Almira Aekus, Delinquent Tax Collector; Seth Boyd, School Board Director; Jim Dassati, Deerfield Valley News.

**Call to Order. Additions or Changes to Agenda.**

Vice Chair, Allan Twitchell, called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Greg Brown requested that we move executive session to the first action item.

**Hearing of Visitors**: No visitors.

**Executive Session to discuss ongoing litigation**

At the advice of the Town attorney, at 7:32pm **Greg Brown moved to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the Town’s tax sale litigation would clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage if its legal strategy was made public, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor.**

**Greg Brown moved to enter into executive session to discuss the tax sale litigation under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(A) of the Vermont Statutes to include Gig Zboray and Almira Aekus, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor.**

**A motion was made by Greg Brown to exit executive session at 7:46 pm, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor.**

**A motion was made by Greg Brown to ratify the “Stipulated Settlement Agreement” in the matter of Peter J. Rysz, plaintiff vs. Town of Whitingham and Almira Aekus, defendants, seconded by Allan Twitchell, all in favor.**

**Approval of Payables Warrant – January 19, 2017**

**A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to add to Payables Warrant W1730 dated January 19, 2017 a payment to Peter J. Rysz and his attorney, Bruce Hasselbach in the amount of $3,200, seconded by Greg Brown, all in favor.**

**A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to approve Payable Warrant W1730 with the above change, dated January 19, 2017, seconded by Greg Brown, all in favor.**

**Approval of Payroll Warrant – January 19, 2017**

**A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to approve the Payroll Warrant W1729 dated January 19, 2017, seconded by Allan Twitchell, all in favor.**

**Approval of Minutes of January 4, 2017**

**A motion was made by Allan Twitchell to approve the Minutes of January 4, 2017, as written, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor.**

**School budget discussion**

The Selectboard discussed problems with the state school funding methods and the devastating effect it has on the Twin Valley School District budget. The school board cut the budget by $750,000 over last year. To stay out of the “penalty box” they would be required to slash another $750,000. Due to the change in the CLA (common level of appraisal) and to the calculation used for “equalized pupils” the tax rate to run the school will be at $2.277; a 52-cent increase over the current tax rate*. It was noted that running the whole town is at a tax rate of 68-cents!*

The Selectboard and the School Board, are outraged that the State can keep penalizing Whitingham and Wilmington when they are the pilot towns for merging. Act 46 is the State trying to encourage towns to consolidate but the results of the Whitingham-Wilmington merger show a large increase in cost so there is no incentive to consolidate at all.

The Selectboard will write a letter to all of our State Representatives. Mr. Boyd indicated that the School Board would do so also. Mrs. Aekus suggested that a similar letter could be written for local residents to sign.

Karl Twitchell requested that an article be added to the Warning for 2017 Town Meeting to appropriate $100,000 to increase the litigation fund in the event that the Town will need to litigate with the state over the inequality of the school tax.

In regards to the fuel tank: Mr. Boyd contacted Greg Nido recently and requested that the underground fuel tank be pumped out and cleaned. Once clean it should be filled to capacity to prevent condensation build up. Greg Brown suggested that due to the age of the underground tank perhaps in the near future a 5,000 gallon above ground tank should be installed. However, with the money troubles in the school budget that does not seem feasible in the near future.

**Review and sign Warning for 2017 Town Meeting:**

**A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to sign the Warning for Town Meeting as written** (with the addition of the article mentioned above)**, seconded by Greg Brown, all in favor.**

**Other business / Administrative Assistant – as needed** none

**Adjourn**

**A motion was made to adjourn by Greg Brown, seconded by Karl Twitchell all in favor.**

Allan Twitchell adjourned the meeting at 9:03pm. Respectfully submitted, ~Gig Zboray