

**Town of Whitingham**

**Office of the Selectboard**

**MINUTES OF OCTOBER 25, 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, October 27, 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; Member Karl Twitchell.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Office Administrator; State Representatives Laura Sibilia and John Gannon; Carrol Havreluk, EZ Riders Snowmobile Club; Stanley Janovsky, Road Commissioner; Phil Edelstein and Seth Boyd, residents.

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

Keith Bronson called the meeting to order at 7:31pm. There were several additions to the agenda under #9 other business.

**Hearing of visitors** Carrol Havreluk asked permission on behalf of the EZ Riders Snowmobile Club to use approximately 400 yards of the town trail portion of Hamilton Tavern Road. **A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to allow the club to use the trail and for Keith Bronson to sign the VAST Landowner Permission Form, seconded by Allan Twitchell, all in favor with Keith Bronson casting his vote.** Keith Bronson signed the appropriate paperwork.

**Representatives Laura Sibilia and John Gannon**

*Broadband and connectivity*. Our representatives are fighting hard to get the dollars to make improvements. Laura Sibilia noted that the state has found it very difficult to work with VTel and will no longer support any ideas for funding of that company. If the Town is considering a comprehensive telecommunications plan she encourages folks to come to the Broadband Summit on November 1st 1-4pm in Dover. CoverageCo has not fulfilled their bargain with grant funding either. They again requested money this year from the state. They received a reprieve for more time to fulfill their contract, but they did not get more money from the state.

Phil Edelstein informed our representatives of his experience with broadband and cellular service and provided positive feedback about VTel.

*S.27, a proposed bill that would require all municipalities in Vermont to provide “primary police coverage” within its jurisdiction:* John Gannon provided information about this proposed bill. The Selectboard members informed our representatives that this would be very difficult for the Town of Whitingham and requested no more unfunded mandates. Keith Bronson and Gig Zboray attended a senate hearing on this topic and it seemed clear

that even established police forces have a difficult time finding qualified applicants. If any changes in the system were to be made the Board suggested increasing the State Police force rather than mandating all the small towns to do something individually that they cannot afford.

*Education Funding:* was brought up, along with unfunded mandates again.

*VT Rural Caucus invites Testimony on the Future of the Rural Economy:* Gig & Phil questioned Laura and John about the best way to provide testimony for this. The Economic Development Group is working on a letter and are considering getting a group to go in person to testify. Laura mentioned it’s a good idea to offer constructive ideas, not just negativity. Appearing in person allows us to face the committee but we might only get a few minutes to speak.

*VTrans*: Keith read a list of complaints that we have against VTrans. John Gannon responded with some information that he had regarding paving of Route 9. Laura suggests that we copy both her and John in on our emails to Rob Faley (VTrans District Manager). Phil suggested that VTrans contact our town to find out where the issues are before any paving projects are started.

*Act 148:* the Selectboard expressed their complaint about composting and the cost of it as well as Household Hazardous Waste Collections (state requires 4 per year). John Gannon thought it might be a possibility to alter some of the Solid Waste District rules.

*Carbon Tax:* Laura would be in favor of a carbon tax if it was many states, not just New England and if 100% of the tax dollars were used to offset the additional cost for people who need to drive and people who like heat. She will never vote for something that is Vermont only.

*Education:* John Gannon would like to have a joint meeting with Wilmington and Whitingham Selectboards and the School Board(s) to come up with strategies for more engagement with Montpelier and other towns. Laura and John fought in the House for Whitingham on many fronts of education and lost on everyone. There is more that can be done in terms of communicating with the state. Laura has been working on rural weighting as a new way to count students, it was passed but the Agency of Education recently said they are not going to do it. John would like to meet with the Towns before January 3rd when the new legislative session begins. He will organize the meeting.

**Review and approve Access Permit**

**A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to approve Kristen Breeden’s access permit application, seconded by Allan Twitchell, all in favor.**

**Appoint Green Up Day 2018 coordinator**

**A motion was made by Allan Twitchell to appoint Aysha Peltz and Todd Wahlstrom as Green Up Day Coordinators for 2018, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor with Keith Bronson casting his vote.**

**Transfer Station/WSWMD**

Gig received an email from Bob Spenser that the Board of Supervisors had made some changes to the Termination Agreement at their October 12th meeting and that it would be

mailed to us. As of today, we did not receive the revised agreement yet. Gig checked the WSWMD website today to see what the Minutes might have noted about the changes proposed and the Minutes were not posted on their website yet.

**Education Funding Litigation**

**A motion was made by Allan Twitchell to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the town’s education funding litigation would clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage if its legal strategy was made public, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor with Keith Bronson casting his vote.**

**A motion was made by Allan Twitchell to enter into executive session to discuss education funding litigation under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(1)(A) of the Vermont Statutes to include Gig Zboray and Seth Boyd, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor with Keith Bronson casting his vote.**

With no decisions made Executive Session was exited at 9:15pm.

**Approval of Payables Warrant – October 26, 2017**

**A motion was made by Allan Twitchell to approve Payables Warrant W1818 dated October 26, 2017, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor with Keith Bronson casting his vote.**

**Approval of Payroll Warrant – October 26, 2017**

**A motion was made by Allan Twitchell to approve Payroll Warrant E1817 dated October 26, 2018, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor with Keith Bronson casting his vote.**

**Approval of Minutes of September 29 and October 18, 2017**

**A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to approve the Minutes of the September 29, 2017 Selectboard Meeting and the October 18, 2017 Hazard Mitigation Planning Meeting as written, seconded by Allan Twitchell, all in favor with Keith Bronson casting his vote.**

**Other business / Office Administrator – as needed**

1. The check to Layla’s for Animal Control purposes that was added to the September 27th warrant was not needed and was subsequently voided.
2. The ZBA decision was officially appealed to Environmental Court. Attorney Bob Fisher is representing the Town.
3. The Selectboard meeting scheduled for Wednesday, November 22, the day before Thanksgiving was rescheduled to Monday, November 20th.
4. A River Corridors informational meeting hosted by WRC will be held November 29th from 6-8pm here in Selectboard Office.
5. Budgeting- The Selectboard would like the bookkeeper and treasurer to populate the budget with suggestions and include a 2% cost of living for employees (not elected officials). The board would like Stanley to do annual reviews of his employees.

**Adjourn**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Allan Twitchell, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor with Keith Bronson casting his vote.**

Keith Bronson adjourned the meeting at 9:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

~Gig Zboray