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

**December 9, 2015**

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

at the next meeting of the Whitingham Selectboard.

The Whitingham Selectboard held a regular meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2015 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 Greg Brown; Member, Karl Twitchell; Member, Robin Kingsley.

Others present: Gig Zboray, Selectboard Administrative Assistant; Vicky Abare of VLCT Pacif Insurance (phone in); Stanley Janovsky, Highway Foreman; Almira Aekus, Town Clerk/Treasurer; Jenepher Burnell, Lister; Cara Cheyette, Deerfield Valley News Reporter.

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

Chair, Keith Bronson called the meeting to order at 7:31pm. Additions to the Agenda: add 10d, Vermont Managers’ Administrators’ and Colleagues’ Luncheon. Changes to Agenda: Vicky Abare could not attend in person, she called in. Heidi Joyce could not attend.

1. **Hearing of Visitors** (actually came after #3 due to incoming phone call).

Cara Cheyette of Deerfield Valley News asked about distribution credit and clarified increase in premium for property & casualty insurance of $1,197 but better coverage in case of a loss. Cara questioned coverage of Employee Health Insurance: Bronze Plan paired with town funded savings account. Town picks up 83% of the premium. The town picks up a large percentage of the out of pocket costs of the employee. Bronze plan deductible went up considerably (now $4,100). No employee has ever hit the full deductible, what the Town provides still covers most expenses. If an employee were to max out their plan they would be responsible for $1,200 out of pocket. Bronze plan raised the deductible, the Town left the deductible coverage for employees as it was in the prior year. The town budgets the full amount including what deductibles they will cover. We have 7 family plans, 1 parent/child and 1 single.

1. **VLCT Pacif building insurance with Vicky Abare**

Green Mountain Hall value cut from $449,944 to $150,000 and coverage changed from Guaranteed Replacement Value (GRC) to Functional Replacement Value (FRC). This will show a savings of $931 in the premium. Value of items in GMH would need an appraisal done if contents are covered. We need a record of the value of the contents.

School house value cut from $132,232 to $50,000 and coverage changed from GRC to FRC. This will show a savings of $255 in the premium.

Town Garage change to Guaranteed Replacement Cost at the UIS value of $589,093 premium would be $2,025 (versus ACV premium of $1,565). Selectboard feels the actual cost to replace the garage if it were destroyed would be closer to $1,100,000 (based on 4,400 square feet at $250 per). Vicky Abare says regardless of how much it costs they will replace it if we have GRC coverage.

Sewer Buildings: Rate for building is the same as rate for contents. Vicky recommends changing both plants to GRC. The equipment is part of the structure, but we have it covered as contents. Talk of putting the value all in the building rather than split with contents. In the future VLCT will have UIS evaluations on the sewer plants but they cannot provide that now. For right now we are going to leave the value of the buildings and contents as is but switch the coverage to GRC.

Municipal Center/Library will also be switched to GRC using the UIS value.

Replacement cost of sheds would be about $5,000 each and were changed to GRC.

Fire Stations should also be at GRC. (Increase of $170 in premium for the Whitingham Fire House and $329 for the Jacksonville Fire House).

Everything except historic buildings will change to GRC; the historic buildings will be at Functional Replacement Value.

$12,379 will be the new premium for property insurance, an increase in annual premium of $1,197 but we will be fully covered to replace the buildings. Total property & casualty premium is $36,177 and Workers Comp coverage is $23,444 with a distribution credit of $3,934 for a total of $55,687 with a quarterly payment of $13,922.

**Motion by Greg Brown to accept changes made for a total annual contribution for Property & Casualty and Worker’s Compensation Insurance of $55,687, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor.**

Vicky Abare disconnected the phone call.

1. **VLCT Wellness with Heidi Joyce**

Tabled, Heidi Joyce could not attend.

1. **NEMRC Reappraisal Agreement**

Jen Burnell spoke with Ed Clodfelter, he and the Listers decided to go ahead and do the “update” with NEMRC which will update the land schedule, bring CAMA up to date with new cost table, and look at local multiplier, but before all that can happen the state mandates that a data quality study is done. If data quality is poor then a full reappraisal will be required. Because professionals did the data collection in 2004 they are confident that the data quality study will be good and the update can go forward. The cost for this update (partial reappraisal) is $52,000, a full reappraisal would be twice as much. Greg Brown thanked the Listers for their dedication to the position and readiness to take on this task. Jen is pleased that Judy Carrier has agreed to help with the in-house clerk work. Greg asks if we have fund money available other than litigation funds. Almira states there is $59,000 in the reappraisal fund and the Act 60 fund has $21,000 available. The Selectboard would like the Listers budget to remain the same and not increased to cover the work on the reappraisal work which should come out of the reappraisal fund. An article can be drawn up to transfer the Act 60 Fund into the Reappraisal Fund effective at some date. The Listers will need to keep track of their hours working on reappraisal separate from regular Lister hours.

Cara Cheyette questioned the reasoning behind this update and Jenepher explained that current sales are not coming in line with assessed values and the data needs to be updated, the Town’s Coefficient of Dispersion (COD) is at about 17%, if gets to 20% it triggers reappraisal. Our Common Level of Appraisal (COA) is at 107.76%, it should be at 100%.

**A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to sign the agreement with NEMRC for the reappraisal update on Jenepher Burnell’s recommendation, seconded by Allan Twitchell, all in favor.**

1. **Approval of Payables Warrant**

**A motion was made by Karl Twitchell to pay Payables Warrant W-1624 dated December 10, 2015, seconded by Robin Kingsley, all in favor.**

1. **Approval of Payroll Warrant**

**A motion was made by Robin Kingsley to pay W-1623 Payroll Warrant dated December 10, 2015, seconded by Greg Brown,** **all in favor.**

1. **Approval of Minutes of November 24, 2015**

**A motion was made by Robin Kingsley to approve the Minutes of November 24, 2015, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor**.

1. **Begin Budgeting**

Almira punched in numbers based on budgets that have been submitted by departments and other information received to date. She feels that the tax rate level would remain the same as last year. Tentative fund balances were noted in yellow at the top. Greg Brown suggested a slight raise of $30.50 for the year for Selectboard Members just to make the amount an even number (Members $1,969.50 to $2,000) The Chair would increase $28 for the year ($2,272 to $2,300).

The insurance will change based on the changes made to insurance coverage at this meeting. The auditors budget is only $500 just in case we choose to have the Town Report printed by an outside source (Staples) rather than print in house.

Board of Health wages include Health Officer and Deputy, Almira will add a line to separate Deputy wages.

Town Clerk budget went up slightly because it will be a general election year so there needs programing done on the tabulator and ballot clerk increases. Decrease in Town Clerk fees because they are lower now.

Financial Operations budget decreased by $20,218.

Listers wages to be corrected to $5,000 (and correct FICA/Medi) due to drawing reappraisal wages from the reappraisal fund. In the Town Report the Selectboard should address the Reappraisal Fund and the Listers should also include a write-up about the reappraisal. An article (#2) will need to be written to transfer funds from Act 60 to Reappraisal. A note will be needed to amend the (Listers) budget to increase the wages if Article 2 does not pass at Town Meeting.

Town Nurse budget was changed from last year to adjust the FICA/Medi.

Tax Collector increase $3,000 – went middle of the road with penalties (hard to budget for that), postage was increased.

Animal Control lowered $883 (no office assistant and retirement).

General Expenses: Audit figure should be available before budget is finalized. Computer Contracts include CAMA and NEMRC. Emergency Management reduce to $0, Stanley says the cost last year was because we needed an Emergency Action Plan which was a one-time expense. Memorial Day Flowers change title to Town Flowers budget increased a little because it will be Old Home Week in 2016. Auditors talked about taking marriage and dog licences, penalties and town clerk fees out of the budget – but that can be discussed at a later date. Wings funding is now separate from the School User Fee. Seminars/Dues and Course Fees does not need to be in General Expenses because each department has their own, Almira will remove it. Discussion of Fire Department telephone, the Whitingham Ambulance reimbursed the Town for the cost of the phone but since ambulance service was switched to Deerfield Valley Rescue that phone line is now used by the Fire Department as a second line (one number, two lines). Discussion of Town Web page budget, possibly increase it to cover updating the Town website. Almira thinks Stacy Birch could do the job. We need to research the cost.

Municipal Center: Snow removal budget covers some of the Municipal Employee wages. Cleaning costs discussed.

Historical Society is level funded.

Planning Commission: Windham Regional Members was discussed and a figure of $1,440 was decided. Windham Regional Meetings ? Almira will look into this.

ZBA: left the same.

Law Enforcement: left the same so there is coverage available for Old Home Week.

Transfer Station: WSWMD annual assessment went down 11%. Transfer Station assistant wages were a little high in the current year because Clyde was sick. Cara asked if we would share the Transfer Station with Halifax and the Selectboard clearly said NO, because it is subsidized by the Town.

Town Hill: Mowing – Almira will check the contract.

Library: Almira explained how it is not in the NEMRC system so she had to add information to the budget report.

Cemetery: As submitted by Commission.

Highway: Municipal Employee wages needs to be reduced. In notes “quantity” is spelled wrong. A fund balance of $29,950 remains from fiscal year 2015.

Sewer matches itself.

Almira gave the Selectboard copies of the current budget status report and the fund balances as of November 30, 2015

1. **Miscellaneous/Other Business/Mail**
2. **Hired vs Elected Employee questions** Tabled.
3. **Sign letter to WRC / Municipal Center Bridge info.**

**Motion by Greg Brown, seconded by Robin Kingsley for Keith Bronson to sign the letter to Windham Regional to review and approve the Town Plan, all in favor.**

Jen Burnell explained what happened at recent meeting about the Municipal Center bridge (notes of the meeting were provided to Selectboard members). Stanley Janovsky mentioned that he had given a grant application to the Village of Jacksonville Electric Company and apparently they never filled out the paperwork to get improvements to the sidewalks. Jen feels that the more conversations happening with local and state agencies about the stream bank condition the more likely it is that VTrans will address the situation themselves and the money will not have to come from the Town.

Keith Bronson noted his appreciation of Phil & Ally Edelstein volunteering to oversee this project and future grant application including following up the ANR and WRC about the stream.

1. **Recognition of letter written to Greg Brown from the Robohms.**

On November 23, 2015 Greg Brown met with the Robohms and Almira Aekus and went over the Robohms list of concerns and questions. They feel they were able to assure the Robohms that they have tied up some loose ends and going forward are clear changes in the format and accountability. A reply will note that we have taken their suggestions into consideration and we will act on them as we see fit. Positions that are reappointed have never been posted. None paid positions have been posted if the position was vacated. Paid positions would not be posted if they are refilled by the same person. Gig should check if the reappointed positions need to be posted. Other suggestions will be addressed in a response to them.

1. **Vermont Mangers’ Administrators’ and Colleagues’ Luncheon** Selectboard agreed that it is worthwhile for Gig to attend one meeting to see what it is about and if it will be helpful in her new position. Selectboard also approved Gig attending “Town Meeting Tune-Up” in February and “Spring Selectboard Institute” in March as these trainings will be helpful.

**OTHER/Mail/Old Business:**

**School Generator:** Karl Twitchell and Allan Twitchell attended a school board meeting last night. It was discussed that the Town would buy the filter/water separator (marine application dual filter) (about $1,300) then the school would be responsible for installing it and maintaining it. There should be several people familiar with the system (school custodian, Peter Bernard and Stanley Janovsky) in case of emergency. The money for the separator would come out of Civil Defense. The fuel tank is 23 years old, unsure if it is single wall or double wall. Down the road the school will have to budget a new tank. Stanley asked if Nido’s could drain the tank. Keith suggested the tank could be relined. Greg asked if the bottom could be purged or siphoned off. Codogni Plumbing will install the filter. As a designated shelter the furnaces must run also (not just the generator) so the filter should be placed at a location to filter the whole system. **Greg Brown made a motion to utilize civil defense fund money to provide a filter system for the heating and generator at the civil defense facility also known as the Twin Valley Middle/High School seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor.**

**Highway Foreman Credit Limit: A motion was made by Greg Brown, seconded by Robin Kingsley to increase Stanley’s credit card limit to $2,000, all in favor.**

**Driveway Permit:** Debra Pierce applied for an access permit. If we approve the permit it will be challenged by Phil Edelstein, if we reject the permit it is sure to be challenged by the applicant. Phil has been in consultation with his attorney already, grounds for denial according to his attorney is “access on a hill”. Greg would like to contact Fisher & Fisher to clarify all the various issues. Hurd Lane is still a class 3 road, Phil only pays for snow removal. In 2006 agreement was written …”landowners agree to be responsible for snow removal”. Is there a stipulation about a property with 2 road frontages and a hill? Jen Burnell suggested consulting with VLCT. Cara Cheyette suggested having Phil’s attorney write up the statute or case law that bears on the issue. At this point Stanley has no basis to not approve the permit. Gig will ask Phil to have his attorney write us a letter referencing State Statutes or case law. We will then consult with VLCT to review what Phil’s attorney has told us.

**This permit has been tabled because it is not on the Agenda.**

**Christmas letter** to employees was passed around and signed by the Selectboard members.

**Thank you to Wanda Walkowiak** was discussed during budgeting. An honorarium will be included in the Selectboard Annual Report and Almira will look to see what was done in past years.

**Santa comes to Fire House:** December 20th at 5 o’clock. Gig will post to website.

**Worker’s Comp Insurance:** Gig wrote a memo to Stanley, Marylee and Selectboard. Robin Kingsley mentioned that it is important to stay on top of the proper procedure to make sure all subcontractors have their own coverage.

**11. Adjourn**

**A motion was made by Greg Brown to adjourn at 10:28pm, seconded by Karl Twitchell, all in favor.** Keith Bronson adjourned the meeting.Respectfully submitted, ~Gig Zboray