

Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes July 1, 2022 Regular Meeting

Via Zoom

Kord Scott, selectboard chair
George Dutton, selectboard
Michael Pelton, selectboard
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk

Others Attending:
Bill Dunkel
Tom Widger
Abby Pelton
Maureen Bell
Kathy Scott
Ashley Pinger
Jessica Clay
Elizabeth Stober
Ginny Crittenden
Barbara Jean Quinn

Call to Order

Kord announced the meeting and called it to order at 5:31 PM and began the Zoom recording.

Additions to Agenda/Announcements/Reminders

There were no additions to the agenda, announcements or reminders. Kord changed the order of the agenda items to move the Vicious Dog item to the beginning of Old Business.

Approval of Minutes

There were no changes to the minutes from the meeting on June 20, 2022.

Motion: To approve the minutes from both meetings. Kord moved, and all agreed.

Announcements/Reminders

- Bill Dunkel, Energy Committee chair, said they are taking orders for Window Dressers. He is available to answer questions and to take measurements of windows that need insulation.
- Abby Pelton, WES school board member, said the Friends of the Windham School are conducting a fund-raiser to improvements to the building.
- Michael said the Emergency Communications operators, Jim McCandless and Tan Bronson, are looking for other ham operators to assist them.
- Spray foam is being considered for the Meeting House. Other forms of weatherization are also being explored.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Correspondence

Twelve emails or letters were received and reviewed by Kord. None were urgent.

Next Step: Kord will forward these to George and Michael to review and Mac to record. Any related discussion will take place at the next meeting.

New Business

Community Bulletin Board – Vance Bell, web master for the town's website, turned off the comment site, as it can be used for unwanted messages. Maureen will look into other towns' message boards. Michael said ours should not include public opinion but be a way to publicize items for sale, services available, events to attend, etc.

Next Step: The selectboard will continue to look into ways to have a bulletin board on our website.

VHIP (Vermont Housing Improvement Program) – There are grants available for homeowners through this state agency that is addressing the homeless problem. The grants are for landlords who have tenants in housing that needs repair. Michael suggested that second-home owners might create rental units in their properties. The grants currently do not serve second-home owners, but the program is changing. Further info is available at <https://accd.vermont.gov/housing/vermont-housing-improvement-program>

Next Step: Kord is applying as a landlord, and he will use his experience as an example to help others.

CAC (Citizen Advisory Committee) – Michael has requested information about this committee that oversees low-interest loans to town residents. This service needs more publicity.

Next Step: Michael will pursue having information posted on the town website.

Old Business/Roads

Calendar Update – There were none.

Next Steps from Previous Meeting

1. Vicious Dog Hearing Outcome – Animal Control Officer Ashley Pinger reported that the Clay's fines still do not appear to be paid. Jessica Clay said she mailed the check and sent a copy of it to Ashley before mailing it. Unfortunately, it can take a long time for checks to clear through state government. Selectboard members stated that they want to be compassionate, but as town officials, this matter needs to come to an end. After discussion, Jessica agreed to pay the fine online and print a receipt showing the payment had been made. She and Ashley will make calls to ensure that the paper check is not cashed by the state.
Next Step: If there is no proof by Tuesday, July 5th that the fines were paid online, the Clay's dog will be seized.
2. Logging Concerns – Kord spoke with Richard Paré, the town's road foreman, regarding concerns about debris left behind on Howard Hill Road. The debris is in Andover.
Next Step: Kord will ask Imme Maurath to determine who the log hauler is and whether they have a heavy weight permit from Windham if they are using our roads.
3. Contract for Animal Control Officer – Michael has reviewed the contract, but would like to compare it to the current contract. George said the AOC has served the town well. Kord has not yet reviewed the new contract. The cost to us is still unknown.
Next Step: Kord will send the current contract to Michael. The matter will be reviewed and discussed further before the contract is signed.
4. Roadside Mower – Only one proposal has been received for a loader-mounted mower attachment, which was discussed last week, and it is around \$106,000. We need to find out how much life is left in our bucket loader and whether it needs to be preserved for its current uses. We need to look into prices for other loader-mounted mower attachments.
Next Step: Ask Richard to come to our next meeting, report on options with costs, and help selectboard make a decision. Also, consider having him come monthly.

5. Invasive Roadside Plants – Richard has concerns about the effectiveness of mowing to eliminate invasive roadside plants. Poison parsnip is a huge problem already. The town’s Conservation Committee looked into Grazon and continues to reject the idea of spraying. (See attached email.) George wants to talk to others about how to deal with this. Maureen suggested asking state officials what they recommend. George suggested talking to Marc Pickering at VTrans. Ginny spoke on behalf of the Conservation Committee and said they have been cutting for several years and where they cut, it looks better. She appreciates the mowing that has been done. George noted that there are also negative impacts from mowing.
Next Step: Kord will talk to Mark Pickering about recommended treatments and will get a list from him of vendors who use sprays. He’ll give that list to George, who will contact the vendors.
6. ARPA Update – Mac reported that emails have been received offering three other ideas for the use of the ARPA funds. All three relate to the school and are probably not allowable for ARPA funds. Maureen forwarded information about ideas from last year, some of which are the same as the committee’s suggestions. The committee meets on July 11 and will report on costs and further info about their ideas.
Next Step: Mac will update the selectboard at their July 18th meeting.
7. Reappraisal – No listers were present at the meeting to report on the reappraisal. The selectboard has questions regarding NEMRC, their relationship to the state, their request for monthly payments, and our obligation to them. The board also wonders about other proposals.
Next Step: Kord will ask the listers to come to the next meeting.
8. Zoning and “Slate Ridge” Type Usage – Kord and Bill Dunkel spoke with Bob Fisher, town attorney, on June 21. Bill reported that Bob said our current zoning regulations protect us from having “assault training” or other paramilitary usage in town, as such usage is not listed in our zoning regulations as permitted, and anything not listed as permitted is prohibited. However, someone could get a permit in a commercial area and then expand for paramilitary training. To avoid that, either the town needs a carefully defined addition to our zoning regulations regarding what we prohibit, or the selectboard needs to know what permits are granted and remain aware of what is going on in town, so that they can prohibit “zoning creep” (someone getting a permit and then going beyond what the permit allows). Michael said it is unwise to ban things outright. He noted that Section 207 in our regs prohibits slaughterhouses, but having a well-run slaughterhouse here would be a blessing for the town. The selectboard needs to be diligent about enforcing the regulations we have. The Vermont Supreme Court supports a town’s right to establish and enforce prohibitions.
Moved: To keep our zoning regulations as they are. Kord moved, and all agreed.
Next Step: We need to arrange for the selectboard to receive copies of all zoning applications.
9. FEMA – All costing has been completed except that for Wheeler Road, which is under review. The process continues until all of FEMA’s questions are answered. We are still waiting for the FEMA reps to return to get our related administrative costs. How much we’ll receive and when we’ll receive it should be known soon.

Other Old Business/Road Issues

Kord displayed a map of Windham (see attached) showing our roads by class. Currently, the connection between Ingalls Road and Old Farm Road is a Class 4 road. It is a 5200-foot long and a single lane that is passable now only by ATV. If we upgraded it to Class 3, there might be a little funding available for that. The selectboard also looked at roads off Toad Road in West Windham, but these run through private property and from there are mostly in Jamaica. Harrington Road, in northern Windham, also becomes a Class 3 road, but that part of the road is not needed. Ginny pointed out that currently West Windham Road is the only way out of West Windham, and if the Burbee Pond damn were to flood, there would be no way out. She supported a focus on the improvement of Ingalls to Old Farm, as that would provide an additional exit. Michael said the board needs to make sure all areas of town have needed exits.

Next Step: Richard will submit a cost analysis for the upgrade of Ingalls to Old Farm, as Class 3 and Class 4.

Payroll/Bills

The attorney's fees for the two law suits against the town are \$6,800, so far. The motion to dismiss has not been answered by the judge, and Bob doesn't know why.

Moved: To approve the pay orders received from the town treasurer. Kord moved, and George agreed, while Michael abstained (due to not having reviewed all items).

Moved: To have Kord sign for the payments presented. Kord moved, and George agreed, while Michael abstained (due to not having reviewed all items).

Executive Session

Moved: To adjourn the regular meeting at 7:12 and end the Zoom recording, and go into executive session to discuss a personnel issue. Kord moved and all agreed.

Moved: To adjourn the executive session at 7:49, return to the regular meeting, and restart the Zoom recording.

Moved: To have Kord contact the VLCT about warning and conducting a meeting to address personnel issues, and to authorize Kord to contact the individuals involved to ask them to attend an executive session after the next selectboard meeting. Kord moved, and all agreed.

Adjournment

Moved: To adjourn the meeting at 7:53 PM. Kord moved and all agreed.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for July 18, 2022 at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy, selectboard clerk
Approved July 18, 2022

Accompanying documents:
Email from Conservation Committee
Road Map of Windham