

**Windham VT Selectboard Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2022 Regular Meeting**

Via Zoom

Kord Scott, selectboard chair
George Dutton, selectboard
Michael Pelton, selectboard

Others attending:

Maureen Bell	Jon Gordon
Gail Wyman	Abby Pelton
Cathy Fales	Tom & Eileen Widger
Ellen McDuffie	Kathy Scott (briefly)

Call to Order

Kord announced the meeting, called it to order, and started the recording at 5:30 PM.

Additions to Agenda/Announcements/Reminders

- Due to forecasts of a storm, Kord suggested approving payroll early in the meeting, in case internet connections were lost. George and Michael agreed.
- Kord announced that Mac was unable to attend the meeting due to a migraine and would be preparing the minutes from the Zoom recording.
- Michael thanked the WCO for hosting the Candidates Forum, which was well put together and well-attended (about 50 people total in person and on Zoom).
- Michael also announced that there would be a special meeting/public hearing on Zoom at 5:30 PM on Monday, October 3 about the change to our zoning regs related to timber harvesting.

Approval of Minutes

There were no changes to the minutes from the meeting on September 6, 2022.

Motion: To approve the September 6th minutes. Kord moved, and all agreed.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence that was not addressed elsewhere on the agenda.

Payroll/Bills

Moved: To approve the pay orders received from the town treasurer. Kord moved, and all agreed.

Moved: To have Kord sign for the payments presented. Kord moved, and all agreed.

New Business

1. Hybrid Meetings – The plan to hold a hybrid meeting today did not work out because Kord and Becky Eliastam were unavailable to help set things up. The best time to have meetings was discussed. Maureen said the time was formally at 6:30 and lasted until 8:30 or 9:00, and it was requested that the meeting start earlier. Kord prefers 5:30 since he gets up early to drive the school bus. George likes the earlier time and hybrid format. Michael likes 5:30 but cannot be there in-person, due to having three kids to watch until Abby gets home. By January 15, 2023, we are required to have meetings in-person or hybrid (in-person and on Zoom). It was agreed to keep the meetings at 5:30 and to start hybrid meetings on October 17th. Abby said she'd speak to her supervisor about leaving her job earlier on selectboard meeting days, so she can cover child care.

2. Set time and date for next meeting – The hearing on changes to our timber harvesting regs is at 5:30 PM on October 3. Kord does not know if he will be available after that for the regular meeting as Kathy (his wife) has surgery that day. George will conduct meeting on the 3rd if Kord isn't there. Michael suggested that Kord plan to be with Kathy and not worry about the meeting.

3. Zoning Reg Update – Kord reviewed requirements for the hearing on timber harvesting. We don't know if anyone will show up, as no one has for similar past hearings, but we need to give loggers and others a chance to weigh in.

4. Municipal Highway and Stormwater Mitigation – Applications are due October 7 for FY 2023. Last year's application for the replacement of our salt shed was not approved.

Next Step: Get help from the Windham Regional Commission to revise last year's application to submit for FY 2023.

5. VLCT Annual Meeting and Town Fair – October 6-7 – Kord and Maureen have attended in the past. Kord asked George and Michael to consider attending.

6. VLCT Training for Securing and Managing Funds for Infrastructure Needs – This would be a good one for a selectboard member to attend. The fee is paid by the town. George said he won't be able to attend.

Old Business

1. Video storage regulations – Michael said he wasn't able to find any information, including in the state statues, that said we need to keep Zoom videos of selectboard meetings. Since we have minutes, we don't have to keep the videos, but since we have the videos, Michael recommends that we file them in the Town Office with an index for their storage location.

Next Step: Determine the time frame for keeping videos on the website and for storing them in the Town Office.

2. Update of data storage – We have one quote for backing up data. We need to determine the size of the drive we need. George said he would recommend that we have two years of storage space and that we have a separate computer for researchers to use in the office, an idea Ellen supported. She said we need a complete computer index of our records so that researchers can easily find things and print them out from the computer. Ken Goding suggested a network saving device on which all computers' data would be saved. Abby said we could use cloud, but George said having our own computer for that is safer than the Cloud.

Next Step: Decide whether we will pay someone to set up a network and backup system. Also, Kord will get with Vance to figure out how much storage space is needed.

3. VCT Tech or other IT person – Michael said everything we're talking about is all under the auspices of an IT person. If many people are using our computers, we need to have protections. He agrees with George that we want a separate computer as our server. They can determine what is the best system for us to make everything safe and secure. We need to set up meeting with Vance and possible IT person. Ken Goding is the coordinator of VCT Tech. He gave us some ideas, but if we include videos, that will impact the size of the storage.

Next Step: Kord will talk to Vance. George will contact Ken.

4. Town constable enforcement of speed limits – Maureen sent info, and it appears that there is already a procedure for what the constable can do. If he needs to enforce the regulations for timber harvesting, we need additional regs for that. Jim was a police officer in another state, but he needs to qualify in Vermont. He's willing to do whatever is necessary. Michael wondered if Jim would take training for Vermont police officers. Michael is familiar with the training and thinks it is good.

Next Step: Decide what we want constable to do and what training he needs.

5. Update on speed studies, patrol presence, and speed limits – This item was invertedly skipped.

6. Update on town-owned properties – Kord has talked to those who made offers and to Bob Fisher, town attorney. Bob confirmed that we don't have to accept any offer if those making the offers aren't planning to do with the property what we want. Regarding the property on Rt. 121 – Jon Gordon wants to make a small gathering area there with a picnic table by the stream. It's for his family, but he'd be willing to let others use it. The Wilkens want to store an RV or other things there. Maybe add a barn. Kord doesn't think there is room for a barn there. The third person who put in a bid did not provide a phone number and has not responded to the letter Mac sent asking him to contact Kord. Michael said that to be fair, we need to wait for that third party's response. Abby said she spoke to others who might have been interested, but didn't put in bid because they didn't know what they could do with the property. George noted that we had closed the bids. Kord added that people were told they could put in an offer that was contingent on what could be done with the property.

We received reasonable offers on the other two properties. Both were conditioned on zoning approvals. Bob advised that we write up sales agreements stating that the sales aren't final until they have zoning approval. Kord will ask Bob to set up the agreements, with input from Alison, our zoning administrator. It looks like Miles Clark, who wants to buy the Woodburn property, can share the leech field owned by his parents. The Horsenail Hill property has a shared well and septic. So that's not a problem.

Next Step: Gather more info the Rt. 121 land and chose a buyer at the Oct. 17 meeting.

Motion: To tell Bob to prepare the paperwork. Kord moved and all agreed.

7. Taxing short-term rentals – Tom Widger said we should be taxing the Airbnb properties like other towns are doing. There were questions about whether or not vacation rentals are taxed by the state. Tom said this is extra income for the town, and Londonderry is addressing it. The VLCT might also have information. Michael said, in general, he is not interested in taxing folks.

Next Step: Michael agreed to contact one of the other towns to see what they are doing.

8. Meeting House Improvements – Pete not here to give comments about the desired Meeting House improvements. Tom spoke with Pete, who has many ideas. Tom sat in on the ARPA committee, as neither of the two committees working on the Meeting House are represented on that committee. Tom was asked by the ARPA committee to come on with list of what is needed for the Meeting House. The ARPA group recognizes a need to pay for grant writing services to pursue the many grants available, including the numerous sources of funding for the Meeting House. Tom said he will continue to go to the ARPA meetings. George asked if Tom would like to be on the ARPA committee. Tom said he would.

Move: To appoint Tom Widger to the ARPA Committee. Kord moved and all agreed.

Michael asked Tom to set priorities on the list of things needed at the Meeting House. Tom said he thinks maybe \$40,000 is needed, some of which can serve as matching funds for other grants. Tom said some work is already being done with volunteer labor.

Maureen said the building is 220 years old, with the 225th anniversary coming up in 5 years. She and Ginny have talked about a celebration being in order. Maureen also said she took a grant writing class and wants to perfect her skills, as there needs to be a focused person writing grants.

Abby said she wants to talk to Maureen for her help for the Friends of the Windham School. Abby commented that others need grant writing too, as Windham has three community-based nonprofits that need more funding.

9. Town Office Insulation – George asked if the two bids we’ve received are sufficient since three other contractors were contacted who didn’t make bids. Bob said that we could ask them all to send in sealed bids, which would make things perfectly legal. But that adds time to the process, and winter is approaching. Bob said if we are comfortable with where we are now and want to move forward, we could do so, after making it clear in our meeting minutes that we were unable to follow our policy and get a third bid, after asking five vendors for proposals and recommendations. George and Michael agreed that we need to move forward. We tried to get multiple bids, and we might lose the vendors who did bid if we tell them they need now to send in a sealed bid. Kord is willing to tell any taxpayer that we spent a great deal of time trying to get three bids. We decided at the last meeting to give the job to Vermont Foam Insulation (referred to during the last meeting as “Spray Foam Insulation”).

Next Step: Kord will get this insulation work into Vermont Foam Insulation’s schedule.

Next Step: We need to update our purchasing policy to add “selectboard discretion” and to incorporate into the bids an engineering design from a professional service.

10. Town Office Air Exchange System – Currently, there is no air exchange in the office. Two companies looked at the situation – Alliance, which is putting in the school’s heating system, and Cota and Cota, which has the heating system maintenance contract for the town’s buildings. Alliance looked up the standards and said the current system meets the minimum air exchange requirements. But our current system is now in pieces from an unfinished attempt to fix it. George wonders if we want to replace or upsize, and he said if this costs more than \$10,000, we’ll need a third bid. Ellen said the duct work now has in and out vents that are only ten feet apart, which is too close together. Also, there’s no air exchange in the back room or the listers’ room. Many older folks are in the office, so this is of great concern.

George wants a contractor to write specs on this, and he wonders if we should pay them. He could ask someone at FW Webb to do it. Cathy asked if the Town Office has a plan for the facility with steps for now and future. It would be based on an energy audit, equipment plans, etc. Kord said there’s nothing in writing. The building is not that old and doesn’t need much improvement. Cathy worries that we spend money to do one thing and then in two years have to redo that to do something else. She said we need an impartial consultant.

Next Step: George will contact Webb for a designer who might help with an air exchange recommendation.

11. Audio-Visual Equipment – George wants to see how the hybrid meetings go, in order to determine what other equipment we need to purchase. Kord agreed and said Becky has the same view. Things went well at the candidate’s forum.

12. Update on ACT 172 – This update was delayed until Mac can report.

13. Update on Wheeler Road ZBA Decision – Bill Dunkel contacted us from England to see if there has been any appeal. The deadline for this is the 24th. Ellen has not received anything, nor has Bob. No one has heard from the Environmental Court or the property owner. Bob advised us to wait until the 30-day window expires and move forward from there.

Next Step: If anything comes into the office, Kord will let folks know.

14. Wheeler Road – All the work is completed, and we can now file for reimbursement.

15. Chase Road – This is all finished but the guard rails. Susan Persa has old photos from original culvert installation and is putting together an article for the News & Notes.

16. Roadside Mower – There is some progress on pricing, but nothing to discuss. None of the hydraulic options look good. We'll get bids from John Deere and two other dealers for a new loader with a mower.

17. Update on FEMA Project – We're at final step to get the funding for this. We have presented a price that FEMA is reviewing, and we're waiting for them to give us a price we can commit to.

18. Collaboration on Rescue Services – Kord got a reply from Peter Cobb of Londonderry Rescue after saying to them that we're happy with their service but folks in South and West Windham wonder if they would be reached faster by a service closer to them. He replied that he will continue the conversation.

Adjournment

Moved: To adjourn the meeting at 6:45 PM. George moved and all agreed.

The next selectboard meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 3, 2022 at 5:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Mary McCoy (Mac), selectboard clerk
(the minutes were prepared from the Zoom recording)
Approved October 3, 2022