

**Wolcott Selectboard Meeting
Minutes
January 5, 2022**

Wolcott Town Office/Zoom/phone-in: 6:00 p.m.

All Minutes are draft until approved by the Selectboard
Please see future Minutes for approval of these Minutes

Present: Linda Martin, Kurt Klein, Allen Carpenter, Kurt Billings, Richard Lee
Employees: Belinda Harris Clegg, Deb Klein
Presenters: Seth Jensen, LCPC; Salvador Morales, LCPC; Juli Beth Hinds, Birchline Planning, LLC
Public: Kevin Carlburg, Monica Cross
Reporter: Doug McClure, *Hardwick Gazette*

Martin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Amendments to the Agenda: Klein requested that Item #9(e), Union negotiations – update, be discussed during an executive session at the end of the meeting. No objection.

Approve Minutes of December 15, 2021: Motion by Lee to approve the Minutes of December 15. Seconded by Carpenter. Discussion: None. Voting: All in favor.

Comments from the Community/Correspondence

Wolcott resident, Kevin Carlburg, requested that the Warning for Town Meeting include an Article asking voters to consider having retail sales of recreational cannabis in town. It was noted that Morrisville voters have already approved retail sales of cannabis. Many towns throughout the State will put this issue before their voters at Town Meeting. Carlburg contends retail cannabis offers many advantages to the Town, and the Cannabis Control Board will set standards and restrictions. The issue before the board is whether to include such an Article on the Warning, or whether to require a Petition be brought before the board requesting the Article be added to the Warning. Discussion ensued. Motion by Klein to include an Article in the Warning regarding retail sales of recreational cannabis, along with an informational piece to be included in the Town Report. Seconded by Carpenter. No further discussion. Voting: Klein, Carpenter, Lee, Martin in favor. Billings opposed. Motion carries. Carlburg volunteered to work with the Selectboard on wording of the Article, and on information townsfolk will need to make an informed decision.

Clegg reported she received a phone call from a resident indicating that Ed Ledoux is keeping his dog at his former residence on East Hill Road, which is property now owned by the Town.

Animal Control Officer – update: Klein has been in communication with Dean Mercier, the Animal Control Officer (ACO). The ACO has received multiple complaints from a resident about barking dogs at a neighboring property. This has been an ongoing issue for some time. There is a recording of the barking in excess of 60 minutes. When the ACO responded to the property, he noted the dog was not wearing a bark collar as had previously been agreed to. The ACO transported the dog to the pound. The owner of the dog subsequently stated he would borrow a bark collar for the dog. The dog was then released back to its owner after a fee was paid. Klein suggested that should an issue at this residence arise in the future, that the ACO respond to the property with a Sheriff's Deputy.

PRESENTATIONS:

Village Wastewater/Intended Use Plan

J.B. Hinds, Birchline Planning, LLC, started the presentation regarding options available to the Town for a wastewater system in the Village. The Lamoille County Planning Commission can prepare and submit an application to the State for financing. The State would formally rank the project. An Intended Use Plan (IUP) would accompany the application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to identify communities seeking funding. There would be no financial commitment on the part of the Town, nor any obligation to move to the next step. The only action the board would need to take at this time is preparing a Resolution, or a formal statement, that the Town is interested in exploring options. Motion by Lee for the board to prepare a Resolution. Seconded by Carpenter. No further discussion. Voting: All in favor.

Hinds stated that the waste water system at the Town Office allows for 900 gallons/day which is very positive. That would be sufficient for a café, for example, in the old schoolhouse. The cost estimate for repairs to the schoolhouse received several years ago will need to be updated. Morales will discuss this further at the Schoolhouse Restoration Committee meeting next week.

North Wolcott Recreation Field stabilization

Seth Jensen, Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC), reported on plans to reduce flooding along the Wildbranch by the North Wolcott recreation field. Engineers have identified two alternatives for the property.

Alternative A would involve removing most of the wood and debris to clear a flood chute & create a flood storage area. The larger logs would be used to stabilize the bank. A flood bench would be created behind the field to guide flood water. Alternative B would involve relocating the parking area to the south of the fields that is less prone to flooding and erosion. This would require converting the baseball diamond to a multi-use rec field.

LCPC and the engineers met with the Recreation Committee at the ball fields to discuss the alternatives. The Recreation Committee favors moving the parking area. It was noted that no one is using the ball diamond, so the area could be set up for other recreational uses.

There is a grant program through Vermont Emergency Management that focuses on projects involving flood mitigation and natural resource benefits. The grant application deadline is January 31. Following discussion, the board agreed to have LCPC put together the grant application pursuing Alternative B. If the grant is awarded, LCPC can manage the project.

2022-2023 Budget Proposals

The board was presented with a written proposed budget for the Transfer Station in the amount of \$80,000. The board discussed moving funds from the Litter Committee's proposed budget for a bulk waste day to the Transfer Station budget. Motion by Klein to approve the Transfer Station budget at \$82,700. Seconded by Lee. Voting: All in favor.

The board reviewed and discussed various line items in the proposed Selectboard budget. The board is still awaiting some figures that will need to be included. The Selectboard budget will need to be approved at the January 19 meeting.

Selectboard review/action

Lister Copier: Clegg reported to the board what the cost would be for a new color copier/scanner on a three-year lease. It was noted the lease price for a new copier is less than is currently being spent on a maintenance contract for the copier currently in the Lister Office. Motion by Lee to enter into a three-year lease for a new copier. Seconded by Klein. Voting: All in favor.

Mileage Reimbursement Policy: Martin read into the record the proposed Mileage Reimbursement Policy. Generally, the policy will require any Town employee seeking mileage reimbursement to submit an invoice listing the date, mileage, and purpose of travel. Mileage is not to exceed the budgeted amount. Currently, mileage is being reimbursed at 51 cents per mile. The board will reconsider that rate following Town Meeting. Motion by Lee to adopt the Mileage Reimbursement Policy. Seconded by Carpenter. Voting: All in favor. The signed policy will be added to the Policy book, and will be posted on the Town's website.

Website Management project: A meeting will be held next week with the website designer who will rejuvenate and stabilize the Town's website. It is anticipated this will be a three-month project. Additional improvement should follow after that.

Hybrid meeting project: The board discussed ideas for equipment and other improvements to improve conducting hybrid meetings from Town Office. Improved wi-fi is necessary. Motion by Martin to order the Starlink system and hardware. Seconded by Lee. No further discussion. Voting: All in favor.

Tax payment plans: The board had entered into tax payment plans with three property owners. One has paid in full, one is making timely payments, and one is behind by over \$2,000. The board will need to determine whether to allow the delinquent taxpayer to continue with the payment plan, or send the property to tax sale. Clegg is to keep the board updated on the delinquent status.

Project Manager position: An ad for the Project Manager position has been posted in the *News & Citizen* as well as the Vermont League of Cities and Towns bulletin board.

Town Warning/Meeting: Martin also wished to address Item #9(j) at this time. Martin shared with the board a document displaying a timeline to Town Meeting day along with dates that would be required should there be a Special Town Meeting as required by the Petition. If the board selected a date for a Special Town Meeting at this meeting, then February 8 would be the first possible date. Even if there was a favorable vote for Australian ballot at a Special Town Meeting, candidates would have had to file Petitions to get on the ballot by January 24.

The board agreed to add an Article to the Warning asking voters to weigh in on electing Town officers by Australian ballot in the future. The State legislature will soon vote on whether Selectboards will have the option of postponing the date for Town Meeting, or allowing Australian ballot, as was done last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the likely vote of the legislature, it is anticipated the board will go with Australian ballot again this year. In other discussion, the board agreed to include the Lamoille County Sheriff's Office budget in the Selectboard budget. An Article will be added to the Warning regarding the creation of a Capital Reserve fund. It was agreed that appropriations will be listed on the ballot individually so that each one will be voted on separately rather than as a group.

OSHA document completion: Billings and Carpenter have not met with the road crew to work on the document. Martin suggested the document be returned to the board for completion.

Executive Session: Motion by Lee to enter into executive session, for personnel reasons. Seconded by Klein. Voting: All in favor. The board entered into executive session.

The board came out of executive session at 8:45 p.m. No action was taken.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Klein

Next regularly scheduled meeting – January 19, 2022