

**Wolcott Selectboard Meeting
Minutes
November 2, 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, Richard Lee, Kurt Billings
Employees: Belinda Harris Clegg, Tom Martin, Deb Klein
Public: Monica Cross, Dolan Patrick, Cornelius Reed
Presenters: Kate Wanner, Senior Project Manager, The Trust for Public Land
Kipp Verner, Interim President, Lamoille County Habitat for Humanity

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

Amendments to the Agenda: Martin asked that authorizing the Town Clerk to sign the mortgage discharge document regarding the Sterling View loan be added. Lee asked that a junk and junk car issue be added. No objection to either item; both added to Selectboard review/action.

Approve Minutes of October 19, 2022: Motion by Klein to approve the Minutes of October 19.
Seconded by Carpenter. Discussion: None. Voting: All in favor.

Comments from the Community: None. Correspondence moved to Selectboard review/action.

Budget Hearings

Cemetery Commission: On behalf of the Commission, Cornelius Reed submitted to the board a written budget request for \$11,000, the same amount as last year. The funds are used for mowing. This will be the final year of a three-year mowing contract.

Athletic Association: The Athletic Association sent an email seeking level funding in the amount of \$1,500. The Association noted that while the number of participants is growing, they are trying to keep costs as low as possible.

Recreation Committee: The Recreation Committee has not yet submitted a budget. It was noted the Committee has not had any expenditures yet this year from the \$1,000 budgeted.

Presentation: Town Forest

Kate Wanner with The Trust for Public Land provided a rough update on purchasing land for the Town Forest. The Bourne's property is under contract and will close within 18 months. There was a good turnout on October 22 for the guided forest walk. So far, 139 responses to the community survey have been received. Kate is in contact with the Planning Commission on progress for trail development.

The Trust for Public Land is partnering with Lamoille County Habitat for Humanity. A small parcel of land will be subdivided from the Bedell property along VT Rte 15 to be donated to Habitat for Humanity. They will construct a duplex that will be available to families in need. This affordable housing lot is

needed for funding purposes. There is no cost to the Town, and the land and structure would be added to the Grand List. Kipp Verner outlined for the board the basics on how Habitat for Humanity operates.

Project Manager Report

The Town's handyman has been doing a lot of work in preparation for winter. The tire corral at the Transfer Station was rebuilt. Improvements will also be made to the chain and fencing at the Transfer Station. Other work includes: Library fixtures, vent cleaning at Town Hall, scheduling furnace repair, boiler room door repair at the Garage, and patching holes at Town Office. Painting of the Town Garage has been completed. The handyman has been working with Tom Martin to dispose of items from the old Schoolhouse prior to the Funders Meeting on November 4. Doors and windows inside the old Schoolhouse will be posted on Front Porch Forum as being free for pickup.

The road crew has been working on grading roads. The Town may want to pre-buy salt in the event of a railroad strike.

The Helpsy textile donation bins are in place at the Transfer Station. Donations are to be clean and bagged before depositing in the bins. The Litter Committee is working with Helpsy on a pickup schedule. Black Dirt Farms has increased their price for pickup of compost from \$20 to \$24 per tote. The board will look into available options to avoid raising the price on compost. Only one compost tote should be open at a time. Once that is filled, the other tote can be made available. The board will revisit the issue at a meeting in January.

Planning has started for putting together the Town Report. Klein is checking with the State on the status of the employee Covid paid leave grant. A question arose about having the mask mandate reinstated at Town Office.

Correspondence

The Town received a notice that a Wolcott resident's dog bit an individual in Johnson.

The board reviewed the Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual printout. Focus was on the Transfer Station and the Town. Clegg stated the Town is on budget. The Transfer Station is always an area of concern. There is a considerable loss on tires so far with \$700 coming in and \$1,800 going out. It was suggested the attendant keep a close eye on the size of tires coming in and whether rims are attached, so that the correct amount is charged. The Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District may be able to provide some tips.

Selectboard review/action

Designate Authorized Agent: Martin stated the board needs to designate an authorized agent for the Town to sign a mortgage discharge document. This is part of the Sterling View loan agreement. Motion by Lee to authorize Belinda Harris Clegg as the authorized agent for the Town to sign the mortgage discharge document. Seconded by Klein. Voting: All in favor. Following discharge, the Town will receive one-third of approximately \$12,000. The board can determine what to do with the funds once they are received.

Sheriff budget; Communications budget: The board had agreed not to use ARPA funds to pay for the increase in the Sheriff's budget since that would simply create a bubble that would have to be dealt with in the future. Johnson is also opposed to the use of ARPA funds to cover their increased cost. The previous three-year contract had been for a 3% annual increase. In order to maintain the law

enforcement services the Town has been receiving from the Lamoille County Sheriff's Office, the increase is 8%. The Sheriff is not seeking an extended contract. The Communications budget is also up by 7.04%. According to the Sheriff, the cost increases are due mostly to staffing. Insurance costs have increased as well.

It was noted that Elmore pays the Sheriff's Office for only a set number of hours of patrol each month. Currently, if Eden requires the services of the Sheriff's Office, the Town pays by the hour. Wolcott will meet again with the Selectboard representatives from Johnson and Hyde Park but no date is set yet. All Selectboard members are welcome to attend, or may convey their comments to Martin and Klein to be relayed to the Sheriff.

The board will consider whether to present the Sheriff's budget as a separate Article on the Warning, or have it included in the Selectboard's budget listed as Essential Services.

State ARPA Wastewater grant: The Town received a Village ARPA grant for wastewater in the amount of \$2,000,565. The grant agreement should be received within three to six months. Quarterly reporting would be required. The State would pay 90% of the total project cost, and 10% would come from the Town. The Town's portion would be \$256,500. Those funds could come from other grants. It is unclear whether ARPA funds could be used. The Town is partnering with the State of Vermont. Wolcott and Burke were selected as pilot towns to try to find village wastewater solutions. The deadline to spend the money would be December 26, 2024. There are still details to be worked out. The next step is engineering. The matter will go to voters to determine whether to move forward or not.

Assessor MOU – cost estimate: The board has committed to an Assessor for four hours per week, with Hyde Park and Johnson each committing to eight hours per week. The Assessor would be an employee hired and paid by Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC). The board reviewed figures submitted by LCPC on estimated costs. LCPC would be responsible for paying insurance and taxes. Considering salary and benefits the cost to the towns would be between \$55 and 60 per hour. The contract would start December 1, but realistically, an Assessor may not be on board until maybe May. Martin believes this shared Assessor agreement to be proactive. Klein believes it is a good strategy to move forward. Other towns could join in, which would be helpful. LCPC is seeking commitments from the towns. Motion by Lee to commit to the joint venture of a shared Assessor for 4 hours per week. Seconded by Carpenter. No further discussion. Voting: All in favor.

Municipal Planning Grant – follow-up: LCPC has been working on behalf of the Schoolhouse Revitalization Committee to obtain a Municipal Planning grant to study the feasibility of using the Schoolhouse as an economic driver and meeting place, and also to look at parking issues in the area. The board signed a Resolution. LCPC will submit the paperwork by December 1.

Scanning Project – discussion: Clegg reviewed with the board a quote received from Kofile to scan, upload and index approximately 400 surveys to Town Fusion so they can be viewed and downloaded by the public. The proposal totals \$6,025.00. The public would be able to view surveys online at no charge. There would be a charge to download and print a copy, of which the Town would receive \$1. Clegg noted there are Restoration fee funds available to cover a portion of the cost. Motion by Klein to have Kofile scan, upload and index approximately 400 surveys based on the proposed cost of \$6,025, using \$4,000 of ARPA funds, with the balance coming from Restoration fee funds. Seconded by Lee. Voting: All in favor.

Clegg is waiting for a quote to have six books of land records scanned and placed online. Online records could be accessed going back to 1980.

North Wolcott Property – complaint: Lee wished to pass on a complaint to the Junk & Litter Committee regarding properties in the North Wolcott Village center. The concern involves several junk cars and other items. Klein will see that the issues are brought to the Committee.

Adjourn: Motion by Lee to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Billings. Voting: All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Klein

The next regularly scheduled Selectboard meeting – November 16, 2022