

Wolcott Selectboard Meeting March 15, 2023

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, Kurt Billings, Richard Lee
Allen Carpenter (joined the meeting at 7:28 p.m.)
Employees: Belinda Harris Clegg, Deb Klein
Public: Dolan Patrick, Bradley Horstman
Guest: Kate Wanner

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

Organizational Meeting of Selectboard

Election of Chair: Klein nominated Linda Martin as Chair. Seconded by Lee. No other nominations.

Voting: 3 in favor with Martin abstaining.

Election of Vice Chair: Martin nominated Kurt Klein as Vice Chair. Seconded by Lee. No other nominations. Voting: 3 in favor with Klein abstaining.

Election of Clerk: Klein nominated Richard Lee as Clerk. Seconded by Martin. No other nominations. Voting: 3 in favor with Lee abstaining.

Adopt Rules of Procedure: Board members reviewed the written Rules of Procedure the board had adopted last year. Motion by Klein to adopt the same Rules of Procedure as last year. Seconded by Lee. No further discussion. Voting: All 4 in favor. Board members signed the printed Rules of Procedure.

Set Date and Time of Regularly Scheduled Meetings: All members present agreed to continue with the schedule of meeting the first and third Wednesdays of each month at 6:00 p.m.

Designation of Newspaper for Notices: All members present agreed to continue with the *News & Citizen* as the designated newspaper for notices. Front Porch Forum and the Town's website are also utilized for the posting of notices. In compliance with State law, notices are posted at the Town Office, the Wolcott Library, and the Wolcott Post Office.

Set Mileage Rate: It was noted that the mileage rate for both Federal and State employees is 65.5 cents per mile. Motion by Lee to set the mileage rate for Wolcott at 65.5 cents per mile. Seconded by Klein. No further discussion. Voting: All 4 in favor.

Amendments to the Agenda: Martin asked that Kate Wanner be added next to the Agenda to discuss a matter that needs to be addressed by the board regarding the Town Forest. No objection.

Town Forest – funding: Kate Wanner, Senior Project Manager at The Trust for Public Land (TPL), updated the board on the status of funding for the Bourne's property that will be part of the Town Forest. TPL had been waiting to see if the WISPR program would be a funding source. Although there was interest, no one is in place yet to run the program, so TPL does not advise waiting any longer. TPL recommends applying for a grant through the federal Community Forest Program (CFP). The CFP grant program provides financial assistance to local governments to acquire community forests. Wanner will draft the application. The Town will review and sign the application. The grant application is due to the State of Vermont by March 31, 2023. The State will then forward the application to the U.S. Forest Service. The Town must be registered with the federal government. The award will be made in April or May.

Approve Minutes of March 1, 2023: Motion by Klein to approve the Minutes of March 1. Seconded by Lee. Discussion: None. Voting: All 4 in favor.

Comments from the Community

Dolan Patrick recommended the Board use ARPA funds to purchase an additional monitor to enhance the hybrid meeting system in the board room.

Correspondence

- The Town received a statement from the electrician who repaired the ceiling light fixture in the kitchen at Town Office. The board will investigate whether the electrician's rate has increased. The Town may wish to look for a different electrician who offers a lower rate.
- The Department of Environmental Conservation report form is due April 1.
- The Town has received inquiries about green burials. The issue will be researched.

Project Manager Report

- Phase 1 of the Brownfield study on the Champlain Oil parcel on VT Rte 15 has been completed. Martin is working with Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) to secure funding for Phase 2.
- The Town just received information from the State regarding the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP). The program can provide building energy resilience assessments, or Towns can apply for grants for weatherization, or improved heating systems to reduce energy use and operating costs. The Town will work with LCPC on this.
- Each year the Town submits a Class 3 roads grant application. The Town will seek quotes for pavement patching on North Wolcott Road.
- The Town is working on improving its website. Phase 1 involved improving security and installing updates. Mapping and Listing information can now be accessed under Property Records. Phase 2 will involve the creation of interactive online forms, and other features to improve user experience. These improvements will be made with ARPA funds. A web designer has submitted a proposal for Phase 2 work for board review and consideration.
- Bids are being sought for the mowing of Town properties. Sealed bids are due by April 15. Bids will also be sought for brush hogging the North Wolcott ball fields and the Transfer Station in the fall, and for plowing Town properties next winter. A plan will need to be in place for snow removal next winter that takes into consideration rail trail traffic.

Town Meeting Ballot – Cemetery Commissioner Position

The Cemetery Commissioner, four-year position, remains open. The Selectboard will post the open position for ten days on the Town's website and bulletin board at Town Office.

Town Meeting Review

This year's meeting was streaming live, and was recorded for later access on YouTube. Dolan Patrick noted there were seven people who watched Town Meeting live, and to date there have been 76 views on YouTube. There was a little trouble with the audio at the beginning of the meeting, but generally feedback has been favorable with folks appreciating the online accessibility.

Clegg noted that next year it may be preferable to hold Australian voting at Town Office, where it is warmer, rather than the gym at the Elementary School. There were 154 voters who cast their ballot out of 1,248 registered voters.

Overall, it was good that the folks who attended Town Meeting asked a lot of questions. Participation and discussion are always encouraged.

NEK Broadband – Appointment

Bruce Wheeler, who has been Wolcott’s representative on the NEK Broadband CUD, has offered to serve another one-year term. Motion by Klein to appoint Bruce Wheeler to serve as Wolcott’s representative on the NEK Broadband CUD for the next year. Seconded by Lee. No further discussion. Voting: All 4 in favor.

Guardrail bid

The Town received from Lafayette Highway Specialties in Essex Junction a bid for guardrails for proposed sites on East Elmore Road, North Wolcott Road, School Street in front of the Fire Department, and East Hill Road by the cemetery. The board had anticipated higher costs for guardrails when including \$15,000 in the budget for next year. The quote is for \$30,000. The board will consider available options. It may be that money can come from other projects, or installing some guardrails this year and the remainder the following year. The board will review Highway Department financials, and discuss the options with the Road Foreman.

Transfer Station Financials

Clegg reported that the Transfer Station is running in the negative, and is behind in paying its bills. The Selectboard discussed possible cost-cutting measures that can be taken. The special container that holds cardboard only was added at the beginning of the pandemic when it was apparent that so many people were buying online. The cost is \$196 each time the container is dumped. The special container can be eliminated and cardboard can go in the regular recycling bin. It may be that the big dumpsters need not be emptied each week. It is imperative that the Transfer Station attendant charge customers the correct amount for the trash, recycling, tires, and compost they bring in. Construction debris is not allowed. If the transfer station cannot break even, it may have to be shut down. Board members are to come up with their best solution to be discussed at the April 5 Selectboard meeting.

Adjourn: Motion by Lee to adjourn. Seconded by Martin. Voting: All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Klein

Next regularly scheduled Selectboard meeting – April 5, 2023