

Wolcott Selectboard Meeting

Minutes

May 15, 2024

Wolcott Town Office/Zoom: 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, Michael Paradee, Allen Carpenter, Kurt Billings, Richard Lee
Guests: Scott Brooks, Greg Povey, Lisa Birmingham, Seth Jensen, Meghan Rodier, Alberto Della Torre, Dexter Lefavor, Tyler Mumley, Nelson Martelle
Public: Kurt Klein, Dean Mercier, Bernard Earle, Dillan Cafferky, Katie Black, Linda Brady, Tom Martin, Monica Cross, Bruce Wheeler, Bradley Horstman, Ryan Bjerke, Scott Holsten, Dolan Patrick, Deb Klein, Jonathan King, Maramonie King, Dana McIntyre, Nicholas Grawbowski, Jessica Preston

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

Adjustments to the Agenda

A request from the Parent Teacher Association to hold a bottle drive will be added to Selectboard review/action without objection.

Approve Minutes of May 1, 2024: Motion by Lee to approve the Minutes of the May 1 Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Paradee. Discussion: Under Comments from the Community, verbiage after "Martin talked with the Road Foreman" should be stricken. On the last page under Updates, the correct spelling is Canonica. With those amendments, voting: all in favor.

Correspondence

-The board received a letter from Mike Caldwell, Morey Hill Road, thanking the road crew for the quick response to the drainage problem on the road, and to thank them for doing a great job.
-A letter was received from Meghan Rodier, Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC), with a Notice that LCPC is seeking general and specific comments on a draft update to the regional plan. The first public hearing on the adoption of the plan will be May 28 at 6:30 p.m. A Zoom option is available. The public can go to their website: lcpv.org to review the plan, or to submit comments to Rodier.

Comments from the Community

-Kurt Klein, Project Manager, updated the board on the status of claims with FEMA. Klein also noted that the Town received \$548.12 as its portion of the National Opioids Settlement. The funds are to be used for opioid prevention. Klein has reached out to Jim Holton, Fire Chief, to see if the Department needs Narcan medication. The Town had submitted an insurance claim in the amount of \$38,981 for the flood damage to Town Hall. The Town received a prorated amount of \$26,239. A claim has been filed with FEMA seeking 75% reimbursement for the shortfall.

-Bernard Earle, Health Officer, reported to the board several septic violations in Town. Earle is in contact with the State regarding septic and garbage complaints.

Consolidated Communications/Fidium Fiber

Scott Brooks, Director of Government Affairs with Consolidated Communications, announced work will begin in Wolcott this summer. Brooks is a point of contact for questions or concerns. Brooks introduced Greg Povey, Senior Manager FiberCo NNE at Consolidated Communications. Povey works with contractors and is primarily in the field. He noted that folks can go to the Fidiumfiber.com website to pre-sign up for service. For those who qualify, a new network interface will need to be placed on the residence. Brooks thanked Andy Ross, Wolcott's representative, for being so active. Lisa Birmingham, Executive Director, Lamoille FiberNet CUD, stated general questions may be directed to her or to Andy Ross. NEK Broadband will have their own schedule for working in Wolcott.

Schoolhouse Revitalization Committee

Two grants have been approved so far to revitalize the old schoolhouse. Alberto Della Torre, LCPC, has been working with the Schoolhouse Revitalization Committee on plans for how the schoolhouse will look on the inside and the outside. Della Torre spoke about a possible grant to develop a local trust. Considering the criteria, he feels Wolcott is a competitive applicant and should apply. The Committee is seeking public input.

Some of the architectural designs worked on so far were displayed on screen for discussion. Nelson Martelle, SHKS Architects, addressed what is needed structurally to keep the building safe, warm and dry. The interior could house a café and a gathering space that could be used by the Historical Society and for other events. Tyler Mumley, Mumley Engineering, Inc., addressed site planning and engineering. The discussion included septic, well, access, and parking. Maps will be added to the Schoolhouse page on the Town's website. Linda Brady, who has been a member of the Committee since 2016, provided some history. Bruce Wheeler was also on the original Committee. An alliance was made with the Wolcott Historical Society. It is envisioned that the schoolhouse will serve as a community center for Wolcott, with space for the Historical Society on one side, and a community gathering spot on the other. Monica Cross, Wolcott Historical Society, characterized the work completed so far as a magnificent step forward that will finally provide citizens with a café and a place to meet in Town. It will tie in nicely with the LVRT, the Wolcott public library, and the Community Garden.

There is a Village Trust Initiative grant offered through Preservation Trust of Vermont that would help Towns create a local trust for a community center, for example. The Committee asked for the Selectboard's support in applying for the grant. Motion by Paradee to approve application to Village Trust Initiative for a grant. Seconded by Lee. Voting: All in favor.

Mitigation Projects: Meghan Rodier, Regional Planner with LCPC, briefed the board on a grant opportunity that has the goal of reducing or mitigating flooding. Funding could be used for projects such as removal of the old VT Rte 15 abutments now in the Lamoille River near Flat Iron Road, major culvert projects, undersize bridges, and road resilience. Seth Jensen, LCPC Deputy Director, pointed out the grant is a one-time opportunity for funds. The pre-application is due June 21. There is no commitment for the Town. The full grant application would be due later this year.

PUBLIC HEARING – Animal Control Ordinance

Maramonie and Jonathan King, co-founders of Harmony Farm Sanctuary and Wellness Center located on Town Hill Road in Wolcott, filed a complaint with the Selectboard regarding an incident that occurred on April 29. Jon King told the board that during the early evening two dogs entered their property through an electric fence. The dogs killed a goat and injured a sheep and several cows.

The owner of the dogs told the Selectboard that she takes full responsibility for what occurred. Martin stated the board needs to know what will be done to assure this will not happen again, and that the dogs will not be a threat to other animals or people in the community. The owner stated the dogs are normally in a fenced area or are on leash. It was human error that the door was left open and the dogs got out. The owner added she is moving from Wolcott soon, but will work with the Kings on a payment agreement.

Dean Mercier, Animal Control Officer, stated the dogs were not licensed with the Town, but have been since the incident. Mercier has received several phone calls from neighbors concerned about safety around the dogs. Mercier does not believe the dogs are a threat to people. The owner has promised him they will not get loose again. Mercier noted that this could happen with any dogs. Mercier told the board he would go to the property to see the dogs for himself. After the hearing closed, Mercier returned to the Selectboard meeting and reported the dogs were very friendly to him, and acted no differently from other dogs.

Selectboard review/action

-Bottle Drive Request: The Parent Teacher Association at Wolcott Elementary School requests permission to hold a bottle drive at the Transfer Station on June 1 and 2. Motion by Lee to permit the Parent Teacher Association to hold a bottle drive at the Transfer Station on June 1 and 2. Seconded by Paradee. Discussion: None. Voting: All in favor.

-Selectboard Assistant – job description: The board discussed briefly the options available should the position consist of 40 hours per week, or 32 hours per week. The board may consider other sources of revenue to supplement the salary.

-Vacancies: Martin stated ads will be posted for the positions of Lister, 911 co-coordinator, Selectboard scribe, janitor, member of Planning Commission and Development Review Board, and Town Report Coordinator.

-Flat Iron Road: Consideration is being given to how best to rebuild Flat Iron Road. There will be a vote at the Elementary School on June 4 on whether to grant an easement to the Town to allow moving a portion of the road. An Act 250 amendment would be needed. Options have been discussed with FEMA.

Dexter Lefavour, Principal Engineer, New England Consulting Engineers, discussed different options with the board. The board will have more information by their next meeting on June 5.

Town Event: Tabled.

Adjourn: Motion by Martin to adjourn. Seconded by Lee. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Klein

Next regularly scheduled Selectboard meeting – June 5, 2024