

Town of Woodstock
Select Board
October 19, 2021
6:00 pm
Town Hall & Zoom
Minutes

Draft minutes are subject to approval.

Present: Chair Mary Riley, Ray Bourgeois, John Doten, Keri Cole, Joe Swanson, William Kerbin, Nikki Nourse, Fire Chief David Green, Elijah Lemieux, Albert Pristaw, Beth Finlayson, Adam Bornstein, Tom Phillips, Susan Ford, Karim Houry, Byron Kelly, Don Gilbert, Zoie Parent, Karen Emerson, Susie Stulz, Roger Logan, Cary Hollingsworth, Charlotte Hollingsworth, Alexandra Williams, Scott Williams, Ernie Fernandez, David McGuire, Susan Fuller, David Hill, Jon Spector, Jeffrey Kahn, Stephen Johannensen, Jess Abston, Seton Mcllroy, Tess Hunter, Geoff Martin, Jill Davies, Isabelle Chicoine, Bill Corson, Police Chief Robbie Blish, Wendy Marrinan, Christine Cilano, Wendy Spector, Patrick Fultz, Bill Johnson, Michael Caduto, Mike Davey, Charlie Kimbell, Alita Wilson, Jennie Auster, Johnathan Wilson

A. Call to order

1. Chair Riley called the Select Board meeting of October 19, 2021, to order at 6:00 pm.

B. Meeting protocols

1. Chair Riley went over meeting protocols.

C. Additions to & deletions from posted agenda

1. Addition – proposals for repairs to Lincoln Covered Bridge
2. Deletion – Sewer permit – Johnson, 51 Barberry Circle

D. Citizens comments

1. Mr. Houry asked whether the Select Board will discuss the cannabis dispensaries and whether they will put it on the Town ballot.
 - a. Chair Riley stated that November 2nd is their next meeting. They could put it on that agenda. They have not really talked much about it.

E. Manager's report

1. General report

- a. Mr. Kerbin stated that he attended the VLCT fair two weeks ago. One of the big topics was ARPA funding. The money can be used for negative economic

impacts related to covid. They can also use it for sewer, broadband, and water. There are a lot of regulations that go along with this. They can reach out to the Regional Planning Committee if needed. There are many financial requirements as well.

1) Chair Riley stated that after Hurricane Irene the Town hired a consultant. It was well worth the money and very helpful.

2) Mr. Kerbin stated that the consultant can also be paid with ARPA funds.
b. Mr. Kerbin stated another major topic was diversity and inclusion. The need to attract young people to the state is important. Woodstock should look at polices, marketing and advertising, and events. The state is making a real commitment with broadband to get everyone connected.

2. Financial report

a. Chair Riley had a question regarding the capital reserve line on the front page.

1) Mr. Kerbin believes it is for highway but will look into it.

F. Permits

1. Liquor license – Farmhouse Pottery

a. Chair Riley stated that this is for Decant Wine Shop at 61 Central Street. It is an extension of the Farmhouse Pottery business. After the Select Board approves the permit it goes to the state.

Motion: by Mr. Swanson to approve the liquor license for Farmhouse Pottery as submitted.

Seconded: by Ms. Cole.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

G. New business

1. Truck loan rate quote

a. Chair Riley stated that this is in regard to the truck the Select Board voted on purchasing last month and agreed that they would go out to bid for rates for a loan.

Motion: by Mr. Doten to accept the loan rate quote from Bar Harbor for the rate of 2.28% for 5 years.

Seconded: by Mr. Bourgeois.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

2. Wastewater Committee report

- a. Mr. Houry stated that the Wastewater Committee was formed by some septic system owners and some people connected to the sewer system in order to look at the best and most fair way to cover major upgrades to wastewater plants. The South Woodstock upgrade has been approved for \$2.8 million. In the near future they will need to upgrade the main plant which they heard could be up to \$18 million. Should it be funded just by the users that are connected to the wastewater plants or should it be funded by all of the taxpayers. He is a sewer connected committee member. He believes that the sewer system is critical to communal town asset and that all taxpayers should fund its major upgrades. It benefits a much broader population including septic tank homes. It is the view of the member of this group that are sewer connected users that funding of this is the responsibility of all Woodstock taxpayers whether they are connected to the South Woodstock Municipal sewer system or not. In three to five years, they are going to have to upgrade the Main Wastewater Plant.
- b. Chair Riley stated that the State of Vermont advised the Town that they had to upgrade the plant in South Woodstock.
- c. Ms. Ford stated that she represents the people on private septic that were on the committee with Adam Bornstein, Tom Philips, and Zoie Parent. The law requires that the bond be voted on by all taxpayers because the bond is based on the whole town. Other towns also do town wide votes but only the users pay. The burdens on septic owners financially far exceed the burdens of the sewer users. The sewer users should pay for the upgrade.
- d. Ms. Parent read an email from Wayne Leonard (included in minutes).
- e. Ms. Stultz stated that she does not have children. She is not a user of the schools. She happily pays her education tax because it is a benefit to have an educated population. You might not be a user of the sewer system, but you are a beneficiary of it because the sewer treatment plants remove diseases from our waterways.
- f. Mr. Logan stated that there are things on the Town budget that he does not agree with but if it was approved by voters then it is his responsibility as a citizen of this Town to pay his share of what was approved by the voters.

- g. Mr. Bornstein stated that septic owners pay a fee for public offices, for the schools, for the post office and anything that is government or a public service. They are paying their share of that for sewer.
- h. Ms. Ford stated that she has to pay for septic on her own property. Septic users have to pay more than sewer users are going to have to pay for these sewer upgrades to replace their own septic system.
- i. Mr. Houry stated that there are only 46 users connected to the South Woodstock Plant. It is not equitable to ask 46 people to pay \$3 million dollars. If everyone paid towards the upgrade, it would be an average of \$100 per year to their tax bill.
- j. Ms. Parent stated that there are 903 sewer users who would pay for the bond.
- k. Chair Riley read the article (included in the minutes).
- l. Ms. Wilson stated that the cost of septic and maintaining it is high. People made the conscience decision to live somewhere with a sewer system.
- m. Ms. Logan stated that it is a function of a town for the people to work together and spread out costs as much as possible.
- n. Chief Green stated that a compromise could be having both groups pay taxes towards the upgrade but a different percentage. User could pay more but everyone could contribute.
- o. Chair Riley stated that historically that is how they did it. Non sewer users paid less.

Motion: by Mr. Bourgeois to table this discussion to a future meeting.

Seconded: by Ms. Cole.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

3. Halloween candy discussion

- a. Chair Riley stated that the residents of Maple Street, High Street, and Golf Avenue agreed that they would like to continue doing the Halloween tradition of closing down the streets for trick or treating. The streets are closed from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Motion: by Mr. Bourgeois to support the Halloween event and purchase \$750 worth of candy.

Seconded: by Mr. Swanson.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

4. Non-profit organization requests for Town Meeting appropriations FY23

- a. Chair Riley stated that this is concerning Town Meeting appropriations that will be voted on in March. These requests have increased annually except for last year because they met the organizations' part way allowing them to submit their requests in writing along with financial information from their last fiscal year and numbers of people that they service in Woodstock from their organizations. They are already getting calls about what they are going to do and how they are going to cooperate with them this year.
- b. Ms. Cole thinks they should require petitions. They should also consider increases in funding. They should have one organization per petition.

5. Town Hall Rejuvenation discussion

- a. Chair Riley stated that the Town Hall Rejuvenation team is hoping to make a presentation to the Select Board. The leadership team has suggested presenting on November 16th at the regular Select Board meeting.
- b. The Town Hall Rejuvenation Committee will be meeting this week and will finalize a date to present.

6. Ambulance bid

- a. Chief Green stated that the 2008 4 wheel drive ambulance is up for replacement. It's been skipped over a few times. He solicited bids. Two vendors submitted bids. One was called Professional Vehicle Corporation and the other one called Specialty Vehicles Inc. Both have met the requirement that they put out for their bids. Specialty Vehicles, SVI, submitted a demo ambulance. It is a brand new 2021 truck with a used box on back that has been completely refurbished. They are the Cadillacs of ambulances. They demoed it, drove it, and checked it out. It is a little bit more, but the warranty is good.

Motion: by Mr. Bourgeois to accept the bid of SVI for a demo ambulance, a 2021 Ford chassis, and a refurbished box for \$238,857 with the extended warranty.

Seconded: by Mr. Swanson.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

- b. Chief Green stated that originally the ambulance was brought up the past budget season and it was suggested that they use the Rockefeller Funds that were withdrawn to offset the \$77,000 and pay essentially cash. It is a hot ticket truck, and it is not going to sit on the lot long.
- c. Ms. Davies stated that the Investment Advisory Committee did a lot of research. The Rockefeller Fund is not going anywhere. It can still make annual payment to the Village and Town.
- d. Mr. Bourgeois stated that he thinks Chief Green should purchase the ambulance. Depending on what the Trustees say they can use Rockefeller Funds, but in the meantime, they can have Chief Green also look at a loan in case they cannot come to an agreement on how to use the Rockefeller Funds.

Motion: by Mr. Bourgeois to use what is in capital reserve to purchase the ambulance and to consider with the Trustees approval using Rockefeller Funds to cover the remaining balance of \$77,850 for the ambulance, while Chief Green investigates interest rates for loans.

Seconded: by Mr. Swanson.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

7. EEI presentation

- a. Mr. Martin shared a presentation (included in minutes).
- b. Mr. Martin stated that if the town did all the work, the Town would reduce their greenhouse emission by 12%. The Town wide net0 goal by 2030 is not feasible but it is feasible for municipal operations to get to net0 by 2030.
- c. Mr. Davey stated that the entire project would be lease to own. They will have more accurate numbers in a month or so. The expected life of the equipment is 18 to 20 years. If voters approve the project in March, the work will be completed and installed in calendar year 2022. The equipment is the best available on the market right now. It would be a \$80,000 lease per year for 10 years.

8. Net-metering update & proposal

- a. Mr. Martin stated that he requested proposals from two other companies. He is recommending Norwich Technologies. There is more monetary savings.

Motion: by Ms. Cole to accept the solar net metering agreement proposal from Norwich Technologies.

Seconded: by Mr. Swanson.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

9. Brief update on potential park superintendent

- a. Mr. Corson shared a presentation (included in minutes).

10. Authorize the Town to apply for a CWSRF Step 1 Planning Loan for the Main WWTF Preliminary Engineering Study Engineering Services

- a. Ms. Auster stated that she expects to hear from Daniel's Construction by the end of the week to see if they will hold their price. If neither bidder can hold their prices, they will have to go back out to bid.

Motion: by Mr. Swanson to authorize the Town to apply for a CWSRF Step 1 Planning Loan for the Main WWTF Preliminary Engineering Study and to appoint Mr. Kerbin as the Town Representative for this loan.

Seconded: by Mr. Bourgeois.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

11. EDC proposals to grant funds to the Chamber of Commerce for Wassail Weekend

a. \$2,000 to pay for shuttle buses on Saturday, December 11th

- 1) Mr. Spector stated that the EDC is proposing a grant for \$5,000 for two things. They are expecting a higher number of tourists this year at Wassail. There were an estimated 60% higher number of tourists here the first week of October than in 2019. They are proposing to have two buses. The EDC recommends it and the holiday lights on a vote of 6-1.

- 2) Ms. Finlayson stated that the buses would not run during the parade. They are 15 passenger buses.

b. \$3,000 to purchase holiday lights to decorate the trees in the Village

Motion: by Mr. Bourgeois to approve the EDC grant of \$5,000 to the Chamber of Commerce for shuttle buses on Saturday, December 11th and to purchase holiday lights to decorate the trees in the Village.

Seconded: by Ms. Cole.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

c. \$3,050 to pay for additional activities on Wassail Weekend

- 1) Mr. Spector stated that this would be for three new activities. These activities would be horse and carriage rides, a group of actors in costume talking about Woodstock walking around the Village, and smores on the Green.

Motion: by Ms. Cole to approve the EDC grant of \$3,050 to the Chamber of Commerce to pay for additional activities on Wassail Weekend.

Seconded: by Mr. Swanson.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 4-1-0, passed. (Chair Riley for, Mr. Bourgeois for, Ms. Cole for, Mr. Swanson for, Mr. Doten against)

H. Other business

1. Proposals to repair Lincoln Covered Bridge

Motion: by Mr. Bourgeois to accept the proposal from Wright Construction to repair the Lincoln Covered Bridge for \$87,158.

Seconded: by Mr. Doten.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

I. Board of Sewer Commissioners

1. Permit – Johnson, 51 Barberry Circle – Deleted

2. Abatement request – Merrill, 75 Golf Avenue

Motion: by Mr. Bourgeois to approve the abatement request for 75 Golf Avenue as submitted by Mr. Merrill for the amount of \$956.38.

Seconded: by Chair Riley.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

J. Approval of minutes

1. 10/5/21 minutes

Motion: by Mr. Bourgeois to approve the minutes of 10/5/21 as submitted.

Seconded: by Mr. Doten.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

K. Adjournment

Motion: by Mr. Bourgeois to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 pm.

Seconded: by Mr. Swanson.

Discussion: none.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Nikki Nourse