

**Town of Woodstock
Selectboard Meeting
October 3rd, 2024
6:00 PM
Town Hall & Zoom
Minutes**

Draft minutes are subject to approval.

Present: Chair Ray Bourgeois, Keri Cole, Laura Powell, Greg Fullerton

Staff: Eric Duffy

Public: Jesse Werner, Leo Werner, Byron Kelly, Peter Shoeman, Linda Smithy, Chris Miller, John King

Call to order

1. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of October 3rd to order at 6PM

B. Addition to & deletions from posted agenda

C. Citizen's Comments

Jesse Werner raises concerns about the approval process for marijuana retail in Woodstock, questioning the number of approvals given by the local Cannabis Control Board

Eric Duffy explains the confidentiality laws surrounding marijuana businesses, suggesting that any approved applications should be listed on previous agendas.

Jesse Werner mentions ongoing pushback from residents in West Woodstock due to a third marijuana retail location, highlighting an official appeal against the state environmental core.

D. Discussion

Public forum to discuss acquisition of the Woodstock Aqueduct Company.

The meeting discussed the acquisition and management of the Woodstock water system, Key capital projects were outlined, such as the suspension of the main under the Elm Street Bridge, new well and pump replacement, and upgrading water mains. The acquisition cost of the water system is \$920,000, with additional \$1.6 million for the Vondell property. Concerns were raised about the financial impact on taxpayers and the need for new revenue to support infrastructure improvements.

Eric Duffy introduces the discussion on capital projects, mentioning a summary prepared by Laura Powell.

Laura Powell outlines several capital projects, including the suspension of the main under the Elm Street Bridge, new well and pump replacement, and upgrades to water mains and fire hydrants.

Eric Duffy provides a detailed list of assets and their estimated value, totaling approximately \$2.7 million.

Byron Kelly raises concerns about funding for these projects and the potential impact on taxpayers, emphasizing the need for transparency and public education.

Peter Shoeman questions the historical revenue generated by the water system and whether it was used to fund necessary upgrades.

Eric Duffy explains that the water company has not increased user rates since 2016, leading to a lack of revenue and accumulated debt.

Laura Powell and Eric Duffy discuss the need for capital reserves to avoid emergency loans and the potential for new revenue through new housing connections and increased user rates.

Peter Shoeman emphasizes the importance of understanding where the revenue will come from and the impact on taxpayers, suggesting that the town should be honest about the financial implications.

Linda Smithy questions the decision to address the fire engines, school, and water system separately and calls for a prioritization of projects.

Linda Smithy calls for a clear understanding of the total cost to taxpayers and the impact on taxes, suggesting that public ownership should be justified by better management and grants.

Chris Miller suggests separating the vote on the Von Dell Reservoir from the infrastructure projects to avoid confusion.

Eric Duffy explains the original plan to have a single vote in November but had to shift due to grant funding and timing.

John King raises ethical concerns about paying \$1.6 million for the Vondell Reservoir, suggesting a lease option for the time the property has been owned.

Laura Powell and other speakers discuss the potential value of the Vondell Reservoir for future water system expansion and recreational use, emphasizing the need for community input on its future.

E. Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313

Motion: by Chair Ray Bourgeois Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313 (7:14PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed. (Returned 7:40pm)

F. Approval of Minutes

9.17.24

9.23.24

9.25.24

Motion: by Chair Greg Fullerton to approval minutes 9.17.24, 9.23.24, 9.25.24

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed.

Adjournment

Motion: by Greg Fullerton to adjourn the meeting at (7:41 PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kitty Mears Koar