

**Town of Woodstock
Selectboard Meeting
October 8th, 2024
1:00 PM
Town Hall & Zoom
Minutes**

Draft minutes are subject to approval.

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

Staff: Eric Duffy, Kitty Mears Koar

Public: Byron Kelly, Bill Hyde, Barbara Otranto

Call to order

1. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of October 8th to order at 1PM

B. Addition to & deletions from posted agenda- none

C. Citizen Comments – None

D. Discussion

Public forum to discuss acquisition of the Woodstock Aqueduct Company

Byron Kelly raises concerns about the completion of the engineering study and the total number of current water system connections and parcels.

Eric Duffy confirms the engineering study will be available online and provides the numbers: 992 connections and 720 parcels.

Byron Kelly questions the plan for funding options and the potential impact on users and non-users, highlighting a discrepancy in the number of users mentioned in the engineering study. Bill Hyde expresses concern about the potential cost to non-users and the impact on the Blake Hill community.

Eric Duffy explains that all parcels in Woodstock currently pay hydrant fees, regardless of whether they have access to hydrants.

Eric Duffy and Laura Powell discuss the potential increase in hydrant fees if the town purchases the Woodstock Aqueduct Company

Susan Ford emphasizes the importance of fire protection and the benefits of having a working water system for the entire community.

Bill Hyde questions the fairness of non-users paying the same rate as users for hydrant fees.

Susan Ford and Laura Powell explained that all taxpayers pay for water for municipal buildings, schools, and courthouses. All taxpayers pay for hydrant fees as a part of their tax bill. That our hydrants are not up to standards and the community needs the hydrants to maintain fire protection.

Eric Duffy explains that there is a moratorium on any new water connections in town.

Laura Powell explains it's going to cost more money for the Aqueduct to continue owning the company than it will for the town.

Barbara Otranto raises concerns about the impact on non-users and the need for a separate vote on the bond for the Vondell reservoir.

Susan Ford and Laura Powell discuss the challenges of presenting multiple measures in a compressed timeframe.

Barbara Otranto questions the timeline and the contact at the state level responsible for the deadline.

Eric Duffy provides an explanation of the federal funding requirements and the urgency to allocate the funds before the end of the year.

Eric Duffy presents a list of capital projects, including the Elm Street suspension repair, new well and pump replacement, and the Route 4 project.

Laura Powell emphasizes the importance of having a reserve capacity within the system and the need for these projects.

Eric Duffy explains the need for a new water storage tank and the challenges of acquiring land for the project.

Eric Duffy outlines the potential costs and funding options for the capital projects, including the use of local options tax revenue.

Byron Kelly and other participants discuss the pros and cons of a flat rate versus a proportionate rate for user fees.

Susan Ford and Ray Bourgeois express their preference for a proportionate rate based on assessed value.

Eric Duffy explains the potential impact on tax revenue and the need for a balanced approach to funding the projects.

Kitty Mears Koar and other participants express concerns about the fairness of non-users paying the same rate as users, and non-user and many generation residents not wanting to pay the same amount as village residents.

They emphasize the need for a fair and transparent approach to setting user fees.

Eric Duffy outlines the next steps, including working on a formula for allocating user fees and presenting it at the next meeting.

Susan Ford and Laura Powell emphasize the need for ongoing community engagement and education about the projects.

Eric Duffy confirms the next meeting date Tuesday October 15th and the plan to present more detailed information and scenarios for funding and user fees.

Adjournment

Motion: by Ray Bourgeois to adjourn the meeting at (2:04 PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kitty Mears Koar