

**Town of Woodstock  
Selectboard Meeting  
November 14th, 2024  
5:30 PM  
Town Hall & Zoom  
Minutes**

**Draft minutes are subject to approval.**

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

**Staff:** Eric Duffy

**Public:** Tom Weschler, Byron Kelly, Susie Stultz, Molly Hutchins, Jon Spector, Deborah Newhoff, Peter Shoemaker, Charlie Kimball, Chris Miller, Ben Pauley, Jill Mitchell

**Call to order**

1. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of November 14th to order at 5:30PM

**B. Addition to & deletions from posted agenda- none**

**C. Citizen Comments – none**

**D. Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313**

Motion: by Susan Ford to enter Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313 at (5:32PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 5-0-0, passed Returned (5:37PM)

**E. Discussion**

**Water System Capital Project and purchase of Vondell Reservoir (5:38pm)**

Susan Ford explained the meeting format, one person from the audience or one on Zoom to speak at a time.

Tom Weschler questioned the necessity of the Vondell Reservoir for the current and future water system.

Susan Ford explained the historical context and future potential of the Vondell Reservoir.

Eric Duffy clarified that the purchase of the water company is still pending the purchase has not closed.

Tom Weschler questioned the necessity of purchasing Vondell and if easements to the water rights already exist.

Eric Duffy and Laura Powell explained the broader benefits of Vondell, including future water use, recreation, and conservation.

Susan Ford emphasized the risk of losing Vondell to private ownership if not purchased.

Barbara Kennedy inquired about taxability and revenue from Vondell.

Eric Duffy provided the annual revenue from Vondell and mentions the cost of water readings.

Byron Kelly supported the 1B vote, then questioned the allocation of costs between users and taxpayers

Byron Kelly expressed concerns about the \$1.6 million cost for 350 acres and its future potential.

Susie Stultz highlighted the historical and ecological significance of Vondell, including its potential for fighting wildfires.

Susan Ford confirmed that Vondell could be used for emergency water in case of drought or wildfires.

Susan Ford acknowledged the potential for development but emphasizes the current focus on preservation.

Eric Duffy revealed the appraised value of Vondell at \$2,058,000 million, indicating a significant discount.

Laura Powell discussed the potential for future revenue from Vondell and the need for a rate increase.

Molly Hutchins emphasized the importance of connecting Vondell to the water system for emergency use.

Alex Molly questioned the allocation of local options and hospitality taxes for the bond.

Laura Powell explained the tentative allocation and the need for user contributions to cover the debt.

Jon Spector suggested preserving flexibility in funding allocations to accommodate future priorities.

Deborah Newhoff questioned the 40% contribution from non-users and suggests a flat per property fee.

Laura Powell explained the rationale behind the current allocation, emphasizing the benefits to all taxpayers.

Peter Shoemaker argued that users should pay more through rate increases rather than property taxes.

Eric Duffy and Susan Ford acknowledged the need to explore different rate structures and revenue projections.

Charlie Kimball highlighted the potential for increased capacity and grand list growth with Vondell.

Laura Powell confirmed that the bond for Vondell and 1B will be paid by all users and taxpayers, while the Elm Street suspension and new well will be user-funded.

Chris Miller questioned the feasibility of connecting von Del to the water system and the cost

Ben Pauley stressed the importance of a timeline for new hookups to support future development.

Laura Powell and Susan Ford acknowledge the need for better communication and messaging to non-users.

Eric Duffy provides estimates for the cost of Vondell and emphasizes the need for further discussions and budget projections.

Participants are encouraged to attend upcoming meetings for further discussion.

**F. Adjournment**

Motion: by Susan Ford to adjourn the meeting at (6:58PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 5-0-0, passed.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Kitty Mears Koar