

**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 raised concerns about the completion of the engineering study and the total number of current water system connections and parcels.

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

Byron Kelly questioned 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 expressed concern about the potential cost to non-users and the impact on the Blake Hill community.

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

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

Susan Ford emphasized 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 explained it's going to cost more money for the Aqueduct to continue owning the company than it will for the town.

Barbara Otranto raised 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 discussed the challenges of presenting multiple measures in a compressed timeframe.

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

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

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

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

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

Eric Duffy outlined 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 expressed their preference for a proportionate rate based on assessed value.

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

Kitty Mears Koar and other participants expressed 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 emphasized 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 emphasized 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



Greg Fullerton (Nov 25, 2024 19:41 EST)



Keri Cole (Nov 22, 2024 18:30 EST)



Raymond Bourgeois (Nov 23, 2024 07:56 EST)


LAURA POWELL

