

**Town of Woodstock
Selectboard Meeting
January 21st, 2025
9:30AM
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, Stephanie Appelfeller

Public: Ben Brickner, Al Alessi, Chris Boyle, Roger Logan, Jon Spector, Jill Davies, Trena Tolliver

Call to order

1. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of January 21st to order at 6:00PM

B. Additions to & deletions from posted agenda

Pomfret Ambulance Bills

C. Citizen Comments – None

D. Manager’s Report

Eric Duffy mentioned painting in the Town Hall building, preparations for Town Meeting, and thanking the Public Works crew for their efforts.

E. Discussion

Pomfret Ambulance Bills

Eric Duffy introduced Ben Brickner, the current chair of the Selectboard in Pomfret, to discuss uncollected ambulance bills.

Ben Brickner explained the contract with Woodstock for emergency services and the significant increase in uncollected bills.

Ben Brickner requested a payment plan or a one-time abatement due to the large amount and the impact on Pomfret's budget.

On Farm Restaurant Amendment Update

Laura Powell explained the changes to the amendment, including the removal of the square footage requirement.

Laura Powell mentioned the historical and non-historical farm structures report prepared by Ben Pauley.

Susan Ford raised concerns about enforceability, and Laura Powell explained the enforcement process.

Al Alessi questioned the rationale behind various components of the amendment.

Laura Powell clarified that the Selectboard was tasked with examining the square footage requirement.

Chris Boyle, an attorney representing residents, suggested a holistic review of the regulations.

Motion: by Laura Powell hold a public hearing on the amendment (6:18PM)

Seconded: by Susan Ford

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

Town Meeting Prep

Eric Duffy discussed the potential warning for the Town Meeting, including having the Lister's become appointed.

Eric Duffy outlined the articles on the warning, including the creation of a reserve fund and the potential elimination of elected auditor positions.

The board set a meeting for Wednesday January 29th at 4PM

All the petitions are in from the nonprofits, there 10-15 petitions.

Update on Purchase of the Woodstock Aqueduct Company

Eric Duffy provided updates on the water system, including the purchase of new technology for meter readings.

Water Ordinance

Stephanie Appelfeller discussed the draft water ordinance and the need for a vote by the end of January.

Roger Logan requested the ordinance to be posted online as soon as possible.

Eric Duffy thanked Stephanie Appelfeller for her hard work on the ordinance.

EDC Housing Group

Jon Spector explained the agenda, mentioning the EDC housing group's updates and the need to halt grant funding while considering guidance for boards and commissions.

Jon Spector highlighted two programs facing funding expiration in six weeks: the marketing program and the housing advisor program.

The marketing program, which costs \$55,000 annually, is recommended to continue with the same process and team.

The housing advisor program, costing \$52,000 annually, is also recommended to continue, with 10% of the advisor's time allocated to administering existing grants.

The RFP process for rebuilding the website is separate from the marketing program, with six proposals received and a review expected in a month.

Jill Davies and Trena Tolliver presented the EDC housing group's performance over two and a half years, highlighting the creation of 17 housing units.

The average grant for each unit is \$10,700, and the average rent is \$1,281, making the program affordable for local workers.

The housing programs include the workforce rental program, multi-unit housing rental program, rental incentive program, and home share program.

Trena Tolliver detailed her role as the housing advisor, managing program management, program design, and coordination with landlords and tenants.

Trena Tolliver discussed the challenges faced in the housing programs, including high building costs and lack of water in the East End Park.

Jill Davies outlined the two main goals: streamlining the development process and making development financially attractive.

Collaboration with the Selectboard, EDC, Planning and Zoning, regional energy coordinators, state legislators, and listers is essential for success.

Stephanie Appelfeller discussed changes being made in the Planning and Zoning office to streamline the development process, including creating water access in the village and updating zoning bylaws.

Jill Davies proposed renewing the housing advisor contract to continue working on existing agreements and bring the lease to locals' program in-house.

The recommendation to encumber an additional \$200,000 for success-based programs is reiterated.

Susan Ford asked about the sustainability of created housing units and the possibility of merging housing initiatives.

Jill Davies clarified that all created units are sustainable and that merging initiatives might not be beneficial.

The potential for the EDC to expand its role in housing and the possibility of hiring a marketing person as a full-time town employee are discussed.

Roger Logan supported continuing the housing advisor position and suggested examining the role of the EDC in marketing Woodstock.

The idea of creating a Housing Authority is proposed to access lower interest loans for development.

Jill Davies urged a quick decision on the housing advisor contract and program incentives to avoid paralysis in the housing programs.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 29th to make these decisions.

F. Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313

Motion: by Chair Ray Bourgeois at go into Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313 to discuss potential contracts(7:16PM)

Seconded: by Susan Ford

Vote: 4-0-0, passed (Returned 7:32PM)

G. Approval of Minutes

Motion: by Susan Ford to approve the minutes November 14, 2024, November 21, 2024, December 5, 2024, and January 16, 2025 (7:32PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

H. Adjournment

Motion: by Susan Ford to adjourn the meeting at (7:33 PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

Respectfully submitted,

Kitty Mears Koar