

**Town of Woodstock
Selectboard Meeting
January 13th, 2025
4:00 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: Byron Kelly, Donna Foster, Tony Richie, Seth Westbrook, Kent McFarland,
Tom Debevoise III, Charles Degener III, Roger Logan

Call to order

1. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of January 13th to order at 4:03PM

B. Additions to & deletions from posted agenda

Deletion of Boiler Purchase for DPW

C. Citizen Comments

Byron Kelly raised a concern about the timely posting of the budget meeting agenda on the Listserv.

Eric Duffy clarified that the listserv is not legally required to be posted but is an additional posting place.

D. Discussion

Discussion on Vondell Property Potential for Conservation

Susan Ford thanked voters for approving the bond to purchase Vondell for \$1.6 million and discussed offsetting the purchase price.

Susan Ford mentioned the possibility of conserving the property with the Vermont Land Trust along with grants and private fundraising.

Susan Ford noted that the Selectboard has not yet voted on whether to conserve the property and whether to exempt any acreage.

Susan Ford worked with Pete Fellows from Two River Ottauquechee Regional Commission to identify two parcels for potential development: a 30-acre parcel at Grassy Lane and a 10-acre parcel near the existing parking lot.

Ray Bourgeois suggested having options available for future development. Greg Fullerton agreed with Ray Bourgeois.

Laura Powell supported the idea of conserving the property and asked about the impact on grant funding if certain parcels are held back for future development.

Donna Foster from the Vermont Land Trust explained that more funding would be available if more land is conserved, but it's hard to provide exact figures.

Keri Cole agreed about holding the two parcels back for now to explore options.

Susan Ford mentioned that the Land Trust is exempting the water body and the existing infrastructure.

Tony Richie expressed reluctance to jump into the land trust agreement, fearing it could reduce the property's value for future use.

Tony Richie also requested that the town leave room for a dog park and ensure no restrictions that would inhibit that possibility.

Susan Ford explained the challenges in finding parcels that could be exempted due to vernal pools, wetlands, steep slopes and shallow soils.

Seth Westbrook of the Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association commented about the Act 250 restrictions being taken into consideration for the property.

Kent McFarland, a conservation biologist, warned about the importance of carefully examining the 40 acres to ensure no endangered species or natural communities are affected.

Eric Duffy mentioned a call he had today with the State Water Development Fund for a very low interest rate.

Motion: by Susan Ford to work with Vermont Land Trust to conserve all the property that they designated, and the 30 acre and 10-acre pieces that the Selectboard have designated. (4:21PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Disbandment of the S. Woodstock Wastewater Plant Design Committee

A committee was formed by the Selectboard to improve the appearance of the South Woodstock Wastewater Treatment Plant. Tom Debevoise, Chair of the Committee, stated that the Committee used the ARPA funds dedicated by the town to move the fence and to paint the tank. Even with the fence moved, most people seem happy and the Committee is really done since there are no funds to do anything else. Tom Debevoise requested that the Committee be disbanded.

Motion: by Laura Powell to Disband the S. Woodstock Wastewater Plant Design Committee (4:25PM)

Seconded: by Susan Ford

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

FY26 Budget

Eric Duffy updated the board on the current budget proposal, which includes a 11.22% tax increase.

Charles Degener, the Town Clerk, expressed concerns about reducing the Assistant Clerk's budget by \$13,000, noting the importance of maintaining service levels, there has been at least two assistant clerks in the past.

Charles Degener proposed various adjustments, including reduction machinery and equipment expenses and delaying restoration of records.

Eric Duffy discussed the potential increase in ambulance fees.

The board considered the importance of increasing compliance with fire alarm registration and the potential for additional revenue.

Byron Kelly showed support for the Town Clerk and Clerk assistants and the Town Constable.

Byron Kelly raised concerns about the state of Vermont's handling of educational funding and the impact on town budgets.

Roger Logan raised concerns regarding the police revenue in the Town and the Village.

The Board scheduled another meeting January 16th at 9:30AM

The board agreed to increase the ambulance budget and restore capital reserves for future ambulance needs.

Eric Duffy mentioned the need to discuss the water budget for the last quarter of the fiscal year and the upcoming special articles for the town meeting.

E. Adjournment

Motion: by Susan Ford to adjourn the meeting at (4:51PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Respectfully submitted,

Kitty Mears Koar

Laura Powell

Greg Fullerton

Raymond Bourgeois

Susan B. Ford

Signature: 
Laura Powell (Feb 8, 2025 13:00 EST)

Email: lpowell@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 
Greg Fullerton (Feb 4, 2025 12:19 EST)

Email: gfullerton@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Raymond Bourgeois
Raymond Bourgeois (Jan 31, 2025 10:48 EST)

Email: rbourgeois@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Susan B. Ford
Susan B. Ford (Jan 31, 2025 09:38 EST)

Email: sford@townofwoodstock.org

Signature:

Email: