

**Town of Woodstock  
Selectboard Meeting  
December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
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, Kitty Mears Koar, Fire Chief David Green

**Public:** Tom Debevoise III

**A. Call to order**

1. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of December 30th to order at 4:00PM

**B. Addition to & deletions from posted agenda**

**Amendment – Wastewater Plant**

**C. Citizen Comments – no**

**D. Discussion**

**Amendment – Wastewater Plant**

Eric Duffy explained the amendment includes an additional \$36,800 for the project, with specific milestones for plan completion.

Motion: by Laura Powell to accept the amendment to the Hoyle Tanner Engineering Proposal (4:03PM)

Seconded: by Susan Ford

Vote: 4-0-0

Motion: by Susan Ford to authorize Chair Ray Bourgeois to sign the amendment (4:03PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 4-0-0

**FY26 Budget Discussion**

Eric Duffy outlined the two main changes in the budget: \$120,000 for the water system project and a \$2,000 increase for the Rec Center budget from the previous year.

With those two additions the projected tax rate increase is 11.22%

Susan Ford expressed hope for a lower Vondell Reservoir bond with a meeting with the Land Trust upcoming, and Eric Duffy mentioned efforts to secure a zero-interest loan for Elm Street Bridge project.

Ray Bourgeois suggested increasing rent for Pentangle and the Chamber of Commerce rent by 10%, citing rising costs of heat and electricity.

Eric Duffy confirmed that the Pentangle contract includes annual increases based on New England CPI, which have not been applied since 2017.

Laura Powell and Susan Ford discussed the potential increase in Chamber of Commerce rent, noting the lack of a formal lease.

Ray Bourgeois suggested reducing the clerk's assistant budget by \$13,000, noting a decrease in recording fees.

Laura Powell advocated for adding a Planning and Zoning Director to support housing and development, despite the tax rate increase.

Eric Duffy discussed the potential for funding a Planning and Zoning Director through shared costs with the village and other departments. The board considered the possibility of partially funding the position mid-year and the potential for a larger conversation on departmental budgets.

The board discussed the Town Constable position and if it is necessary.

Ray Bourgeois asked about the Rec Center and if their rates have been increased.

Susan Ford questioned the \$14,000 budgeted for fireworks, suggesting it could be funded by the Chamber of Commerce.

Eric Duffy agreed to explore alternative funding sources and mentions the need for a decision soon to avoid contract issues.

Susan Ford raised concerns about the audit expense and suggests examining other auditors to improve timeliness and efficiency. Eric Duffy agreed that it is time for a RFP to auditors.

Ray Bourgeois proposed increasing employee contributions to 9% for health insurance, citing rising insurance costs.

### **Nonprofit Funding and Special Articles**

Ray Bourgeois suggested informing nonprofits that they cannot rely on town funding for the next budget cycle.

Susan Ford expressed concern about public response to funding and suggests letting organizations know of the board's intentions for the next year.

The board discussed the potential for reducing the culture and recreation line item in the budget.

### **Water and Sewer**

Eric Duffy provided an overview of the water and sewer budgets, noting increases in salaries, operating supplies, and utilities.

Eric Duffy mentioned the upcoming closure of the Aqueduct Company and the need for a budget for the final three months of ownership.

The board agreed to meet again to finalize the contract and discuss further budget adjustments.

The board plans another meeting for Tuesday January 7<sup>th</sup> at 4PM

Tom Debevoise discussed the potential for conservation restrictions on the Vondell property and the benefits for fundraising.

David Green emphasized the importance of securing conservation restrictions to maximize private donations and grants.

Susan Ford and Eric Duffy agreed to schedule a meeting with the Vermont Land Trust to discuss the conservation easement and fundraising strategy.

The board discussed the need for a joint meeting with the Village Trustees.

**E. Adjournment**

Motion: by Susan Ford to adjourn the meeting at (4:57PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

*Respectfully submitted,*

Kitty Mears Koar

Laura Powell

Greg Fullerton

Raymond Bourgeois

Susan B. Ford

Signature:   
Laura Powell (Feb 8, 2025 13:02 EST)

Email: lpowell@townofwoodstock.org

Signature:   
Greg Fullerton (Feb 4, 2025 12:21 EST)

Email: gfullerton@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Raymond Bourgeois  
Raymond Bourgeois (Jan 31, 2025 10:51 EST)

Email: rbourgeois@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Susan B. Ford  
Susan B. Ford (Jan 31, 2025 09:36 EST)

Email: sford@townofwoodstock.org

Signature:

Email: