

SELECTBOARD MEETING
April 20, 2023
Minutes

Present:	Lee McClenny Bill Cleary Dave Baczewski	Nanette Rogers Callie Hamdy John Roberts
Guests:	Louise Jensen	Ben Bornstein

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom.

CHANGES TO AGENDA

Added Access Permit and Addition of Culvert on Old Stage Road to Highway Department, and CSWD Representative appointment to Discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Louise Jensen addressed a Front Porch Forum post about a Wastewater Outreach Committee work session as well as accusations made against members of the Planning Commission. The Selectboard discussed at their last meeting whether the work session needed to be public, eventually determining that it did not because it lacked a quorum. The final product of the work session would be presented to the full Outreach Committee and the full Planning Commission at a publicly warned meeting. The individual who had made the post in question was present at the Selectboard meeting where it was explained why the work session was not a public meeting and yet made the post accusing the Planning Commission of trying to get around open meeting laws. Louise feels they deliberately misstated the information and is disappointed that someone would take facts that were obvious at the public Selectboard meeting and distort them to spread misinformation.

Lee knows that the wastewater issue has a lot at stake and that it has excited a lot of passions. Many people are in danger of getting off target from time to time. The Selectboard will continue to emphasize transparency in the process. Louise knows there are a lot of different opinions, but she is frustrated by this willful spreading of misinformation. Bill was not present at the previous meeting but voiced his concern over the work session being done without being accessible to the public.

Ben Bornstein was present and gave an update on the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission meetings he has attended. The last meeting focused on transportation, mainly green/electric transportation, and public transportation. They also discussed the state taking control of reappraisals.

MINUTES

Dave Baczewski made a motion to approve the April 6, 2023 minutes as drafted, seconded by Lee McClenny. Motion passed: 2-0, Bill abstained.

ROAD SCHEDULE

John Roberts, Road Foreman, reviewed the March 24, 2023 through April 20, 2023 Road Schedule. Bill Cleary made a motion to approve the Road Schedule as presented, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed 3-0.

ACCESS PERMIT APPLICATION FOR PRIVATE ROAD LOCATED OFF WESTFORD MILTON ROAD

An access permit application was submitted by Ken Heco in response to a zoning violation issued by the Zoning Administrator. John has signed off on the application. The property has two existing accesses. Ken wishes to remove the existing access and have one access that will be located in between the existing accesses. Bill expressed concern over Heco's previous and ongoing violations. Dave Baczewski made a motion to approve the access permit as submitted, seconded by Bill Cleary. Motion passed: 3-0.

CONSIDER PURCHASING ROLLER WITH ARPA FUNDS

A roller for the grader would improve the quality of the roads. John is hoping ARPA Funds could be used to purchase the equipment. He explained that when grading, the roller would pack down the material, which would reduce the number of passes currently needed. Based on conversations Bill had with other highway departments, purchasing a roller is a good investment. The cost of the roller exceeds the unobligated ARPA funds. Currently the highway department has a surplus due to the funds received from FEMA. Lee was in favor but wanted more information from Greg before purchasing. Dave recommended allocating \$40,000 for the purchase, the balance can then come out of the current budget. Dave Baczewski made a motion to approve the purchase of a roller utilizing up to \$40,000 of ARPA funds with the remainder coming from the highway budget, seconded by Bill Cleary. Motion passed: 3-0.

CULVERT ON OLD STAGE ROAD

John advised there is a cross culvert on Old Stage Road near Snow Hill Lane that needs to be replaced. Allen Reynolds would like the Town to place a culvert under his driveway to direct the runoff to a cross culvert further down the road because discharge from the existing culvert causes his field to be wet. John pointed out that if the Town does what Mr. Reynolds is requesting, approximately a half mile stretch would need to be ditched. He added that the area is flat, and a hydrology study should be done before making the change. John does not believe the change would improve Mr. Reynolds' field and recommends replacing the existing culvert as planned. The Selectboard agreed with John, adding that if Mr. Reynolds takes issue with the decision, he should attend a meeting to make his case to the Selectboard.

FY'23 HIGHWAY BUDGET STATUS REPORT

It was noted that the highway budget has a positive balance and there are only two months remaining in the fiscal year.

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FOR ESSEX JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

Rey Garofano submitted a request on behalf of Voices of Inclusion in Essex and Westford in the amount of \$1,000 to support the Essex Juneteenth Celebration which will be held in Essex on June 18. It was noted that if the request is approved it would be an unbudgeted expense. In comparison, the Board noted that the amount requested is half of what is budgeted for the summer concerts, significant cuts were made to annual donations for FY'24, and the Town does not budget any funds for its own Fourth of July celebration. Dave Baczewski made a motion that the Town is unable to financially support the Essex Juneteenth event at a cost of \$1,000, seconded by Bill Cleary. Motion passed: 3-0.

2023 LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Nanette reviewed the existing Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) and updated it. There was concern over the emergency director, Joshua Smith, being able to fulfill his role due to a new position that may conflict with the responsibilities. The Selectboard will reach out to Josh to determine if he can fulfill the responsibilities. Bill Cleary made a motion to approve the 2023 Local Emergency Manage Plan as drafted with the caveat to check with Josh to see if he is still interested in being the EMD and if not contacting Helen Sterling and Francois Ross, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0.

CSWD REPRESENTATIVE APPOINTMENT

Westford's Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) Representative's term is expiring at the end of May. The current representative, Katie Frederick, expressed interest in being reappointed. Bill Cleary made a motion to reappoint Katie as Westford's CSWD Representative, seconded by Dave Baczewski. Motion passed: 3-0. The Board thanked Katie for her continued services.

CORRESPONDENCE

Joe Franz submitted an email with a picture illustrating an example of safety concerns with multiple uses on Woods Hollow Road.

Nanette suggested inviting the Chittenden County Sheriff to discuss the traffic control budget, which has already been spent.

Brad Holden from the Town of Underhill contacted the Selectboard regarding the speed concern on Route 15 raised by Joy Atherton. Joy lives on Duffy Hill Road which is located off Route 15 in Underhill. Brad received a response from VTrans advising that it is Underhill's responsibility to make the request since the section of Route 15 is in Underhill. Lee recommended Westford send a letter of support for a study to be done. Bill and Dave agreed. Lee pointed out that lowering the speed limit would unlikely slow motorists down but maybe something can be done.

COMMUNICATION

The Town Office received several phone calls from residents who received a bill for excess trash. Bill wanted to send a communication explaining what residents can expect Myers to pick up that is paid for by the Town and items and overages they may be charged for. Nanette advised that she already sent a notice to Front Porch Forum.

REVIEW FY'23 GENERAL FUND BUDGET STATUS REPORT

It was noted that the general fund budget has a positive balance, however some large expenses such as funds for reserve funds still need to be transferred, which usually occurs after the final tax installment.

CONSIDER INVESTING ARPA FUNDS IN ONE OR MORE CDS

When the Board was discussing investing town funds in CDs, they briefly spoke of investing some of the ARPA funds, however, a motion was not made. The Board discussed investing the \$150,000 which has been obligated for the Community Wastewater System in the event a bond vote is successful. They also discussed possibly investing additional ARPA funds. It was pointed out that organizations have begun requesting funds that have been obligated. If the Town were to invest obligated funds, the Town could find itself cashing in a CD earlier than its maturity date. Therefore, Dave recommended the Town only invest ARPA funds that it has

control over. Dave Baczewski made a motion to invest \$150,000 of the ARPA funds which have been allocated for the Community Wastewater system in a 12-month interest bearing CD because the funds will not be expended in the next year or more, seconded by Bill Cleary. Motion passed: 3-0.

REVIEW AND APPROVE LOAN DOCUMENTS FOR PURCHASE OF NEW GRADER

The new grader has been delivered and is being used. Nanette provided several loan documents to the Selectboard for their approval and signatures to borrow \$230,000 for the new grader. Lee McClenny made a motion to approve the Resolution as drafted and presented and borrow the money to purchase the grader, seconded by Bill Cleary. Motion passed: 3-0.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND PAYROLL WARRANTS

The Board approved and signed the accounts payable and payroll warrants.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee McClenny, Chair
Selectboard

Callie Hamdy
Minute Clerk

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.
ROAD SCHEDULE
April 7, 2023 – April 20, 2023**

Work to be done

- Truck service.
- Put the summer tires on.
- Haul in road gravel.
- Grade roads.
- Replace several culverts.

Work completed

- Graded several roads.
- Added gravel to Stoney Ridge Road and upper Covey Road.
- Patched potholes on several roads.
- Hauled in road gravel.
- Pulled the plows off the trucks.
- Fixed the tarp motor on the 2020 International.
- *Cleared up intersections and TO parking Lot*

Approved at the 4/20/23 Selectboard Meeting.