

**SELECTBOARD MEETING
October 12, 2023
Draft Minutes**

Present:	Bill Cleary	Callie Hamdy
	Lee McClenny	Greg Barrows
	Dave Baczewski	Sean Cushing

Guests: see attached.

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Bill motioned to go into executive session for matters of personnel and to invite personnel consultant Vicky Ross to the session at 5:01 p.m. Lee Seconded. Motion approved 2-0. The board conducted an interview with candidate A this week. Dave motioned to recess the meeting and exit executive session at 5:45 p.m., Bill seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

The board reconvened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

CHANGES TO AGENDA

There were no changes to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

We got \$4,000 for the mini grant for the ADA inspection for the Town Garage for the MERP Grand Application. Ben Bornstein and John have scheduled it for this coming Tuesday.

Lee welcomed Holly Delisle aboard. She has joined the Town Staff as the new Town Administrator.

Vicky Ross gave a brief update on the Town Administrator transition. Carl Rogers, Nanette, and the Temp Staff are all up and running for the administrator transition. Lori Johnson's help on the transition team has ended. Vicky thanked her for her time and assistance.

MINUTES

Bill motioned to approve the September 14, 2023, minutes as amended. Dave seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Bill motioned to approve the September 25, 2023, minutes as written. Dave seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Bill motioned to approve the September 28, 2023, minutes as amended. Dave seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Dave motioned to approve the October 2, 2023, minutes as written. Bill seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

ROAD SCHEDULE

Sean Cushing, Road Crew, presented the road schedule from September 29, 2023 – October 12, 2023. Bill motioned to approve the road schedule. Dave seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

5-YEAR CONTRACT WITH ROADSIDE MOWING VENDOR

John spoke with the roadside mowing vendor, Roberge, at the Selectboard's direction to see if they could come down in price. They were not willing to do so. Sean felt their price was reasonable for two mowings a year. They also discussed doing a double pass mowing on some roads to cut back brush. Bill motioned to approve a five-year roadside mowing contract with our current vendor. Dave seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

UPDATE ON NEW ROLLER

Sean explained we've been using the new roller behind the grader, and it is making a big difference. They've seen more resistance to rain damage on problem areas since using it.

Greg discussed the payment for the roller. Most of the payment was coming from ARPA funds, but he and John had discussed several options for the remaining funds.

FY'24 HIGHWAY BUDGET STATUS REPORT

Greg Barrows, Treasurer, went over the FY'24 Highway Budget Status Report. We were over budget on the sand due to a price increase.

FY'25 CEMETERY COMMISSION BUDGET REQUEST

Lynn Gauthier from the Cemetery Commission was present. The Cemetery Commission is requesting a level funded budget of \$8,000 and a level funded stipend of \$425. In the past year they have accomplished a significant amount of restoration and cleaning throughout the various cemeteries. There are two cedar trees that will need to come down in the next year. Bill asked what a cemetery lot costs. A lot presently costs \$350 for a 4x10 lot which can accommodate either 1 burial or 2 cremations.

FY'25 CONSERVATION COMMISSION BUDGET REQUEST

Sarah Pinto from the Conservation Commission was present by pro. The Conservation Commission is requesting \$5,000 for the FY'25 Budget. This is an increase of \$1,000 and is due to infrastructure improvements that are needed, such as dealing with areas where water is perennially standing and the replacement of a bridge of the Misty Meadows trails. Some of the water damage that required repair was due to disallowed ATV and motor vehicle use on certain trails. Their new equipment, like the snowmobile, also has ongoing costs not covered by their initial ARPA funds.

FY'25 BRICK MEETING HOUSE SOCIETY BUDGET REQUEST

John Doane from the Brick Meeting House Society was present. Their operating budget has stayed around \$9,000-\$10,000 for the past five years. This year they have some ARPA funds that will keep them busy completing projects. Their funding from the town in the past has been \$4,500 and last year was \$2,000. They are asking for \$2,000, level funded from last year. Town organizations are not charged to use the building. They are also trying to build their member group funding and have organized fundraising that will pick up some of the costs. Lee encouraged the RBMHS to think about providing a charge sheet for municipal events for which the RBMH should be compensated. It would be a good future income stream.

CCRPC ANNUAL REPORT

Charlie Baker, CCRPC Executive Director, presented the CCRPC Annual Report. In FY'2023 CCRPC had helped Westford on Water Quality Planning, Assessment of Village Stormwater Treatment, Technical Assistance, Traffic Counts, Elders and Persons with Disabilities Transportation Program, Chittenden County Brownfields Program, and other more regional projects. Lee expressed the town's gratefulness for CCRPC's assistance. CCRPC had also asked for issues they could bring up in the legislature. Lee brought forward Emergency Services, the future of volunteer fire departments and dispatching for both those services. CCRPC has also continued working on the CUD and broadband. Westford has a lot of unserved people. Cellular is also an issue in Westford and is not as big a priority in the legislature currently. CCRPC will consider pushing this issue. Ben Bornstein, Westford's CCRPC Representative, was present. He complimented CCRPC's staff for their work.

REINVESTMENT OF FORESTRY PROCEEDS FOR TRAIL IMPROVEMENT

Evan Aiken offered, again this year, to give the town a discount on his normal excavator rate to do some trail improvements at the Maple Shade Town Forest. Ethan Tapper, Chittenden County Forester, hopes that they can continue reinvesting a portion of their annual revenue from Ethan's Forest Management into these trail improvements. In winter 2021-22 the Town made \$5,496.58 from forest management and reinvested \$1,800 into trail improvements. In winter of 2022-23 the town made \$2,999.44. Ethan suggests reinvesting the same amount, \$1,800, for stabilizing and/or re-routing wet sections of trails and improving other trails for future recreational and forestry use.

Dave suggested using some of the funds to offset the Conservation Commission budget request. There's a larger decision to be made in how to spend that money. Sarah mentioned in the management plan for Maple Shade there's no plan for expanding the trail network. Evan is using old logging trails further on the property and do not need to be improved to trail quality. Bill motioned to approve contracting with Evan Aiken and to reinvest \$1,800 for trail improvement. Dave seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

PERSONNEL UPDATE

Melissa Manka gave her resignation as Town Planner. Her last day will be November 10th. Lee was sorry to see her go and wished Melissa luck in her future professional endeavors. Dave thanked Melissa for her time and dedication to the town. Bill also thanked Melissa for her time and has enjoyed working with Melissa, he wishes her the best. Melissa mentioned she will give recommendations to the board for hiring her replacement.

DRAFT SEWER ORDINANCE & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Juli Beth Hinds and the Town Attorney both looked through the current draft prior to it going to the board. The hope was to get the draft ordinance and the executive summary on the website in the next week before the next public meeting.

Kim Guidry, resident, asked if the definitions of "officers and agents" be added to the ordinance so it's clear who those people are. There was another acronym she also asked to be clarified. The consultants and town attorney both answered. Regarding the acronym: it was the title of the document and should remain as is. Regarding "officers and agents" our attorney told us they interpret it as being clear who the agents and officers are. Juli Beth noted this is a definition that is used commonly. It is generally not advisable for a town to create a definition that might create something new or something that differs from the courts and states understanding of the term. She would like to talk to the town attorney and VLCT. The

definitions were not an issue for the executive summary and the discussion of definitions in the ordinance will be discussed at a later date.

Bill motioned to approve the town draft sewer ordinance and the town sewer ordinance executive summary as reviewed by the town attorney and to make that publicly available on the wastewater project website. Dave seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

REVIEW DRAFT PERSONNEL POLICY

This has been an ongoing project for more than three years and is not yet ready for approval. Dave urged his fellow board members to read through the current draft in detail. They are hoping to have it ready for approval during the next regular Selectboard meeting. Dave also suggested making a HR handbook separate from the Personnel Policy. This would allow the town to keep their “at will” status.

PROPERTY & CASUALTY, AUTO & WORKERS COMP POLICY RENEWALS

Bill motioned to approve the PACIF renewal application staying at the town’s current policy of 250,000 coverage. Dave seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

CORRESPONDENCE

Andre Roy sent in a note proposing we include pumping every septic tank in town as part of the first round/ongoing basis of the Wastewater Project. Lee believes that’s innovative thinking but too far now. We need to figure out if we have a wastewater project first and the vote is on November 7th.

Lori Johnson wrote in about how to determine how much people would get billed regarding the Wastewater. She took issue with how much we decided to charge per bedroom. Lori believes if the town goes forward with their current billing proposal it means the taxpayers are subsidizing those properties. Bill thinks if people don’t agree with what’s already been approved, the draft ordinance then it is their freedom to vote their conscious at the polls. Dave agrees, we’ve done our best and we’ve put our best forward with the advice given. There are pros and cons to every aspect and the people can vote on that.

Vermont Covered Bridge Society noticed there was long term damage on our covered bridge that may need repair. Bill talked with Caroline Brown from the Historical Society regarding this issue. Caroline headlined the bridge’s original restoration in the 90s. Bill says we owe it to Caroline for all the work and volunteerism she does in town. If she thinks it’s important, we should investigate it further.

Michael Kirick made a budget request for the Summer Concerts. Bill is very supportive of this item; the concerts are very well attended. Dave was also in support. This will be further discussed during budget talks.

Maureen Wilcox asked about the status of the town office feasibility study. Dave will get back to her. Currently the project is on hold until we get certain wetland information. this will happen once the staffing situation in the town office has stabilized.

COMMUNICATION

Communicate about mailed ballots. Planning Commission Outreach Committee to communicate about availability of draft ordinance & executive summary on the website.

CONTRACT WITH NEMRC TO OUTSOURCE PAYROLL

20% of MJ's time is spent on payroll. When she is absent there's not a good plan in place to process payroll. NEMRC is being considered for payroll outsourcing. NEMRC is a \$5,000 a year flat rate to handle payroll. NEMRC has provided a signed contract. The document also says that if we only use them for a short time we will be reimbursed. Bill motioned to approve the signing of the contract with NEMRC. Dave seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

WASTEWATER GRANT REIMBURSEMENT

Melissa submitted on September 29th for a \$119,000 grant reimbursement. It takes about a month to hit our bank account.

FY'24 GENERAL FUND BUDGET STATUS REPORT

Greg Barrows, Treasurer, went over the FY'24 General Fund Budget Status Report

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND PAYROLL WARRANTS

The board reviewed and signed the accounts payable and payroll warrants.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Bill motioned to go into executive session at 8:37 p.m. for personnel and to invite Nanette Rogers, former Town Administrator, Carl Rogers, Interim Town Administrator, and Library trustees Pat Hechmer and Vicky Ross to the session. Bill Seconded. Motion passed 3-0. The board discussed matters related to Library Personnel. No action was taken. Vicky Ross was invited to join in her capacity as the personnel consultant. Topics related to the Road Foreman position were discussed. Plans for winding down the personnel consulting engagement were also discussed. No action was taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee McClenny
Chair Selectboard

Callie Hamdy,
Minute Clerk

**TOWN OF WESTFORD HIGHWAY DEPT.
ROAD SCHEDULE
September 29, 2023 – October 12, 2023**

Work to be done.

- Grade roads when possible.
- Haul in road gravel.
- Service the trucks.

Work completed.

- Hauled in the remaining winter sand.
- Graded a section of Old # 11 Road, a section of Brookside Road, The south end of Woods Hollow Road, The hill on Osgood, Rollin Irish Road, and Allen Irish Road.
- Cleared a plugged culvert on Osgood Hill Road.
- Cleaned up a few small trees.
- Prepared the winter tires to go on the trucks.

Approved at the ____10/12/2023_____ Selectboard Meeting.

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GUEST LIST

Deb Jorschick

Ben Bornstein

Nanette Rogers

Carl Rogers

Kim Guidry

Ira Allen

Dave Lavallee

Vicky Ross

Lori Johnson

Holly Deslile

Mark Letorney

Harmony Cism

Maureen Wilcox

Barb Peck

Susan Larson

Sarah Pinto

Gordon Gebauer

Louise Jensen

Erin Panattu

Basil Panattu

Lynn Gauthier

Seth Jensen

Melissa Manka

Wendy Doane

John Doane

Juli Beth Hinds

Charlie Baker

Dick Lavallee