

SELECTBOARD MEETING
September 24, 2026
Minutes

Present:	Pat Haller Julia Andrews Casey Mathieu Nick Nichols Deb Jorschick	Callie Hamdy Tommy O'Connor Abby O'Neil
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Guests: see attached.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. The meeting was held in person and via Zoom.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Added Access Permit requests.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Items Not on the Agenda

There was no public comment.

MINUTES

C. Mathieu motioned on the August 13th that P. Haller did not make two votes and that he had voted to improve the trails. J. Andrews seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Andrews motioned to accept the minutes from September 10, 2026 minutes as amended. C. Mathieu seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

CCRPC UPDATE

Ben Bornstein, CCRPC Representative, was present. They had the monthly meeting last week. It mostly revolved around the transportation improvement program. He'll be looking at prior and current year's approval programs and see what would be of use to Westford. Additionally, there is a training he had forwarded to the SB members and additional background with respect to the SB training and inclusion forum that is available.

ROAD SCHEDULE

Sean Cushing, Road Foreman, was not present. P. Haller went over the road schedule from September 11, 2026, to September 24, 2026.

FY'27 HIGHWAY BUDGET STATUS REPORT

A. O'Neil, Treasurer, went over the FY'27 Highway Budget Status Report.

TREASURER FY'27 GENERAL FUND BUDGET STATUS REPORT

A. O'Neil, Treasurer, went over the FY'27 General Fund Budget Status Report.

REVIEW AND APPROVE ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND PAYROLL WARRANTS

The Selectboard went over the Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants.

FIRE TRUCK BOND VOTE LANGUAGE & VOTING

The board needed to approve and sign the necessity resolution which had been sent over by the town lawyer. N. Nichols motioned to approve the necessity resolution. C. Mathieu seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

The lawyer had provided the Special Town Meeting Warning for the fire truck bond re-vote. T. O'Connor went over some minor changes that had been made to the document since it was put in the packet clarifying that the meeting location is at the Westford School instead of the town office and that it is a special town meeting not an annual town meeting. The warning needed approval and signature of the board. J. Andrews moved to adopt the warning as amended. N. Nichols seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

The Declaration of Intent had been sent by the lawyer and needed approval of the board. J. Andrews moved to approve the declaration of official intent. N. Nichols seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

FIRE DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Steve Willard and other members of the Westford Fire Department (WFD) were present. What they are looking at is that membership in the department is down and has been for a while. This is a nationwide trend. They try various things to get new members. The WFD currently has 10 members. Most of their members work out of town so they have limited daytime ability to respond, which is why they also bring in other towns to assist with calls. Some of their equipment needs replacement, some of which are approaching 30 years old. Two years ago, they started paying the volunteers. They do not think it gets anybody interested but it does compensate the members for time away from family and other commitments. They appreciate the taxpayers in town for their overwhelming support over the years.

P. Haller asked what the WFD thinks the Selectboard needs to do for ongoing coverage of Westford. Do they need to look outside of Westford? Everybody loves and appreciates the Fire Department, but they are all aging. When they formed in 1982, fire protection from neighboring towns cost around \$20,000 which for that time period was a lot of money. They do not know if surrounding towns would be willing to take on more and how that would affect response times. It may impact people's insurance ratings as you get a lower rate if there is a fire department in town.

One of the things J. Andrews has been thinking about is that in her mind there is a third option which is a hybrid situation. She thinks the WFD has served the town for a long time admirably. Is there a way to have a Westford and other towns arrangement that gives us more human power without taking away that local feeling. S. Willard feels we have that now through Fairfax, Essex, Jericho, Underhill's mutual aid. But there have been hints that those other towns would like to be compensated for that work. C. Mathieu asked if there is a way they can put a wish list together of what equipment needs upgrading. This will give the SB a monetary idea of what they're looking at. S. Willard noted it would be about \$5,000 per person. P. Haller thinks later this fall they will be bringing in an outside consultant to help with the capital budget with a presentation on that during town meeting. C. Mathieu asked how far down the road do we want to kick the can? Do we want to ask another town about their costs to move forward? We need a net cost to get us up to speed. S. Willard thought the capital budget is a starting point

for discussion, but the trucks rule the whole budget. As the years progress, they could get even more expensive than they already are.

N. Nichols asked what number of staff would make it unmanageable. They do not know there's a magic number, they are probably approaching that now with ten members, some of which are aging out. They do have some younger people who have joined. At some point it is not feasible. It is common to have a call and only 1 or 2 people show up because people are working, they don't often get a big team out the door. N. Nichols thinks another option they might want to prepare for is that we are going to be forced to seek services from another town which we already do through the mutual aid. Another option would be fully paid fire department. Do any towns of Westford's size have a paid fire department? 1 or 2 paid people, but they do not have the full statistics. The current Essex Fire Department budget is about \$850,000 for example.

Max Tyler was present. He feels like this discussion is a microcosm of many issues the town is facing, not the least of which is making Westford an attractive place for younger people to settle. That might help relieve this staffing issue. Carol Winfield was present. Interesting to her, Seven Days had a recent article about a Vermont fire department that looked to reduce a residency requirement. Westford Fire Department does not have a residency requirement.

DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON A SIGNED PETITION REQUESTING RECONSIDERATION AND NEW VOTE ON SEASONAL TRAIL CLOSURE

A petition has been received from the town from members of the public. P. Haller read the petition language aloud. Over 125 signatures had signed. P. Haller recognized Dick Lavallee for bringing the petition forward.

J. Andrews moved to change the original ruling and not close any trail for any period of time. D. Jorschick seconded. D. Jorschick had talked with Dick Lavallee regarding the petition and then she went back and researched the meeting and issue as she had not been present. She was hoping if this was not overturned in the decision that possibly we might come to a consensus of a happy medium instead of an all or nothing. She is interested to hear what the people that signed the petition have to say. N. Nichols echoed what D. Jorschick recommended. He thinks when there is an issue where there's valid points on both sides, he will look for compromise. Vicky Ross had written in with that suggestion to the board.

Barb Peck was present. Her opinion is that there should not be a compromise when we are trying to reserve public rights that are being reduced. Being nice to neighbors is not a reason in her opinion to make a compromise on public rights. The landowner can post their land on both sides of the trail to keep hunters off. The Selectboard under statute is really all about preserving public access so she does not think this is a safety issue. It is nice to be a good neighbor, but she thinks in this case the Selectboard should preserve the public right.

Kirsten Tyler was present. She wanted to make the board aware that the agenda of the trail discussion was scheduled for 8pm and it started early. She wondered if there's a bunch of people who are planning to attend this discussion and are not attending yet. J. Andrews thought she raised a good point because this is a hot button issue. P. Haller noted the board

can table it for a later time during this meeting. This subject was paused at 6:45p.m. and the board went down the rest of the agenda.

This subject resumed at 8:10p.m.

Kati Anderson, one of the landowners, was present. She does not want to relitigate the past. She and her husband have spent hundreds of hours trying to maintain Schultz trail and trying to understand the issue at hand. She thanked the Selectboard and the town staff for their work. She understands the board is in a difficult position and that many residents have signed the petition. She hopes they can discuss the issues based on facts and without questioning motive. Her family did not initiate this year's request, and they are not the only ones who appreciate the closure, but they are often named by others when asked to sign the petitions. She reiterated that they knew about the trail before purchasing the home in 2020 and they are not trying to shut down Schultz Trail. They thought they could collaborate cooperatively with neighbors and the town with any challenges. They had conflict with the Westford Conservation Commission when work was done in the ROW without notice and when the WCC trespassed on their land to retrieve the bridge that had floated downriver. They are only asking for a temporary closure for hunting season, and the existing timeframe was already a compromise as initially landowners had wanted the trails closed in September. All the land along the trails is already posted. She and her husband have maintained Schultz Trail for the past three years and it is expensive. Other towns close trails in their towns for hunting season, with VLCT noting it is common. They had also indicated that if the trails were heavily trafficked a closure might not be in the best interest, but that was not the case with Schultz trail, which was sparsely used. Kati has seen hunting accident gunshots firsthand and that will stay with her for the rest of her life, she takes safety very seriously. She recognized that not all the families that have signed her landowner's letter have the same experience as her family. She feels the town should consider each legal trail individually because of this instead of making a closure decision that goes across all trails. If the town cannot find a way to demonstrate a way to protect the private landowners, they might have to find their own lawful ways to reduce recreational land use. Any accidental gunshot is too many and Westford has recreational land that is part of the firearm exclusion zone that people can walk on.

Carol Winfield was present. She thanked Kati for her letter, she hears her and cannot disagree with her sentiments, she is sorry to hear she has had incidents like that and feels it is inexcusable. She does not feel all the residents should be held responsible if there has been infringement. She knows other trails are still open, but if safety during hunting season were the only concern in granting this request why is Maple Shade, which is open to hunting, not closed? It is inconsistent to be concerned about safety on some trails and not others. Hunting has been going on for a long time in Vermont, and many people choose to go in the woods during that time and that is their choice, just as not going in the woods is a choice. By eliminating the legal trails during that time, the board is eliminating people's choice. She does not feel this is a good precedent, especially for two and a half months. She thinks by closing the trails the board is making a choice for people and that makes her uncomfortable. As for the use of the trails, it is admittedly low anyways so why impose more restriction in low trafficked trails? If they are being closed for safety, than the incident of trespassing is not what's driving trail closures. This does not add up comfortably to her with all due respect to the landowners and their land.

Heidi Tardie was present. She asked the Selectboard: do you now or have you ever had in the past had permission to go on to posted land adjacent land for any reason, and whether you have ever exercised that right? If the board has received permission by the landowners, they have a conflict of interest and they should recuse their vote. If they do not answer she is contacting VLCT about the COI. P. Haller noted they do have a COI policy, so it is up to them to decide if they have one and recuse themselves. Nobody recused themselves. P. Haller noted that if a resident feels that they have not followed the COI policy there is a complaint form they can file with the Ethics Liaison.

Ken Tardie was present. Has any of the SB walked the Schultz Trail? None answered. Ken noted that he and Heidi rode their horses on that trail, and they think there had been some illegal posting along the ROW. The landowners say people are trespassing, but they have posted signs in the town ROW. The excuses he is hearing are the same, but a little bit different than the previous owners. One owner says there's very little use, but they also say people are there yelling at them so either there are very few people on it or there is a lot you cannot have it both ways. The best month to ride horses is the fall months and now they are saying they don't want them there.

Vicky Ross was present. She appreciated Kati's comments and thoughtful presentation, and it pains her every time she is pitted against the town and her neighbors. She has three quick points about this topic. Her view is that the SB's right role is to protect the many and not to facilitate the privilege of the few. Secondly, on the safety point she appreciates people's concerns, but she does not think that just because the town says they are closed, that people will follow them. The responsibility of safety lies with the hunter knowing what they are shooting at and what might be beyond it. These trails have supported hikers and hunters for many decades. Lastly, she thinks 10 weeks is excessive, especially when it encompasses October which is a favorite hiking month of many people in Vermont. She suggested a shortening of the special privileged being asked. She does not want the closures to be on all legal trails and feels it should be a trail-by-trail basis.

Barb Peck was present. There are a lot of landowners in VT that have a lot of property. People can come into your property from your back boundary if you have hundreds of acres and you will not know they are there. To ask the town to close the trail so hunters cannot come through that trail and access your boundary is like a back door. If they are posted legally, then hunters on the trail cannot access their land. The question then is who is going to police that? She doesn't think the town should be policing anybody's property for hunting. The SB's priority under statute is to preserve public access. To compromise in her opinion for people who are trying to inhibit that is not something that the SB should be concerning themselves with.

Ben Bornstein was present. He has read Kati's letter and was moved by it. He has tried to support the Andersons because he feels Schultz Trail is different. When it comes to Goodrich Trail, he feels different. Therefore, conflating the four trails is inaccurate and leads to challenges. There is broad authority for municipalities to regulate use and closures and maintenance of trails. One of the limited restrictions on that broad authority is where there is an individual with a court decision like himself granting access. There are twenty-four individuals that share enjoyment of his property that is landlocked and accessed legally from

the Goodrich Trail. He has people coming and going, youth group orienteering, nature trails, extended access to other families for a variety of things, etc. The 2001 decision for his land specifically says this is for the heirs, successors, and assigned. Assigned means those they want to share it with. Any of the 120 odd people who signed on the petition are his assigned if they want to come hike on his property. He welcomes them and embraces them because he has worked hard to keep his land as forest land. Just because it is in conservation does not mean he has to cede his rights. He has confidence in the Andersons as hunters but despite his wife's desire he not be armed, he always goes into the woods armed for safety. He has confronted hunters that have gone on the posted land there prior at his own potential risk. There is an objective safety concern because the SB determined it was objective which leaves his family and friends to a magnified risk. He appreciates P. Haller reaching out to him and acknowledging he is an exception, unfortunately it does not speak to the issue of trying to keep it open and trying to work together.

Kirsten Tyler was present speaking as a member of the public. She recollects a number of requests, accommodations, and pressures for all the restrictions of the Schultz Trail that have happened in the past. The current request is not the first single request. It has been an ongoing fight for years. She does not think this is going to be the last request. It seems that public restriction of these trails has been consistent. In 2021 the trail markers and the poetry walk were all objected to. In 2022 there was talk on possible litigation regarding the Schultz Trail with the request for restrictions more expansive than the SB found acceptable. In the same meeting there was opposition for anything that encouraged or publicized use of Schultz Trail. One of the members of the Westford Conservation Commission (WCC) was asked not to ever go on the Schultz Trail again, this was granted. The kiosk the WCC has tried to put up to explain to users the safety concerns and to explain respect and dog leashing etc. that Kirsten thinks would be good for the landowners' users has been a prolonged negotiation. They still do not have a kiosk for Schultz or Goodrich Trail. In 2023 a walking bridge that the WCC had installed on the Schultz Trail was asked to be removed and so it was removed and the public lost a crossing built to increase accessibility. In 2024 the SB was asked to not encourage use of the Schultz Trail. They have written policy requests of no events or advertising, no improvements, and hunting closure requests. The letter that was submitted by the landowners says that reversing the closure would mean 'they'd have to do things that make the trail less open or less beautiful.' To K. Tyler that is retaliation. In her original statement last time she spoke about public access and how the board should be keeping it because it says it in every single document the town has such as a town plan, the guidelines, etc. She also said that this request is just another additional request and what we have is death by a thousand cuts. Each of the concessions the SB has already given and now has voted to do, they seem small alone, but this has been years and years of requesting and discouragement. The kiosk stalling, the uninstalled bridge, no more trail programming, now trail closures. She asks that they reverse the hunting closure decision.

Dave Lavalley asked the same thing, for decision reversal. For the October 9, 2025, meeting the Andersons asked for a one-time closure of the trails. The trails were closed the same meeting upon request with little public input or discussion. Now here we are doing it again. Same request. The town needs to get off their butt and fix the trail ordinance. By doing this every year at a SB meeting we are eroding away our rights as a town. The political climate right now is taking away rights. It is a public trail, and the public should be able to use it. For a

few landowners to close it because they want to hunt there unbothered is ridiculous. There are over 2,000 people in town and we are accommodating a few. The Andersons have been in repeatedly causing issues over Schultz Trail. The ordinance change would have to be voted on by the town. He thinks a reasonable accommodation was what K. Tyler said, where the WCC was willing to put out vests and warning signs. If the landowners are truly good hunters know there is a trail there and should know not to shoot that way. He thinks the landowners should accommodate the trail.

Lee McClenny was present. He had been a previously SB member during the period Kirsten had talked about. He does not mean to take away from Kati and Jim's strong emotions about this but there are two sides to everything, and he agrees this has been death to a thousand cuts. The VT supreme court has made it clear the town has a right to use the trails and he feels the town should defend that right. There are all sorts of people who have ROWs who pass through their land in town. It is the hunter's responsibility to make sure they are safe, but he does not think this is really about hunting. The town went to great lengths to accommodate the Andersons and found that no accommodation was enough. A kiosk on the Machia Hill end would add a whole bunch to the public knowing where the trails are, how to park, what they can do on the trail, etc. but the landowners have resisted that mightily over the years. Their letter makes no reference to that at all. He thinks the board decision to close it is a mistake and sets a terrible precedent. Currently the hunting closure is for bear and deer, but it is a slippery slope to twelve months of closure for other game such as coyotes which are never not in season.

Steve Willard was present. He thinks it seems clear cut. It is a public ROW. It was there when the land was purchased. The town spent a lot of time in court litigating it and the public should be able to use a public ROW. Dick Lavalley was present. He had gotten the petition together and the response he had gotten after announcing it was immense and fast. It is a public ROW and by law the public is allowed to use it.

J. Andrews had voted against closing the trails last meeting. She was quiet about her reasoning at the time. Her concerns as a SB member were that doing things bit by bit is not an effective way to make policy and run a community and municipality. If we believe having a trail open during hunting season is a safety concern, we should make it an ordinance or policy. Doing it bit by bit changes the goalposts in a way that can be unnoticeable if you are not paying attention. She also thought there are other ways to address these concerns for safety without closing the trails such as the kiosks, vests, and signage, posting a volunteer to talk to people as they enter the trail during the first day of hunting season. She thinks there's other solutions that do not restrict access. Public means everybody and sometimes that's uncomfortable and difficult but public is for all of us.

Several people had asked P. Haller to keep an open mind. He turned it back to those people to also keep an open mind that they are trying to find ways as neighbors to work together. The goal is for people to get along well and happily. That has been his interest. This has been difficult and he has seen this coming for a long time now. He wanted to be clear that the Andersons were not the ones that asked for the closure this year, that was James Hazen. He wants to find a way that the landowners feel they are being respected. As J. Andrews has put, there is a way to do that. Knowing that there's emotions on both sides he would like to still

have it closed for the season because he thinks it is the carrot that can get us through difficulties. He will count on the Andersons and others to not continue the deaths by a thousand cuts requests as a show of goodwill. We have had requests for new mailboxes, and the town could have said no way, that is not our responsibility, but they took ownership. They have a road where there are no parking signs, but they don't have an ordinance for no parking there.

D. Jorschick was present. She thinks that with this trail maintenance piece we started with she does not think a trail closure should be part of that document. She agrees it should be an ordinance, and we should have it living as an ordinance and not something we vote on and move on because we keep revisiting this repeatedly. She thinks that as a board they have more work to do and this should become an ordinance. If to get through this year they limit the time, October – December is a long time. She has ridden horses up there and has never been met with opposition, it was very welcoming. That is what hikers do too. She does not know how to move forward on this right now.

N. Nichols asked if P. Haller could say a more about Covey Trail and Seymour Trail and if he feels strongly about them being closed. P. Haller does not, but they had treated the trails as a group previously. C. Mathieu thinks the board needs to prioritize this, so this does not occur next year. He thinks when we talk about a town vs few people, until you own that land and physically deal with what is going on you may be the only landowner. Those not in that position cannot understand. He would like to continue with the motion, but the board needs to do something before next year and put it on them to make sure it happens, so we are not in this situation again. He feels this needs to be prioritized in the next couple of meetings. P. Haller has been working on the maintenance guidelines, and he has outlined several things that could be added into ordinances. He agrees there are ordinances they should put in place or at least get on paper, so the public has the opportunity to see what those ordinances are.

Dave Gauthier was present. For the motion how long is that going to take affect? J. Andrews explained the motion is not to close the trail. D. Gautier was asking how long will that last, 1-year 2-year, 3-years? It was until another motion was made. Motion failed 2-3.

N. Nichols is worried we are going to keep kicking this down the road and to maintain the same restrictions we did last year is a bad pattern. He feels compelled by the stories said tonight. He wondered about compromise, pulling back the restrictions with the closure to start in deer season November 1. He wanted to do something significant to say that we cannot continue the same pattern. N. Nichols motioned to change the closure dates to November 14 – December 13. P. Haller motioned to change the closure dates to Nov 1 - December 13. N. Nichols seconded.

L. McClenny was sympathetic. The first commenter said that there is no statistical data to base the decision on. We have no proof it's unsafe. This is more of the slippery slope in his opinion. He thinks a lot of people thought last year's closure was a compromise. A lot of the reaction from the public is because we are all wondering why we're talking about it again. He does not think they are buying themselves another year. K. Anderson agrees that they thought last year was a one-time thing and a plan/ordinance would be in place already. There is a reason she is the only person out of all the landowners who is present in the meeting, she is not ready to be

done and is ready to be the pariah of town asking for this. The Andersons did not feel like any of their requests were met. They had felt the WCC had dismissed all their concerns. She said this is the one thing that will make the landowners feel they are being respected.

Carol Winfield was not sure what this motion is for. Which trails are they going to restrict? Or are they including all trails? It is not clear to her why this request is being made. Is it for safety, in which it should be all town trails, or is it because the folks requesting this closure have had previous issues they don't feel were rectified and they're trying to produce another request to see if that might get rectified to feel better about past requests not being met? Is it requested because trail users are scaring the game? There are lots of issues brought up but it is not clear to her how this motion is going to address those. Also, if the issue is safety, we would also need to close a lot of town owned roads that have hunters all over the forests such as Osgood, Machia, etc. So, if safety is a concern how far do you want to take this? It is too nebulous to her. She is concerned they have a petition with over one hundred names on it, they have heard from the public, and yet they are running with the landowners. It seems like they have an incredible number of reasons not to do this and investigate further for next year and only a few reasons to close it. Carol wanted to see the data of how many people have been endangered by hunting on these trails. She is sorry if people in the woods scare the landowner's game, but people are in the woods during hunting season and that's part of the sport. She does not think it is incumbent of the residents to enhance the hunting possibilities of landowners. She asked the board to consider the fact they have many people in town who are uncomfortable and only a few who think it's a good idea. Is the board here to represent the town or are they were to represent the landowners? Other trail abutting landowners have been supportive of keeping the trails open.

Dave Gauthier asked if they put an article on the town meeting ballot in March and the voters said trails are not to be closed, is that possible? That was possible. P. Haller motioned to change the closure dates to November 1 to December 13 for all Legal Trails. N. Nichols seconded. Ben Bornstein stated to make sure that this does not include those who have a legal right to be on the trail. That was the intent of the motion.

Motion passed 3-2. Steve Willard asked what the mechanism of enforcement was. There was none. What happens if he, with an adjoining landowner's permission, walked parallel to the land? As long as he wasn't trespassing there was nothing wrong. It legally must be an ordinance to be enforced, but Westford has no enforcement possibilities.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

T. O'Connor was present and gave the Town Administrator's report.

ACCESS PERMITS

Harmony Cism, Zoning Administrator, was present and described the requests. One is an existing access and the applicant wanted to replace the culvert. S. Cushing has okayed it with the condition that it needs a 30ft, 18" culvert. P. Haller motioned to approve the access permit to Chris Tardie on Machia Hill Road. J. Andrews seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

The second one is just for work in the ROW, which we do not have a form for. Harmony is working on a form with Tommy and Sean. It is for Fidium who need to bore under Old #11

road to install for a customer. Harmony read out a list of conditions she wanted the board to approve the permit with. P. Haller moved to approve the permit to Joe Stone of Fidium Fiber with the conditions to be outlined by letter. C. Mathieu seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Harmony Cism, Zoning Administrator, was present and gave the Zoning Administrator's report.

1705 UPDATES & SUPPORTING MATERIALS FROM CCRPC

Kirsten Tyler, Ben Bornstein, and Max Tyler were present from the Planning Commission. Kirsten Tyler summarized a meeting they'd had with CCRPC to discuss public engagement for 1705. They discussed the three documents that have been shared with the board. K. Tyler is looking forward to the types of engagement planned. There will be a number of different events, styles, and activities to include as many people as possible. With the 1705 property map they wondered if there was anything missing the SB could think to add. They also asked the board to focus on the engagement question and think of priorities. The PC is putting together comments and suggestions. K. Tyler will send those to CCRPC in one packet. She is requesting the same from the SB. B. Bornstein noted that the contract with CCRPC had been signed previously. They had gone over the documents. He and K. Tyler produced a list of venues and activities to create more community involvement in this phase and future phases. They felt it was important to put actual monetary value to certain costs of the different options.

The board asked some clarifying questions. M. Tyler does not know if we have the answers to all the questions they are asking, but if the board has any opinions on who is responsible for providing that information that would be good. He asked the board think about responding in practical terms. What can we afford and do with this property in less than the next 20 years?

DOG WARDEN/ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER

T. O'Connor explained this came with help from N. Nichols. He has suggested seeing who we can share a dog warden with. Benson came to our desk. This is an offer the Selectboard can take up. He is a licensed animal control officer working with the St. Albans police department and covers animal control in many towns in the areas. He can go on NEMRC, he has previous experience with Fish and Wild, animal abuse cases, etc. \$60 a call, \$60 an hour. Normally there are not really any expenses. He has his phone 24/7. Fairfax has been very pleased with him, and he has been able to support them well on recent issues. If we have a facility we could use as a holding area if that would change costs because most of the costs are the travel to put a dog in a facility. We have reached out to a few folks about this. P. Haller noted we had a dog call this week and found a place for that dog. He had asked that person if they wanted to be the dog warden and they had declined but offered they would take in dogs for us. She does not want to be the person that goes out for dog bites etc. That fits well with the potential of the animal control officer. T. O'Connor noted that as a licensed law enforcement officer the potential contractor can ticket if it is an infraction that meets that level. J. Andrew's one hangup is that we have budgeted \$600 for a dog warden which does not leave us with much wiggle room with this potential contractor. It will have to be a discussion amongst the selectboard because the dog warden retention has been difficult for many years.

CONVERSATION ON NEXT STEPS FOR DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR

At a discussion not long ago, the idea of the Delinquent Tax Collection (DTC) came up for the board. T. O'Connor had brought up that currently we don't have a DTC, and it seems like we have not needed a new DTC because those duties have been absorbed by other office staff in the interim. MJ, Bookkeeper, had the idea that the group that previously found the treasurer reconvene to make a recommendation. T. O'Connor went over the current procedure with MJ as they work in tandem. In the last two years we only have four delinquent parcels. J. Andrews asked if they are not finding it necessary to do the amount of calling like the previous DTC had done. T. O'Connor is finding it case by case. All but one of them got a hold of the town and had plans in place or immediately dealt with within that one phone call.

Vicky Ross was present. She is on the nominating committee and had some questions regarding the proposal. With the proposal, are they assuming they would include having the tax penalty stay as is? Is T. O'Conner suggesting those funds could become revenue to the town and not a source of paying a DTC for that service? Many towns work their delinquent taxes this way. The Selectboard members were amendable to the MJ/Tommy plan. He will have the statute information ready for next meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE

Staff Appreciation Dinner at the Red Brick Meeting House. Recap of abandoned car on Seymour Trail. Wendy Doane support for hiring of Town Planner.

COMMUNICATION

Upcoming budget workshops, updated Trail closure notice. October 26 Public Meeting. Public Meeting September 29.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:40p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pat Haller
Selectboard Chair

Callie Hamdy
Minute Clerk

GUEST LIST

Dave Gauthier
Kim Guidry
Ira Allen
Barb Peck
Michael Miller
Harmony Cism
Max Tyler
Ben Bornstein
Kirsten Tyler
Steve Willard
Kati Anderson

Dave Lavalie
Carol Winfield
Martha McClintock
Lori Johnson
Lee McClenny
Vicky Ross
Heidi Tardie
Ken Tardie
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