

**Town of West Windsor  
Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
Monday, August 26, 2024 @ 6:30pm  
Town Hall and Zoom**

**Present in Person:** Mark Higgins, Mark Harley, John Brodie, Amy Yates, Deb Shearer, Mike Spackman, Matt Frederick, Peter Varkonyi, Mike Silverman & Rob Mather (VT50), Amanda Yates, Mark Lather, Mark Morse

**Present via Zoom:** Steve Wood, Tess Hunter (Vermont Standard), Chris Dolan (Valley News), Shannon Harrington, Liz Frederick

**1. Call to Order**

A quorum being present, Mark Higgins called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

**2. Changes or Additions to Agenda**

None.

**3. Announcements/Public Comment**

None.

**4. Approve Minutes of 8/12**

*John Brodie motioned to approve the minutes of August 12<sup>th</sup>. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

**5. Town Clerk's Report**

Town Clerk Amy Yates spoke about the recent ongoing in the Town Clerk's office, including fielding many tax bill questions. She noted that any question to which she does not have an answer is forwarded to Lister Clerk Deb Spackman.

Amy presented routine orders for Selectboard signatures.

**6. Approval for Private Maintenance on Class IV Section of East Rowe Hill**

Mark Lather spoke about his request to add one to two 10-wheeler loads of hardpack to the Class IV section of East Rowe Hill, which he will pay for. He stated that he would then spread the hardpack and crown the road using his personal equipment, at no cost to the town.

Highway Foreman Mike Spackman noted that he is on board with this request and stated that all private work done to local Class IV roads must receive formal approval from the Selectboard prior to any such work beginning.

*Mark Harley motioned to approve Mark Lather's request to perform work on the Class IV section of East Rowe Hill as described above, at no cost to the Town of West Windsor. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **7. Event App & DLL Permit – Vermont 50 Mountain Bike/Ultra Run (9/28-9/29)**

Mike Silverman spoke about the history of the Vermont 50 Mountain Bike/Ultra Run, which is in its 31<sup>st</sup> year, and of his time as race director. Mark Higgins noted that the Vermont 50 is always one of the highlight events of the year.

There was a discussion regarding the event details, which are the same as in previous years, and include approved safety plans from Windsor Police Department and West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department.

Peter Varkonyi spoke about the DLL permit request to allow for the serving of alcohol during the catered event. There was a brief discussion regarding the details of alcohol service, including perimeter fencing and signage. Food and drinks will be available from 11:00am until 6:00pm on Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>.

*Mark Harley motioned to approve the event application for the Vermont 50 Mountain Bike/Ultra Run on September 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

*Mark Harley motioned to approve Brownsville Butcher & Pantry's DLL permit for the Vermont 50 on September 29<sup>th</sup>. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **8. BB&P Water Allocation Review**

There was a discussion regarding Brownsville Butcher & Pantry's current water allocation. During a Development Review Board (DRB) review of BB&P's application to install a generator on premises, the Selectboard, as Water Commissioners, became aware that BB&P may have current uses which could increase water usage beyond the approved allocation.

Mark Higgins noted that the Water Commissioners have not issued a violation and are just seeking to review the current uses and approved water allocation to determine if there is an issue to address. There was a discussion regarding this process.

Peter Varkonyi stated that BB&P is working with Heritage Engineering on a plan to begin a one-year metering study to capture the daily water and wastewater use. Peter noted that BB&P will soon be submitting a plan to the DRB to increase the available seating at the store, which will also necessitate increasing the approved water and wastewater allocations.

This item will be addressed at a future Selectboard meeting when more information is available.

## **9. Preliminary Sewer Capacity Allocation Application – Parcel #03-117 (Ascutney Lofts)**

Mark Morse spoke about his project on parcel #03-117 to build five “tiny houses”, which would have access to one private well, but would require access to the public wastewater system. Mark noted their plan would be to connect to the municipal wastewater system in the Spring of 2025.

Mark stated there had previously been a disagreement between the Town and his engineer regarding necessary wastewater allocations, but that he was now comfortable using the standard 200 gallons per day measurement for a single-family dwelling per unit. As there are five units, the requested wastewater allocation request is for 1,000 gallons per day.

There was a discussion regarding a single onsite washer and dryer setup for the Ascutney Lofts project, with Mark noting that he doesn't feel that this should add to the required allocation since the standard 200 gallons per day allocation for a single-family dwelling would include that setup for each unit already.

There was further discussion on the project, with an emphasis on fees owed and the procedure to move forward. Per the Sewer Use Ordinance, the fee for the Preliminary Sewer Capacity Allocation Application is \$1.00 per gallon per day, which amounts to \$1,000.00 for this project, due within 30 days of Selectboard approval. The application fee is \$25.00 and has been paid.

*John Brodie motioned to approve Mark Morse's Preliminary Sewer Capacity Allocation Application for parcel #03-117 (Ascutney Lofts) for 1000 gallons per day. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **10. Discussion: ARPA Funds**

There was a discussion regarding the remaining ARPA funds, with Mark Higgins noting that two potential projects targeted by the Selectboard are repairs to the Town Hall emergency exit steps and the installation of a shower in the building to allow it to better serve as an emergency shelter.

Mark stated that the Fire Department has requested the Selectboard consider purchasing a breathing air compressor on behalf of the WWVFD to allow them to refill their air tanks onsite, with a quote forthcoming.

Steve Wood spoke about Ascutney Outdoors' plan to install underground electrical service to their “polo field”, as that area is currently only provided power by running an extension cord from the T-Bar building. Acknowledging that this does not serve an Emergency Management function, Steve stated that Ascutney Outdoors is planning to fundraise for this project, but that it could benefit from ARPA funds were they to be available.

Liz Frederick spoke about Mary Blood Library's request for window inserts from [WindowDressers](#), at a cost of \$1016.72. Liz noted that these inserts, which could be installed and removed seasonally as needed, would be projected to pay for themselves in energy savings within the first couple of years, and could also save money on cooling in the summer months.

As part of WindowDressers' business model to lower project costs, representatives of the Town would be required to volunteer time to assist in building window inserts. This plan will be discussed at an upcoming Library Trustees meeting, with a discussion on Library Trustees and/or members of the Friends of the Library covering the WindowDressers volunteer requirement.

Mark Higgins stated that the ARPA discussion will be ongoing and will continue at the next Selectboard meeting.

## **11. Discussion: Fiscal Year Change**

The Town of West Windsor currently operates on the calendar year fiscal model, from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>. There was a discussion regarding a potential change to July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> to match the state's fiscal year.

Mark Higgins noted that this change can only occur by vote at a regular or Special Town Meeting. In addition to being in sync with the state budget timeline, moving to the new fiscal year model would allow voters to approve or reject the proposed annual budget before it goes into effect. In West Windsor's current model, the budget the voters approve at Town Meeting each year has already been in effect since January 1<sup>st</sup>.

There was a lengthy discussion on the details of this potential transition from budgetary and tax standpoints, with Mark Higgins noting that one option is to have a one-time transitional 18-month budget, with taxes to be collected on a 6-month cycle during the transition to avoid hitting taxpayers with one full 18-month bill. The total amount collected would be the same, but the impact would be lessened since it would not all be due at the same time, but in three evenly spaced installments.

There was a discussion relating to holding a Special Town Meeting, and the best way to ensure a good voter turnout without impacting the general election on November 5<sup>th</sup> or dragging the process out into the beginning of the budget season in December.

Mark Higgins will craft a draft notice for a Special Town Meeting, to be reviewed at the September 9<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting.

## **12. Personnel Policy Review**

There was a discussion on the draft personnel policy, which will be an ongoing project with the goal of adopting an updated employment policy for all Town of West Windsor employees. The current policy is many years old and is geared only to employees of the Highway Department.

Using a model provided by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, John Brodie will spearhead the effort, and will present updates for review at future Selectboard meetings.

### **13. FY25 Better Roads Grant Agreement**

There was a brief discussion on the Better Roads Grant Agreement for Fiscal Year 2025. The Letter of Intent to participate in this grant was discussed and signed at the August 12<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting.

This grant provides funding for road erosion inventories, which help to identify and prioritize the road segments most in need of repairs or upgrades for stormwater management.

*Mark Harley motioned to approve the execution of the FY25 Better Roads Grant Agreement. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

### **14. Highway Foreman's Report**

Mike Spackman noted that the repair work on the Churchill Covered Bridge from the July 2023 floods is progressing. There was a brief discussion on this process. Mike noted that the contractor performing the repairs, Jim Burke, has pointed out some other items on the bridge that need addressing, and Mike will coordinate those repairs with him separately from the flood repair work.

Fall scraping of the dirt roads in West Windsor is continuing; Mike estimated it's approximately one third of the way complete.

The second round of roadside mowing is continuing.

Mark Higgins and Amy Yates praised the Highway Department for painting the hatchings ('no parking lines') along Route 44 in the village to better illustrate to drivers the no parking zone along the south section of Route 44 in front of the Fire Station and Butcher and Pantry.

### **15. Cannon Update**

The Hampden, Massachusetts Select Board will discuss this item at their regular meeting on August 26<sup>th</sup>. Matt Frederick will follow up with the Hampden Select Board Chair to see if they have voted to approve returning the cannon to Massachusetts. In the event that Hampden is interested in the cannon's return, Matt will coordinate the transfer between towns.

### **16. Blood Hill Tower Update**

There has been no change to the Blood Hill Tower site since the previous meeting.

### **17. Other Business**

Mark Higgins asked for feedback from the Overland Bike Race. Deb Shearer noted that she had heard that several vehicles were delayed for perhaps as long as 20 minutes while waiting for riders to pass.

## **18. Upcoming Meeting Schedule**

There will be a joint meeting of the Selectboard and the Planning Commission on Thursday, August 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Flood Hazard Area & River Corridor Bylaws and the updated Zoning Bylaws.

The Selectboard will hold their regular meetings as scheduled on September 9<sup>th</sup> and September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## **19. Adjourn**

*Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to adjourn at 7:55pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Frederick  
Town Administrator