

**Town of West Windsor
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 23, 2024 @ 6:30pm
Town Hall and Zoom**

Present in Person: Mark Higgins, Mark Harley, John Brodie, Amy Yates, Mike Spackman, Matt Frederick, Jill Appel, Ryan Lather, Jill Delaney

Present via Zoom: Deb Shearer, Joe Gibbs (VC3)

1. Call to Order

A quorum being present, Mark Higgins called the meeting to order at 6:34pm.

2. Changes or Additions to Agenda

Item #9, Discussion: ARPA Funds, will be moved to immediately precede the FY25 Budget Discussion, and will become item #11. These minutes will reflect the amended agenda order.

3. Announcements/Public Comment

Jill Delaney gave an overview of the Winter Solstice Celebration that was held at Ascutney Outdoors on December 21st. 77 people attended the event, which featured poetry and live music, and received many compliments. Jill noted that the plan is for this to become an annual event.

Mark Higgins spoke about the Family Movie Night held in the Town Hall auditorium on Friday, December 20th, which had around 60 attendees. SCIP provided refreshments as a fundraiser and the library collected donations to help cover the cost of the movie license. Mark noted both the success of the event and his hope for more community movie nights in the future.

4. Approve Minutes of 12/9 Special & Regular Meetings

Mark Harley motioned to approve the minutes of the December 9th special and regular Selectboard meetings as written. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

5. Town Clerk's Report

Town Clerk Amy Yates spoke about the recent ongoings in the Town Clerk's office, including working with Town Administrator Matt Frederick on the FY25 budget preparations and the implementation of a system to accept credit and debit cards.

Credit and debit cards will now be accepted by the Town Clerk for payments to the Town. The current processing fee for transactions is 3.49%. Please contact the Town Clerk at 802-484-7212 or via email at ayates@westwindsorvt.org with any questions.

6. Dog License Fees

All dogs more than 6 months old must be registered annually with the Town Clerk on or before April 1st each year, according to Vermont law. Fees paid after April 1st each year will incur a late fee, as shown at the bottom of the table below.

The Vermont Legislature increased the fee to be collected from municipalities for the State of Vermont Rabies Control Program from \$1 to \$3 per dog, effective January 1, 2025. There was a discussion regarding this increase, which would pass the new fees along to the dog owners, as well as matching the fees owed to the state and to the municipality for spayed and neutered dogs for on time dog registrations.

See the table below for updated dog license fees, beginning January 1st, 2025:

	Spayed/Neutered		Not Fixed	
1/1/2025 – 4/1/2025	Town	\$ 7.00	Town	\$ 14.00
	State	\$ 7.00	State	\$ 7.00
Total License Fee:		\$ 14.00		\$ 21.00
4/2/2025 – 12/31/25	Town	\$ 9.00	Town	\$ 18.00
	State	\$ 7.00	State	\$ 7.00
Total License Fee:		\$ 16.00		\$ 25.00

John Brodie motioned to approve the new dog license fees as stated in the table above per the recommendation of the Town Clerk. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

7. Committee Appointments

Planning Commission Chair Al Keiler has agreed to remain on the Planning Commission for at least another year. Mark Higgins noted that should Al decide to step away prior to the end of this new term, a replacement may be named to complete the term at that time.

Mark Harley motioned to reappoint Al Keiler to the Planning Commission, with a term to expire on December 31, 2027. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

8. MERP Grant Update

Matt Frederick stated that West Windsor did not receive the MERP Implementation Grant following the Energy Audits that were conducted this fall at the Town Hall and the Town Garage.

Due to limited grant funds and the state's scoring metric, other needy towns were placed ahead of West Windsor for the award of the Implementation Grant. There was a brief discussion regarding the audits, which outlined the remaining areas of improvement for energy resiliency.

Matt noted that there are low interest loans available through the Vermont Bond Bank if the Selectboard decides in the future to pursue alternate means of funding these upgrades.

9. Highway Foreman's Report

Highway Foreman Mike Spackman stated that the one-ton truck should be back in service by the end of the week. The repair estimate is \$10,931.03. Mike noted that the loader and excavator also had recent issues, though those repairs were covered under warranties.

There was a discussion regarding the new equipment purchases, including costs and potential delivery dates. Due to continually rising costs, the projected purchase price for all three items (2025 one-ton, 2025 grader, 2026 10-wheeler) are currently underfunded by a difference of approximately \$47,000.00 from their Highway Capital Budget estimates.

The new grader is scheduled to be delivered by April 2025. The new 10-wheeler will also be available during this timeframe, though the body of the truck is unlikely to be ready until the summer of 2025.

The recent spate of small storms has had a noticeable impact on the Highway Department budget due to the unavoidable overtime hours worked by the crew to maintain safe roadways.

Town Administrator Matt Frederick noted that he had a closeout meeting with FEMA regarding the July 2023 flooding, which included Mike Spackman and Erik Boedtke of the Highway Department, Jim Tonkovich from the State of Vermont, and JoAnne Davis of FEMA. At this time, all five West Windsor projects have been "obligated" by FEMA, including the project for administrative costs, which means the remaining funds and any additional project reviews are now in the hands of the State of Vermont.

The Town of West Windsor has received \$75,819.94 in FEMA reimbursements to date, and the State of Vermont has projected the total reimbursement for all projects to be \$111,887.70. The remaining funds, approximately \$36,000.00, should be received in the first quarter of 2025.

There was a discussion on how to handle the incoming reimbursement funds, which will be added to the Highway Department Equipment Fund to help cover future costs.

10. VC3 Contract Update

VC3 representative Joe Gibbs presented a proposal to amend the current VC3 contract structure to provide a clearer understanding of the services provided and offer a model for upgrading the current equipment and systems in place.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the current VC3 contract, which runs through February 2027, including leased equipment and associated costs, total system users, and the proposed alternate contract structure which may better reflect the operating needs of West Windsor staff.

Joe will put together a cost comparison between the current agreement and the proposed agreement, as well as an itemized cost breakdown of the current services provided by VC3 to the Town of West Windsor for a future Selectboard presentation.

11. Discussion: ARPA Funds

There was a discussion of the projects under consideration to receive the remaining ARPA funds, including the Affordable Housing Study, the Breathing Air Compressor for the Fire Department, ABS playground equipment, the Town Hall emergency exit steps, and the 2025 Highway Department Grader.

As no firm quotes were ready for the playground equipment and emergency exit steps, those projects will be removed from final consideration of ARPA funds, though alternative funding sources may be pursued for these projects.

In a future budget cycle, the Selectboard will consider the creation of a Town Hall Capital Budget, to fund special projects such as the repair of the emergency exit steps, the installation of a shower, and improvements to the auditorium, including refurbishing the floor, the installation of light-blocking curtains, and upgrades to the lighting and sound quality. Routine upkeep and maintenance of the Town Hall will continue to be funded through the annual General Fund budget.

John Brodie motioned to approve the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$42,500.00 of ARPA funds to Milton CAT for the purchase of a 2025 Caterpillar 140AWDJJOY Motor Grader. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Mark Harley motioned to approve the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$34,879.02 of ARPA funds to Reynolds and Son for the purchase of a Bauer Vertecon VEC05 Breathing Air Compressor and four storage cylinders. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Mark Harley motioned to approve the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$28,790.69 of ARPA funds to Banwell Architects for the purpose of conducting an Affordable Housing Study for West Windsor. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

12. FY25 Budget Discussion

There was a line-item review of the FY25 budget, mainly focused on the General and Highway Funds, including insurance premiums, radio communication costs, the police and ambulance contracts, appropriation requests, highway wages and grants, final FEMA reimbursements, and the Highway Department Capital Budget.

There was a discussion regarding the West Windsor [Social Service Program Appropriation Policy](#), taking into consideration the Reading-West Windsor Food Shelf request to reduce their annual appropriation to zero dollars for the upcoming budget cycle owing to a good year of donations and internal fundraising. Matt will reach out to them to discuss the FY25 appropriation request as it relates to this policy.

Amy and Matt will finalize FY24 actuals after the End of Year paperwork is complete and will continue to work on the FY25 budget over the next couple of weeks, in anticipation of a final review and budget approval at an upcoming Selectboard meeting.

13. Other Business

None.

14. Upcoming Meeting Schedule

The Selectboard will hold a special meeting on Monday, December 30th at 9:00am to finalize the Affordable Housing Study contract with Banwell Architects.

The next regular Selectboard meeting will be held on January 13th at 6:30pm.

15. Executive Session

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to enter executive session at 9:24p.m. for the reasons set forth in 1 V.S.A. § 313(3).

The Selectboard came out of executive session at 9:42pm.

16. Final Decisions

No decisions to note.

17. Adjourn

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Frederick
Town Administrator