

**Town of West Windsor  
Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
Monday, December 9, 2024 @ 6:30pm  
Town Hall and Zoom**

**Present in Person:** Matt Frederick

**Present via Zoom:** Mark Higgins, Mark Harley, John Brodie, Deb Shearer, Al Keiler, Jill Appel, Mike Dudley, Alessandro Iuppa, Susan Yost, Lauren Dorsey (Vermont Standard)

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Changes or Additions to Agenda**

Items #5 (Weeden Hill Traffic Study) will be moved to a future Selectboard meeting. Item #10 (Highway Foreman's Report) will be skipped, as the road crew is currently attending to snow removal efforts. Both items will be removed from the meeting agenda, and these minutes will reflect the amended agenda order.

**3. Announcements/Public Comment**

None.

**4. Approve Minutes of 11/25, 12/2**

Town Administrator Matt Frederick noted that, erroneously, Jill Delany was not listed as present in person in the November 25<sup>th</sup> draft meeting minutes. Mark Harley asked that the Other Business section of the November 25<sup>th</sup> draft minutes be reworked to include additional clarifying language. Jill will be added as having attended the meeting in person, and the Other Business section will now read as follows:

“Mark Harley spoke about his conversations with Avitar Associates regarding the GIS mapping project. Mark noted that Avitar shared with him a complete, GIS-readable West Windsor parcel dataset from April 2023 in “shapefile” format and PDFs of the paper maps of the parcels that Lister Clerk Deb Spackman has been updating manually.

No edits or updates from 2023 were included in the shared dataset, though Avitar indicated that there would be no additional charge for completing the updates, as the 2023 payment includes the completion of the data upload. Mark will continue to work with Avitar and will report back on his progress at future meetings.”

*John Brodie motioned to approve the minutes of the November 25<sup>th</sup> Selectboard Meeting with the above amendments and the minutes of the December 2<sup>nd</sup> Selectboard Meeting as written. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **5. Affordable Housing Study RFP Review**

On behalf of the Planning Commission, Al Keiler and Jill Appel presented the results of their Request for Proposal (RFP) process regarding an Affordable Housing Study in West Windsor. The Planning Commission received four proposals and conducted interviews with two firms. Based on the results of the process, the Commission recommends moving forward with [Banwell Architects](#) for the proposed Affordable Housing Study.

There was a robust discussion of the details, scope, timeline, and costs of the proposed study, as well as the identified need for additional affordable housing in West Windsor. Al stated that increasing the available housing stock should be a priority owing to an “aging population, declining school population, the rising tax burden, and short-term rentals.”

The proposed Affordable Housing Study will be under consideration for the use of ARPA funds.

## **6. Discussion: ARPA Funds**

Representing the School & Community in Partnership (SCIP) and Brownsville Base Camp, Jess Brodie presented quotes for proposed upgrades to the playground equipment at the Albert Bridge School. These upgrades could include new equipment (swings/teeter totters/picnic tables/etc.) or work done to existing areas (wood chips under an existing swing set) and would be at a variable cost depending on the equipment. Jess will craft a priority list of recommended items along with their associated costs. There was additional discussion regarding any remaining ARPA funds which are not otherwise obligated to projects at the final ARPA discussion potentially being directed to local nonprofit organizations.

There was a discussion on the projects under consideration for the use of the remaining ARPA funds, which currently have an unobligated total of \$105,687.66. The projects under consideration are the Affordable Housing Study, the installation of EV chargers, new ABS playground equipment, a portable Breathing Air Compressor for the Fire Department, funds to cover the unexpected price increase of the new Highway Department grader, and the repair of the Town Hall emergency exit steps. As no quote has yet been received for the emergency exit steps, that project is currently on hold.

The ARPA Committee recommended a focus on emergency preparedness, and their final project evaluation criteria are:

- The project should benefit the highest number of residents
- Align with the [2020 Town Plan](#)
- Should have a long-lasting and positive impact on the town
- Avoid current and future tax implications to residents

Based on these criteria, the Selectboard focused on the Breathing Air Compressor (emergency preparedness) and the Highway Department grader (tax implications) as priorities, which would reduce the available ARPA funds to \$24,687.66, less than the expected project costs for the Affordable Housing Study and the EV charger installation.

There was discussion on alternate funding methods for projects that do not receive ARPA funds, including pursuing outside grants.

Mark Harley stated that the Planning Commission would likely pursue the Affordable Housing Study with the Selectboard regardless of ARPA funding, and there was a discussion on the potential partial funding of initial phases of the proposed project using the limited ARPA funds. The Planning Commission will work with Banwell Architects to produce a contract for the Selectboard to review prior to the next Selectboard meeting, and decisions will be made on how to achieve funding for the project at that time.

The Selectboard indicated their interest in EV chargers and encouraged the Sustainability Committee to investigate grant opportunities and third-party funding that may help offset any necessary Town funding for the project.

The Selectboard will get concrete numbers together for all considered projects and make final decisions on the remaining ARPA funds at the second regular Selectboard meeting in December to ensure that all funds are obligated before they expire on December 31, 2024.

## **7. Committee Reappointments**

Matt Frederick outlined the expiring terms for municipal boards and committees and the proposed reappointments, which are as follows:

### **Mary L. Blood Memorial Library Board of Trustees:**

Michael Epstein  
Nancy Nesbitt  
Jenifer Aldrich

Current terms expire on 12/31/24, new 3-year terms will expire on 12/31/27

### **Development Review Board:**

Shannon Harrington  
Ryan Thompson

Current terms expire on 12/31/24, new 3-year terms will expire on 12/31/27

Courtney McKaig, Alternate

Current term expires on 12/31/24, new 1-year term will expire on 12/31/25

## **Conservation Commission:**

Barbara Gerstner  
Ken Parrot

Current terms expire on 12/31/24, new 3-year terms will expire on 12/31/27

*Mark Harley motioned to approve the committee reappointments as outlined above. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **8. Appoint Liaison to State Ethics Commission**

There was a discussion regarding Act 171, which establishes a municipal ethics framework in Vermont. Per the State of Vermont Ethics Commission [website](#):

*“The Act establishes a statewide municipal code of ethics and allows the State Ethics Commission to provide municipalities with free training and advisory services. It also requires municipalities to investigate and record ethics complaints, which can be filed either with the municipality or with the Ethics Commission (complaints filed with the Ethics Commission will be referred to the municipality for investigation); to appoint an Ethics Liaison (an existing employee or select board member) to receive complaints and serve as a point of contact for the Ethics Commission; and for municipal officers to complete a free basic ethics training, which will be available through the Ethics Commission's website by December 31, 2024 (the training requirement does not go into effect until September 30th, 2025).*

*The primary purpose of the bill is to set minimum statewide standards while allowing municipalities to adopt supplemental (or maintain existing) ethics policies that do not conflict with the statewide code, and develop individualized policies and procedures related to complaint investigation and tracking. Many municipalities may already have such policies or procedures in place. The majority of the provisions of the bill related to municipal ethics, including the municipal code of ethics and the training requirement, do not go into effect until January 1, 2025 or later.”*

The new bill will establish training and reporting requirements for the municipality and its officials. More information will be available on the [Town Website](#) in the coming weeks.

*John Brodie motioned to appoint Mark Higgins as the West Windsor Liaison to the State Ethics Commission. Mark Harley seconded the motion. The motion passed 2-0 with John Brodie and Mark Harley voting in favor and Mark Higgins abstaining.*

## **9. Review Windsor PD Log for November**

There was a brief discussion regarding the November Windsor Police Log. The only incident of note was a call regarding potential explosives which turned out to be old road flares.

## **10. Personnel Policy**

Mark Higgins stated that the contract with OneDigital regarding the crafting of a municipal Personnel Policy has been signed. Mark noted that West Windsor employees will have the opportunity to review the draft policy and offer feedback. Updates will be provided to the Selectboard as the process moves forward.

## **11. FY25 Budget Discussion**

Mark Higgins stated that the Highway Department's one-ton truck, which is due to be replaced, is currently out of service, with an expected repair bill of approximately \$11,000.00. As this piece of equipment is critical for snow removal, and the new one-ton truck is not yet ready for service, these repair costs will need to be added to the FY25 Highway Budget.

The Reading-West Windsor Food Shelf (R-WWFS) typically receives an annual appropriation of \$1,000.00, however, they will not be requesting any funding for FY25. As emailed to Matt Frederick from R-WWFS Treasurer and West Windsor resident David Hughes, "We have had a very successful year of fundraising, and our volunteers have done great work chasing down grants. Given the budgetary constraints that all Vermont towns are facing, we do not want to request money that the Town of West Windsor might have a more urgent use for."

There was a brief discussion regarding this topic, and the Selectboard will continue to weigh the merits of at least allocating some funds to the Food Shelf's critical mission at the next Selectboard meeting.

## **12. Other Business**

None.

## **13. Upcoming Meeting Schedule**

The next regular Selectboard meetings will be held on December 23, 2024 and January 13, 2025.

There will be a Special Selectboard Meeting for annual employee reviews on Friday, December 20, 2024.

## **14. Adjourn**

*Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:25pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Frederick  
Town Administrator