

**Town of West Windsor  
Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
Monday, July 8, 2024 @ 6:30pm  
Town Hall and Zoom**

**Present in Person:** Mark Higgins, Mark Harley, John Brodie, Amy Yates, Mike Spackman, Matt Frederick, Chris Yurek (MARC)

**Present via Zoom:** Lauren Dorsey (Vermont Standard), Deb Shearer, Evan Fitzgerald (FEA)

**1. Call to Order**

A quorum being present, Mark Higgins called the meeting to order at 6:32pm.

**2. Changes or Additions to Agenda**

There will be a cannon update provided in Other Business.

**3. Announcements/Public Comment**

Mark Higgins noted that this year was “among the best years” for attendance and fundraising for local organizations for July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Mark Harley added that he heard that the fireworks this year “may have been the best we’ve ever had.”

It was noted that Butcher and Pantry’s July 3<sup>rd</sup> cookout event did not detract from the success of the events and fundraising on the mountain before the fireworks.

**4. Approve Minutes of 6/24**

*Mark Harley motioned to approve the minutes of the June 24<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

**5. Town Clerk’s Report**

Amy Yates spoke about the recent ongoings in the Town Clerk’s office, including the processing of deeds and accounts payable, and the report on unlicensed dogs. Including 2023 and 2024, there are 53 unlicensed dogs on the list.

To inquire about your dogs’ registration status or to license your dog, please contact the Town Clerk at 802-484-7212 or via email at [ayates@westwindsorvt.org](mailto:ayates@westwindsorvt.org).

There was a discussion regarding outstanding dog licenses and the legal requirements for notification of dog owners in violation of the state law. Mark Higgins encouraged Amy to

document every attempted communication to these dog owners and asked her to relay that to the West Windsor Constables, as well.

Amy noted that dog license fees for the upcoming year may increase to match the expected increase in license fees owed by the Town of West Windsor to the State of Vermont. This increase would require Selectboard approval and will be considered at a future meeting.

*John Brodie motioned to authorize Mark Higgins, on behalf of the West Windsor Selectboard, to sign the warrant empowering the elected Constables to follow up with the owners of all unlicensed dogs in West Windsor. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **6. MARC Ascutney Resort Gully Project (Chris Yurek)**

Chris Yurek spoke about the proposed Ascutney Resort Gully Project, which would be pursued and managed by the Mount Ascutney Regional Commission. This project would aim to restore bank stability and prevent future erosion in the area around a culvert outflow between Hotel Road and Mill Brook.

There was a brief discussion relating to this proposal, including the standard 10-year commitment from the town to maintain the resulting work done in this area if MARC is able to secure the grant funding to move forward with the project.

*John Brodie motioned to approve the signing of the letter of support in favor of Mount Ascutney Regional Commission moving forward with the Ascutney Mountain Resort Gully Remediation Final Engineering Design project. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **7. Mill Brook Watershed Study (Evan Fitzgerald)**

Evan Fitzgerald spoke about the proposed Mill Brook Watershed Study and the previously completed 2015 River Corridor Plan, which focused on highlighting problem areas along Mill Brook following Tropical Storm Irene in 2011.

There was a lengthy review of the scope of the proposed watershed study, the outcome of which would be to create “a table of priority projects”, which would both update and amend the previous study to account for changes to the Mill Brook watershed between 2015 and 2024, particularly from the floods in 2023.

Evan noted that the idea for the Mill Brook Watershed Study project originated with the West Windsor Conservation Commission and that this is a good time for these projects due to available funding stemming from recent disasters.

*Mark Harley motioned to approve the proposal for flood mitigation scoping of the Mill Brook Watershed presented by Fitzgerald Environmental Associates, LLC via letter dated June 17, 2024, to Ted Siegler, as Chair of the Conservation Commission on behalf of the Town of West Windsor, for a total cost not to exceed \$10,000.00, to be paid using ARPA funds. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **8. Taylor Sullivan Request**

This item was resolved prior to the meeting without Selectboard involvement.

## **9. Churchill Covered Bridge Repair Bids**

There was a discussion regarding the necessary repairs to the Churchill Covered Bridge from damages sustained in the July 2023 flooding. Matt noted that the Town had sought bids from several area contractors, but that only one bid was returned. Due to the nature of the repairs and replacement of broken siding, a lift placed on the edge of Mill Brook will be required to allow the contractor to operate over the brook while working on the bridge.

The lone bid was from James A. Burke at a cost not to exceed \$9,500.00, which covers the lift rental, the removal and disposal of all broken siding on both sides of the bridge, and the staining and installation of new one-inch, rough cut hemlock boards. Mike noted that Mr. Burke also offered to include staining the rest of the bridge for the same price so it will continue to look uniform.

There was further discussion regarding potential FEMA requirements, as the covered bridge is listed with the National Register of Historic Places. The new siding will be of the same material to match the old siding, and the repairs will restore the bridge to its pre-existing condition. Matt will follow up with FEMA on any additional contractor requirements necessary for reimbursement.

*John Brodie motioned to accept the bid from James A. Burke for repairs to the Churchill Covered Bridge in accordance with the bid specifications in an amount not to exceed \$9,500.00. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

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

Roadside mowing is continuing, though there are only a few roads left for this round.

The Highway Department's chloride trailer needs some welding. Mike will pursue a local contractor to complete the work.

A section of Brownsville Hartland Road near Knob Hill Road was recently paved by Waters Excavation. Mike noted that Matt Waters offered to use his employees and equipment to pave this section as a "training exercise for his people" and would only charge for materials. Mike estimated that this offer may have saved the town around \$25,000.00 on this repair and asked that the Town write a letter to Waters Excavation thanking them for this generous offer. Mark Higgins noted the "extreme cooperation and the kindness shown to the Town" by Waters Excavation, and that he will draft a letter expressing this appreciation.

There was a discussion on the proposed Yale Heights Road flood mitigation project, for which the Town has submitted a pre-application to the State of Vermont's Hazard Mitigation Grant

Program. The program was recently amended to extend the submission deadline to August 16<sup>th</sup> while removing the local match requirement.

There was a discussion related to roadside mowing and invasive plants such as wild parsnip and Japanese knotweed. Mike noted that the Highway Department does the best it can to prevent the spread of unwanted plants by early mowing before the seeds are dispersed, but that they aren't licensed for herbicide application.

There was a brief discussion relating to the potential Highway Department new hire. Mike noted the applicant has given notice to his current employer, but that there may be an offer forthcoming to attempt to entice him to withdraw that notice and remain. Mark Higgins stated his willingness to call a Special Selectboard Meeting as needed to move the process forward, and that the Selectboard will "support the Highway Department in any way they can."

### **11. June Windsor PD Log Review**

There was a discussion on the Windsor Police Log for June, with a mention of recent accidents on Blood Hill Road and Ski Tow Road.

### **12. Second Quarter Budget Review**

There was a line-item review of each Town account, with a specific emphasis on the General Fund, the Highway Fund, and the Library Fund. Matt and Amy will do follow up research to answer outstanding questions and concerns and will report back to the Selectboard as needed.

### **13. Blood Hill Tower Update**

*Note: This item was addressed out of order, and followed Item #11, June Windsor PD Log Review.*

Mark Higgins mentioned that he has not received any further communication from American Tower. There has been no change to the site conditions from the previous update. Mark will submit a follow up email to American Tower regarding this issue.

### **14. Other Business**

Mark Higgins stated that officials from the Town of Hampden, MA have indicated an interest in potentially bringing the cannon back to their town. The bid process for the cannon will be put on hold pending further conversations with the Hampden officials. Updates on the cannon will be provided as this process continues.

### **15. Upcoming Meeting Schedule**

The next regularly scheduled Selectboard meetings will be held on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and August 12<sup>th</sup>.

**16. Adjourn**

*Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:31pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Frederick  
Town Administrator