

West Windsor Selectboard Minutes
Monday, November 13, 2023 @ 6:30 pm
Town Hall and Zoom

Present in Person: Matt Kantola, Mark Harley, Mark Higgins, Mike Spackman, Cathy Archibald, Deb Shearer, Joe Pasco, Sarah Runnion-Bareford, Jesse Runnion-Bareford, John Runnion-Bareford, Dagny Runnion-Bareford

Present via Zoom: Chris & Colin Eggleton, Lauren Dorsey, Linda Ley, Christina Dolan, Matt Frederick

1. Call to Order

Matt Kantola called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

2. Changes or Additions to Agenda

None

3. Announcements/Public Comment

Matt K stated that he would be attending the quarterly Solid Waste District meeting on Wednesday to discuss budget info and allotments.

Mark Higgins stated that he would like to give an update from the Planning Commission hearing that was held on Wednesday, 11/8 regarding proposed changes to the local zoning bylaws. Mark continued that the most contentious issue was the discussion relating to short-term rentals in the zoning code. He stated that while reviewing that topic in the meeting, it became clear that a multi-pronged solution may be needed to address the issue, including creating an ordinance to address short-term rentals in addition to changes in zoning regulations. The Selectboard will visit the proposed zoning changes in a discussion with Zoning Administrator Deb Shearer and the Planning Commission at a future meeting.

4. Approve Minutes of 10/23, 10/30

Mark Higgins motioned to approve the minutes of October 23rd and October 30th. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Town Clerk's Orders

Matt K stated that he had signed the Town Clerk's Orders. He mentioned that Cathy had "doled out funds to the different departments to get the books in order for the end of the year." There were no other large expenditures to note.

6. Request for Private Road – Sarah Runnion-Bareford

Ms. Runnion-Bareford spoke about the details of a plan to purchase a lot with an existing driveway and a right-of-way access on Brownsville-Hartland Rd near the Brownsville/Hartland town line. This would be the 3rd lot accessed by this driveway, necessitating an upgrade to a private road per zoning bylaws. There was discussion on sight distances required for such an upgrade. Mike Spackman mentioned the benefit of moving the existing driveway approximately 25' to the south (towards Brownsville), which would allow for increased sight distance, a safer transition to the town road due to reduced driveway grade, and less water runoff onto the town road. Deb Shearer spoke of an additional benefit of upgrading the driveway to a private road being that it would allow for individual E911 addresses for each of the lots accessed.

Deb stated that there would need to be a new survey to indicate that the existing right-of-way meets the required 50' standard. Mike stated that no new highway access permit would be necessary, just a modification to move the driveway as far to the south as possible. There will need to be a public hearing to allow for feedback prior to an official decision being made. Matt F will post the hearing notice in an upcoming edition of the Vermont Standard and on the town website, contact abutters, and place physical copies of the notice in the required locations. The Selectboard will revisit this topic once the public feedback period has been met.

7. Highway Foreman's Report

Mike S stated the highway department has 2 to 3 days remaining of blowing leaves out of ditches with the tractor. When this project is complete, the tractor will be delivered to Townline for repairs. This drop-off will likely occur after Thanksgiving.

Mike stated that the town is still processing MRGP paperwork. The deadline for work to be completed for this grant is Summer 2024.

The highway department is aiming to work on the Sheddsville tree removal project before the winter sets in to at least remove some of the smaller trees.

Matt K asked about the Yale Heights Stormwater Permit status, and Mike S and Mark Higgins confirmed it had been submitted to the state this summer.

Matt confirmed with Mike that the highway department budget was being worked on and suggested the potential for ARPA funds to be used to cover the work to be done on the exterior of the highway department's "Burke Garage." Mike also brought up that there should be incoming funds from FEMA reimbursements, as well, when that process concludes.

8. Catering Permit – Blood's Seafood

Mark Higgins stated that the permit would be for "clearly less than 100 people" as no event permit was subsequently submitted and made a motion to approve the permit. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

9. UVLT 2023 Town Forest Monitoring Report

There was discussion about the report, which stated that the town was in compliance with the expectations from Upper Valley Land Trust. Mark Higgins stated that the report read “like poetry”, and there was praise for Micah Tilles, the UVLT Land Steward who completed this year’s report.

10. Health Officer Appointment

Cathy indicated that current Health Officer Nancy Gaynor stated she would accept the position again, “unless you can find someone else.” Matt K nominated Nancy Gaynor to continue as the West Windsor Health Officer for another 3-year term. Mark Higgins seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Matt F will submit the necessary paperwork to the State.

11. Generator Update & Next Steps

Matt K stated that he and WSESU Superintendent Christine Bourne signed a Memorandum of Understanding covering the details of ownership and maintenance of the future ABS generator. As it will be purchased using ARPA funds, the Town of West Windsor will have ownership of the generator, while the school district will provide generator maintenance and fueling. The school district will also provide any necessary fencing around the generator and will ensure it remains accessible during the winter months.

Matt K motioned to approve the MOU and proceed with the quote from Brook Field Service to complete the generator purchase for a total of \$21,582.00 plus a snow stand to keep the generator off the ground for an additional \$385.00. Mark Higgins seconded the motion, and all were in favor. Depending on how quickly the winter weather sets in, this project may not be completed until spring 2024.

12. Q3 Budget Review vs Actual Expenditures

Mark Higgins initiated the conversation and the Selectboard discussed line items from the town budgets. There was a lengthy review of each department budget to date, and Cathy and Mike answered numerous questions regarding various line items.

13. FEMA Update

Matt F spoke on the current state of the FEMA projects. The highway department has completed the field work for debris removal, as well as all emergency and permanent road repairs relating to the flood events in July of this year. The ‘Category A’ paperwork (debris removal) is entering the review stage, the ‘Category B’ paperwork (emergency repairs) is well into the review process, and the ‘Category C’ paperwork (permanent road repairs) is nearly ready for submission. The remaining field work has a completion timeline of January 2025. Weekly meetings between representatives from the town and our FEMA Program Delivery Manager will continue as the overall process moves along.

14. Other Business

Matt K stated an interest in speaking with Erik Boedtger and representatives from the West Windsor Volunteer Fire Department to continue the ongoing discussion on ARPA funds and the state of the fire station. Matt continued that he'd spoken with Evan Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald Environmental Services, and that Evan believes it may be possible to recontour the Mill Brook banks behind Brownsville Butcher & Pantry and the fire station to help with future flood mitigation in the downtown area.

Linda Ley thanked the Selectboard "for all that you do", and wanted to pass along to anyone interested in buying a holiday wreath this year, that they should consider doing so from the Independence Day Committee fundraiser. Linda can be reached at brownsvilleidc@gmail.com for further details!

15. Executive Session

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to enter executive session at 7:46pm for the reasons set forth in 1 V.S.A. § 313(2)(3).

The Selectboard came out of executive session at 9:33pm.

16. Final Decisions

No decisions to note.

17. Adjourn

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:33pm.