

**Town of West Windsor  
Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
Monday, November 25, 2024 @ 6:30pm  
Town Hall and Zoom**

**Present in Person:** Mark Higgins, Mark Harley, John Brodie, Amy Yates, Mike Spackman, Deb Shearer, Matt Frederick, Susan & Richard Yost, Jill Crowley, Shelley Seward, Peter Varkonyi

**Present via Zoom:** Linda Ley, Lauren Dorsey (Vermont Standard)

**1. Call to Order**

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

**2. Changes or Additions to Agenda**

Item #10, Facility Use Agreement – Family Movie Night at Story Memorial Hall will be moved up to Item #4, following Announcements/Public Comment. These minutes will reflect the amended order of the agenda.

Mark Harley will provide an update on his communications with Avitar Associates regarding the West Windsor parcel mapping project under Item #17, Other Business.

**3. Announcements/Public Comment**

Linda Ley spoke about the upcoming 2024 Holiday Happenings in West Windsor on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>:

- The Brownsville Community Church is organizing the annual Christmas Bazaar at the Town Hall from 9:00am until 2:00pm, which will feature local crafts vendors, a bake sale, live holiday music, and a luncheon (11:00am – 1:00pm).
- At 4:00pm, there will be a gathering on the corner of Route 44 and Brownsville-Hartland Road for the annual Community Tree Lighting, which will include light refreshments, a cozy fire pit, and a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus!
- The day will wrap up with a Live Christmas Nativity (5:30pm) at the Brownsville Community Church pavilion (66 Brownsville-Hartland Road). Accompanying the Live Nativity Pageant there will be live music and, possibly, live animals, too! All are welcome to attend this event!

The annual sale of Christmas wreaths and other holiday items has begun! Please visit the [GiftItForward](#) website and use the fundraising code BROWNSVT001 to support the 2025 Independence Day Committee celebrations. Online donations to the IDC may be made [here](#).

#### **4. Facility Use Agreement – Family Movie Night at Story Memorial Hall**

Liz Frederick spoke about the proposed Family Movie Night, to take place at Story Memorial Hall on Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm. Family Movie Night is sponsored by the Mary L. Blood Memorial Library. The movie to be shown is a 2003 PG-rated Christmas comedy about an oversized elf who travels from the North Pole to New York City to meet his biological father, who is in desperate need of some Christmas spirit. *(Movie license prevents the naming of the movie, but the full advertisement is available on the library website.)*

The School and Community in Partnership (SCIP) organization will serve food as a fundraiser, and children 10 and under will need a parent present for the duration of the showing. This event is open to the public with no charge for entry, and doors will open at 5:30pm.

Movie-goers are welcome to bring their own comfortable seating and blankets, though Ascutney Outdoors will be providing inner tubes to sit on to watch the movie and there are plenty of folding chairs available. The Town Hall auditorium will be reserved from 2:00pm until 8:00pm on December 20<sup>th</sup> to allow for setup and teardown. Anyone interested in assisting with the loading, unloading, and transfer of tubes to and from Ascutney Outdoors is encouraged to contact Shelley Seward via email at [sms@shelleyseward.com](mailto:sms@shelleyseward.com).

*Mark Harley motioned to approve Mary L. Blood Memorial Library's Facility Use Agreement for Family Movie Night at Story Memorial Hall from 2:00pm to 8:00pm on Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

#### **5. Approve Minutes of 11/11**

*John Brodie motioned to approve the minutes of the November 11<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting as written. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

#### **6. Town Clerk's Report**

Town Clerk Amy Yates spoke about the Special Town Meeting held at Story Memorial Hall on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. There were 81 registered voters at the meeting. Amy stated that the vote to move the budget year for the Town of West Windsor to a fiscal year from July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> passed with a paper ballot vote of 63 in favor and 15 opposed, with 2 blank ballots and 1 not voting. You can read the minutes of the November 16<sup>th</sup> Special Town Meeting [here](#).

Delinquent tax payments are continuing to be received, with approximately \$175,000.00 still owed, and approximately \$13,000.00 in fees and penalties due, as of November 25<sup>th</sup>. There was a brief discussion on the year-to-year tax delinquency comparison, and Amy noted that a large percentage of 2024 delinquencies occurred due to late payments from escrow companies and lending institutions.

## **7. Initial Highway Access Permit – Weeden Hill Snowmobile Crossing**

There was a brief discussion on the proposed new snowmobile crossing on Weeden Hill Road, which will utilize the existing driveway access at 92 Weeden Hill Road (Parcel #06-108). Highway Foreman Mike Spackman stated that he did inspect the proposed access and that safety measures, including stop signs on the proposed snowmobile trail, have been installed.

There was a discussion on the details of the proposed new access, including sight distances, the specific location of the proposed access, the current driveway access, and the lack of need for Final Highway Access approval given that this would be a seasonal access with no new construction or conditions.

*Mark Harley motioned to approve the Initial Highway Access Permit for a new snowmobile crossing at 92 Weeden Hill Rd (Parcel #06-108). As this is a seasonal highway access with no new construction, no final approval will be necessary, and this approval will persist until specifically rescinded by the West Windsor Moonlighter's Snowmobile Club, the landowners, or the Selectboard. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **8. Final Highway Access – Fitch (Parcel #05-101)**

There was a discussion regarding Final Highway Access approval for Parcel #05-101 on Silver Hill Road, which received an Initial Highway Access Permit in 2018. Mike Spackman stated that the missing Final Highway Access approval came to light as the Highway Department was pursuing a grant for ditch work on Silver Hill Road, and he recommended Final Highway Access approval be granted since there have been no issues resulting from the completed access since its installation over five years ago.

*John Brodie motioned to approve Final Highway Access for Parcel #05-101 on Silver Hill Road. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **9. Event App – Solstice Celebration at Ascutney Outdoors**

Jill Delaney spoke about the proposed Solstice Celebration at Ascutney Outdoors Center from 4:00pm to 6:00pm on Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, which will be a free event open to the public featuring light music, poetry readings, and fires in the AO fire pits. Brownsville Butcher & Pantry will donate hot wassail drinks for the event, which will coincide with Ascutney Outdoors' annual holiday sale.

*John Brodie motioned to approve the application for the Solstice Celebration at Ascutney Outdoors Center from 4:00pm to 6:00pm on Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. Mark Harley seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **10. Facility Use Agreement – English Country Dance January thru May**

Jill Delaney spoke about the proposed monthly English Country Dance events from January through May 2025, continuing the successful series of events. There was a discussion on the event details, which will remain the same as previously approved events, with the exception that these events would take place on the *first* Sunday of each month from January through May.

There was a brief discussion regarding a potential increase in rental fees for use of the Town Hall. This conversation will be revisited in the spring and will include a breakdown of associated costs to the Town from increased facility usage.

*Mark Harley motioned to approve the Facility Use Agreement for the English Country Dance series on January 5<sup>th</sup>, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, April 6<sup>th</sup>, and May 4<sup>th</sup>. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **11. Discussion: 2025 Vermont Food & Music Festival**

Peter Varkonyi spoke about the rebranding of the Fire on the Mountain event, which will be known as the Vermont Food & Music Festival.

Peter noted that, while the October 2024 event was highly successful, there were some areas for improvement to better utilize the Ascutney Outdoors Center facilities, including congestion, pedestrian traffic, and trash collection. Peter further noted that there are plans to investigate adding a second day to create a two-day event.

There was discussion regarding the proposed event, including the potential band line-ups, parking arrangements, shuttle service, traffic control, and public safety. Peter stated that, in addition to officers from the Windsor Police Department, there would be a contract with Green Mountain Public Safety to provide security details. There was additional discussion of potential camping on Ansel Dickey's field, and the benefits and drawbacks of that arrangement.

The 2025 Vermont Food & Music Festival is planned to take place next fall on October 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, and would have 2000 available tickets each day, up from 1000 for the 2024 event.

Mark Higgins praised Peter for the safe and successful 2024 event and encouraged continuous communication with the Town in the leadup to the 2025 event.

## **12. BB&P Water Meter Study**

Peter Varkonyi requested a continuance for commencing Brownsville Butcher & Pantry's approved Water Meter Study. Peter stated that BB&P representatives met with the Development Review Board (DRB) on November 12<sup>th</sup> to request additional seating, and the determination regarding that request is expected by the end of December. Peter also noted that they are still

waiting to hear back from Heritage Engineering regarding comments on the Water Meter Study from the State of Vermont.

There was a discussion on the Water Meter Study, the Vermont Potable Water Supply Rules, and BB&P's current water allocation and costs.

*Mark Harley motioned to amend the deadline for the commencement of Brownsville Butcher & Pantry's Water Meter Study from December 1, 2024 to February 1, 2025, contingent upon the Development Review Board's approval of the request for additional seating. Brownsville Butcher & Pantry's annual water fees will remain at 1 Equivalent User Unit pending the conclusion of the Water Meter Study, after which the fees may be amended based on the study results. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

### **13. Discussion: ARPA Funds**

Jill Crowley spoke about the Sustainability Committee's proposal to install EV chargers in the gravel parking lot below the Ascutney Outdoors Center.

There was discussion regarding the West Windsor Purchasing Policy, which requires soliciting proposals in an RFP process for expenditures greater than \$15,000.00, and additional discussion regarding the expected Return on Investment for EV chargers, private investment and expansion opportunities, potential uses for any funds generated by the public EV chargers, and future maintenance responsibilities once new chargers are installed.

The Sustainability Committee will begin the RFP process to collect bids for the proposed EV charger installation and will report back to the Selectboard when that process is complete.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the ARPA funds and the obligation deadline of December 31<sup>st</sup>. The Selectboard will continue this discussion at both remaining regular Selectboard meetings in 2024, with the goal of obligating all ARPA funds at the second regular Selectboard meeting in December.

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

Highway Foreman Mike Spackman stated that the Highway Department has nearly finished blowing leaves to clear roadways, ditches, and culverts.

Mike and Matt Frederick will continue working on 2025 grant opportunities for the Highway Department.

There was a discussion regarding the 18-month budget for the Highway Department, which, in addition to the regular 12-month cycle, will include 3.5 more "winter" months and 2.5 more "summer" months from January 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026.

## **15. Personnel Policy**

John Brodie stated that there is a revised proposal from OneDigital of \$3250.00 for the crafting of a Personnel Policy for West Windsor. There was a robust discussion on the OneDigital proposal, the current Personnel Policy, which was crafted for the Highway Department in the 1980s, and the benefits of having a Personnel Policy in place that is both recent and accounts for all Town of West Windsor employees.

Pursuant to the West Windsor Conflict-of-Interest Policy, John disclosed that he is an employee of Kinney-Pike Insurance, which is owned by OneDigital. John stated that he will not be involved with this project for OneDigital, nor will he profit from any agreement between the Town of West Windsor and OneDigital, either monetarily or professionally.

There was a discussion regarding the Conflict-of-Interest disclosure as it relates to a potential agreement between the Town of West Windsor and OneDigital, and no conflict was deemed to exist.

*Mark Harley motioned to approve the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$3250.00 from the ARPA funds to OneDigital for the purpose of crafting a personnel policy for the Town of West Windsor. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **16. FY25 Budget Discussion**

There was a discussion on the Fiscal Year 2025 budget process as it relates to the budget presentations. Each budget spreadsheet will be presented for discussion with 12- and 6-month figures in separate columns, which will be combined for the final 18-month budget figure. This will allow for more accurate reviews of each line-item.

There was a discussion regarding appropriation requests, which will remain annual expenditures following the October tax payment deadline each year, with the specific amounts to be voted on at each annual Town Meeting.

There was further discussion regarding potential penalties and interest accrued for missing the first tax payment in a fiscal year, as different towns have different models. Amy will follow up with towns operating on similar fiscal year models to determine the pros and cons of different penalty structures.

## **17. Other Business**

Mark Harley spoke about his conversations with Avitar Associates regarding the GIS mapping project. The Avitar contact indicated that they did not receive 2023 data from West Windsor but would complete their updates upon receipt of the local data. There would be no additional charge for this service 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.

## **18. Upcoming Meeting Schedule**

The next Selectboard meetings will be held on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 9<sup>th</sup>.

The Special Selectboard Meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup> will focus entirely on the FY25 budget, with an emphasis on the Highway, Library, and Cemetery Funds. The December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting will be a combination of regular town business and continued budget discussions.

The date of the second regular Selectboard meeting in December will be decided during the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting based on the outstanding needs at that time, including the finalization of the FY25 budget and concluding the ARPA funds obligation process.

## **19. Executive Session**

*Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to enter executive session at 8:52pm for the reasons set forth in 1 V.S.A. § 313(1)(E).*

The Selectboard came out of executive session at 9:12pm.

## **20. Final Decisions**

*Pursuant to the Executive Session discussion, Mark Harley motioned to authorize the execution of a fee agreement between the Town of West Windsor and the law office of Schuster, Buttrey, & Wing, P.A. of Hanover, NH. John Brodie seconded the motion, and all were in favor.*

## **21. Adjourn**

*Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Selectboard unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:12pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Frederick  
Town Administrator