

Wolcott Special Selectboard Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2019

All Minutes are draft until approved by the Selectboard.
Please see future Minutes for approval of these Minutes.

Present: Eric Furs, Kim Gravel, Michael Davidson
Absent: Jennifer Holton-Clapp, Richard Lee
Town Employees: Linda Martin, Allison Bigelow, Deborah Klein, Tom Martin
Guest: Linda Mullen
Public: Harvey Reed, Christy Moodie, Linda Brady, Bill Cotten, Jackie Burgess,
Kurt Klein, Chad Roy, Steve Perkins, Monica Cross
Reporter: Doug McClure, *Hardwick Gazette*

Eric called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. There were no amendments to the Agenda.

New Business:

Presentation by the Auditor: Copies of the annual auditor's report were provided to the board. Linda Mullen, who conducted the audit for the Town, presented her findings to the Selectboard pursuant to State statute. It was noted that some paychecks had been issued to employees before the board could approve the orders. Discussion ensued regarding the quick turnaround between when employee time sheets are due and when paychecks are issued. The board will give thought to the different options discussed. A change can be made in the new year. The auditor also noted that as of the end of the last fiscal year, \$15,579 remains in unassigned funds that will carry over to the general fund.

Presentation of Budget Proposals for 2020-2021:

The Selectboard collected budget proposals for review.

Fire Department: Request for level funding at \$68,900.

Glee Merritt Kelley Community Library: Request for appropriation, level funding at \$8,725.

Cemetery Association: Request for level funding at \$11,000.

Athletic Association: Request for level funding at \$2,000.

Parks & Recreation: Will consider a request for level funding at \$2,000.

Health Officer: Will consider a request for level funding at \$1,350.

Animal Control Officer: Will consider a request for level funding at \$4,300.

Ordinance Committee: Request for \$3,300. This would be a new budget item.

Planning & Zoning: Request for \$12,875, an increase of \$2,375 over last year. The fee charged for the required NEMRC software used by Zoning, Listers, and the Town increased substantially.

Listers: Request for \$26,336, an increase of \$4,536.

Transfer Station: Request for \$65,010, and increase of \$7,096.

The budget for the Highway Department has not yet been submitted. The budgets for Town Clerk and the Town will be submitted following discussions with the board. It was noted that election expenses will increase this year due to a primary and general election.

Chad Roy and Linda Brady led a discussion about creating a Historical Preservation fund that could be added to each year. The Schoolhouse Restoration Committee, which reports to the board, could be given a line item. There remains \$3,300 in funds available for the Old

Schoolhouse. It was suggested that Chad and Linda submit to the board a proposal of what they would like to see accomplished.

Loan for flood projects: Discussion ensued regarding anticipated road projects, and projects for which FEMA reimbursement may be expected. The Treasurer is to seek the best terms for a five year loan for \$250,000. Eventually when federal funds are received, the loan can be paid off early.

Holiday pay for employees during probationary period: Discussion took place regarding the policies impacting employees during their probationary period. Motion by Kim to waive the probationary period for holiday pay for all Town employees retroactive to date of hire. Seconded by Michael. Motion amended by Kim to include uniforms as well. Seconded by Michael. Voting: All 3 in favor.

Other Business:

Monthly Orders for Transfer Station and Town: Done.

Kurt informed the board that the newly drafted Junk Ordinance was submitted to Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) for a legal review. VLCT legal department replied there is a \$95 per hour charge. It was estimated the review could take between one and three hours. It was noted that the committee used the VLCT template as the basis. Motion by Michael to approve VLCT legal review of the draft Junk Ordinance at the quoted rate not to exceed three hours. Seconded by Eric. Voting: All 3 in favor.

Linda Martin announced she will resign as Town Clerk, and as Treasurer, at the end of Town Meeting day, 2020. Linda shared copies of her resignation letter with board members, and read it aloud, as follows:

To the Town of Wolcott:

I plan on retiring at the Town Meeting on March 3, 2020. I have enjoyed serving the citizens of the town since March 1986.

The Town has seen many changes and growth in that time. My office has gone from hand writing checks to having the financials computerized. Just about all of the work required from the State of Vermont is now done on the computer. A website now has to be maintained.

In that time the number of personnel in the town clerk's office hadn't changed or the hours but the burdens placed on the workload have steadily increased over the years.

I had hoped the Selectboard would have had someone on board this fall to alleviate the workload but that didn't happen. In listening to town's people I don't think they want to support paying for a 40 hour a week, high salary person. I think many believe there is a need but it should start slow. Maybe a 20 hour Selectboard assistant and then a 20 hour office help person. You would be paying the office person a lower rate to do the menial tasks

I haven't found the time to even be able to take off more than a day and a half for vacation since March. I usually work part of Friday and Saturday to try and stay on top of things. I'm tired and see no relief in sight.

I would like to include in the budget hours to come in one or two days a week for a few months after Town Meeting to be able to train the new Town Clerk and Treasurer. We have been so busy that I haven't been able to teach Allison many things.

I also would like you to consider hiring a very part-time bookkeeper to post the accounts on Quick Books Governmental Accounting is very unique towns must now follow QASB accounting rules.

I have presented many options here and would like to have a conversation on how we are going to move forward to make this work.

Linda

The Selectboard will meet with Linda before Town Meeting to discuss issues brought up in her letter.

Adjourn: Motion by Eric to adjourn at 8:01 p.m. Seconded by Michael. Voting: All 3 in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deborah Klein

Next regular Selectboard meeting - December 18, 2019