

Wolcott Selectboard Meeting Minutes October 6, 2021

Wolcott Town Office/Zoom/phone-in: 6:00 p.m.

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

Present: Linda Martin, Kurt Klein, Richard Lee, Allen Carpenter, Kurt Billings
Employees: Dillan Cafferky, Belinda Harris Clegg, Deb Klein, Bernard Earle
Presenters: Roy Schiff, Meghan Rodier, Melanie Riddle, Seth Jensen, Doug Osborne,
Kate Wanner
Public: Dolan Patrick, Lucien Gravel, Chan Judd, Jr., Monica Cross, Linda Brady,
Marie Stadtmueller, Pat Thompson, Kee Gillen
Reporter: Doug McClure, *Hardwick Gazette*

Martin called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. Martin noted that the Town has new equipment to enhance the quality of hybrid meetings.

Amendments to the Agenda

School Street Bridge: Martin noted that the board is working with VTrans to get signage installed so that traffic on the temporary School Street bridge will be two-way.

FEMA: Martin announced that FEMA paperwork regarding the Brook Road culvert is ready for review and sign off.

Training: Martin participated in a webinar hosted by Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) addressing funds available to Towns that may help with bridges and culverts.

Approve Minutes of September 15, 2021: Motion by Klein to approve the Minutes of September 15. Seconded by Lee. Discussion: None. Voting: All in favor.

Comments from the Community: Chan Judd, Jr. inquired about whether the Town is seeking an additional back-up driver for the road crew. He stated he is working full time.

Animal Control Officer (ACO) - report: Tabled to later in the meeting due to ACO absence.

Town Clerk/Treasurer - report: [Taken out of order by unanimous consent of Selectboard.] Clegg reported that to date, the Town has received \$246,012.36 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Clegg reviewed for the board short-term investment options for the funds besides the cash management fund currently used. The board opted to keep the funds in the cash management fund for now. Should things change, the board will reconsider.

PRESENTATIONS:

Wolcott Restoration Projects - update: Present were Roy Schiff and Doug Osborne, Water Resource Engineers, with SLR Consulting. Also present were Meghan Rodier, Seth Jensen, and

Melanie Riddle with LCPC. Schiff led with a Power Point presentation in which he described potential designs for flood mitigation plans for the Fish & Wildlife access area off Elmore Pond Road, as well as the North Wolcott ball field area along the Wild Branch.

At this early design stage, Schiff indicated the preferred alternative for the Fish & Wildlife access area would be to remove all or part of the berm to allow any flood water to spill over, and till up the reed canary grass and replant with native vegetation that would store more water and sediment. For the ball field area along the North Wolcott Road, debris needs to be cleared. The preferred alternative would be to mitigate flooding by stabilizing the bank in front of the ball field, plant a series of trees, and reconnect the flood shoots by cleaning out the debris. The Town may wish to consider moving the parking lot to an area further downstream. Gillen indicated moving the parking lot is possible, although it would be more inconvenient. Schiff added that a path could be created from the new parking area to allow for better access. Cafferky will look at safety issues along North Wolcott Road should the parking area be moved.

Rodier stated the "30 percent design" is due November 1. SLR is considering another grant, due by the end of the year, that would address other areas along North Wolcott Road. Jensen stated final designs and implementation will be up to the Town and Fish & Wildlife. Funding sources were discussed.

Wolcott Town Forest - discussion: Kate Wanner, The Trust for Public Land, has been working on behalf of the Town on the possible acquisition of land to be used as a Town Forest. Land on either side of East Elmore Road, owned by Whitcomb and Bedell, is available for this purpose. Part of the acreage is immediately adjacent to the Elementary School and could be used for educational purposes. How the land could be used would be up to the board, but recreational uses including hiking and biking trails, as well as economic development such as timber management or sugaring are all possible. Additional acreage owned by the Bourne's family may be available as well, but has not yet been determined. That land would provide direct access to the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. Regardless of the acreage, the total cost to the Town would be \$25,000. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds could be used to cover that cost. Insurance premiums would not go up. Wanner stated the next step is for the Town to confirm acquisition of the land for the Town Forest.

Set date for Special Town Meeting, Approve Warning: Wolcott Town Forest Acquisition: Before the board makes its decision to acquire the land, Martin said she would like the Wolcott voters to weigh in. A draft Warning for a Special Town Meeting was reviewed by the board. The Warning consists of one Article: "Shall the voters in said Town authorize the Select Board to purchase up to 706 +/- acres of land on both sides of East Elmore Road to become a new Town Forest for the purpose of protection of recreation opportunities, education, public access, open space, scenic values, forestry, wildlife and water quality? Said purchase will be conditioned on the Town being able to receive grant funding for all but \$25,000." Discussion ensued.

Motion by Lee to approve the Warning with the wording as it appears in the proposed draft. Seconded by Klein. No further discussion. Voting: Martin - Yes; Klein - Yes; Lee - Yes; Carpenter - Yes; Billings - No. Motion carried.

The Special Town Meeting will be held Wednesday, November 10, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Wolcott Elementary School.

Transfer Station - discussion

Fees: The Transfer Station has been running in the red for some time. The board does not want the Transfer Station to be a burden to taxpayers. Lee proposed changes to some of the fees charged. Bag fees will remain the same. Changes to bulk waste would include: sofa-\$15; upholstered chair-\$10; twin mattress or boxspring-\$10, larger mattress or boxspring-\$15; daybed-\$20; carpets/miscellaneous-\$20. Truck tires-\$10 each, plus \$2 for a rim. Due to increased costs in disposing of recycling, there would be a charge of \$1 for a 15 gallon bag or blue recycling bin. Discussion ensued. Motion by Lee to adopt the changes to the Transfer Station fee schedule as discussed. Seconded by Klein. No further discussion. Voting: All in favor. The new fee schedule will go into effect the weekend of October 30 & 31, 2021. The new fee schedule will be advertised on the Town website, Front Porch Forum, and the *News & Citizen*. Flyers with the new fee schedule will be available for handout at the Transfer Station.

Bottle Deposit Station: The Lamoille Area Cancer Network (LACN) has been maintaining the can and bottle deposit shed at the Transfer Station. LACN would like to replace that shed with a new 8 x 16 shed with an overhead door. The new shed will hold twice as much. They will dispose of the old shed. Discussion ensued. Motion by Lee to allow LACN to replace their shed with a new structure as described. Seconded by Carpenter. No further discussion. Voting: All in favor.

Clean-up Day Request: The Litter Committee would like to hold a fall clean-up day for roadside trash on Saturday, October 16. It is understood the Wolcott Girl Scouts, and other volunteers, will participate. Regular trash bags would be used, and the road crew would pick up the following Monday or Tuesday. No bulk items would be picked up. Motion by Lee to approve the October clean-up day with the road crew picking up bags only. Seconded by Carpenter. No further discussion. Voting: All in favor.

2022-2023 Budget Proposals

Health Officer - Seeking flat funding.

Fire Warden - Seeking flat funding.

Animal Control Officer - Budget proposal tabled to a future meeting. Bernard Earle reported to the board that he had several phone conversations with Dean Mercier, the Animal Control Officer. The conversations involved an incident where a minor was bitten several times by a dog. The incident occurred at night behind the Wolcott Store. The dog was impounded by the ACO. The dog was registered with the Town, and now has a current rabies vaccination. The owner of the dog paid the boarding fee, and paid a fine to the Town as well. The dog is now being homed elsewhere. Martin noted there is no written report, so there is nothing for the Selectboard to act on. Klein noted that the parent of the minor who was bitten has the option of writing a letter to the Selectboard to request a hearing. The Selectboard would follow the appropriate State statute. Earle noted the minor's parent is seeking assistance with medical bills from the dog's owner.

Selectboard review/action

Appointments to Regional Emergency Management Committee (REMC): The REMC has requested the board to make two appointments to their Committee. One would be the Emergency Management Director, and the other would be a different member of the Town's emergency services. Ryan Bjerke is the Town's Emergency Management Director. Steve Princ, a volunteer with the Wolcott Fire Department, was suggested as the other appointment. Motion

by Klein for the board to appoint Ryan Bjerke and Steve Princ to the REMC. Seconded by Carpenter. Voting: All in favor.

Insurance company inspection - review items remaining: Following the recent insurance company inspection, two items involving the Town Garage still need attention. One is a written energy control program. This is an OSHA requirement that addresses employee training overview. A sample was provided to Cafferky. The second is a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) assessment that needs to be completed. This is also an OSHA requirement. A sample policy was provided to Cafferky. Billings and Carpenter will work on completing these requirements with Cafferky's input.

Martin noted that the insurance policy is up for renewal. The board reviewed values of Town structures and contents, with changes made where needed. Clegg addressed the status of the property at 3801 East Hill Road. The property went to tax sale, so the Town now owns it. The Lamoille County Sheriff's Office will serve an eviction notice on the occupant. The board will address what to do with the structure once the occupant is removed. Adjacent property owners have expressed interest in purchasing the property if the Town wishes to sell it.

Tax payment plan request: The board received a written request from Penny Wells to enter into a payment plan for back taxes on her two parcels with three mobile homes. The proposed agreement is to pay \$100 per week for each parcel. The amounts owed are \$684.87 and \$2,425.06. So far, \$500 has been paid. It was noted that the owner's business was hurt as a result of COVID. She has previously been successful with a payment plan. Motion by Klein to accept the tax payment plan as requested by Penny Wells to pay \$100 per week for each of two parcels. Seconded by Lee. No further discussion. Voting: All in favor.

NEK Broadband survey - report: Martin stated the board has received a survey from NEK Broadband inquiring what kind of land and/or assets the Town might have for build out. Board members will study the request further and take it up at the October 20 meeting.

Errors & Omissions: The board received a written request from the Listers to make a change in the assessment of a property from \$331,400 to \$258,500. Motion by Lee to allow the change to the Grand List. Seconded by Carpenter. No further discussion. Voting: All in favor.

Acknowledge Spark! Connecting Community grant award: Deb Klein reported that the Spark! Connecting Community grant she had applied for was awarded in the full amount of \$950. No matching funds are required. The proposal was for a Wolcott Community Garden & Park Logo Contest. The project will seek designs for a logo representing the Town's newly established Community Garden and park. A \$50 prize will go to the contest winner. Remaining funds will go towards digitalizing the design and creation of a sign.

Adjourn: Motion by Lee to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Klein. Voting: All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Klein

Next regularly scheduled meeting - October 20, 2021