

Wolcott Selectboard Meeting Minutes December 15, 2021

Wolcott Town Office/Zoom/phone in: Public - 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, Kurt Billings, Allen Carpenter (5:12 p.m.)
Richard Lee (via phone: 5:00 to 5:37 p.m.)
Employees: Dillan Cafferky, Joey Hoadley, Chan Judd, Belinda Harris Clegg,
Deb Klein
Public: Larry Moquin, Ruthanna Demag, Monica Cross, James Dawson,
Dolan Patrick
Reporter: Doug McClure, *Hardwick Gazette*

Martin called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. Motion by Klein to enter into executive session with the basis being labor relations agreement with employees. Seconded by Billings. Voting: Martin, Klein, Lee, and Billings in favor. The board agreed to invite Larry Moquin, regional organizer and labor representative with the New England Region of Laborers International Union, along with Dillan Cafferky, Joey Hoadley, and Chan Judd to join executive session. The board entered executive session at 5:07 p.m. The board came out of executive session at 5:37 p.m. No action was taken. The meeting was recessed to 6:00 p.m.

Martin opened the public meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Amendments to the Agenda

The board agreed to add the following under Selectboard review/action: Petition submitted to Selectboard; Appointment of negotiator with union; and Lister copier.

Approve Minutes of December 1, 2021: Motion by Klein to approve the Minutes of December 1. Seconded by Carpenter. Discussion: None. Voting: All 4 in favor.

Comments from the Community/Correspondence: Ruthanna Demag, a member of the Schoolhouse Revitalization Committee, noted the committee is meeting, and is moving forward.

2022-2023 Budget Proposals

Transfer Station: Tabled to the January 5, 2022 meeting.

New Appropriations: No new appropriations have been received.

Highway Department: Cafferky, Road Foreman, presented a written budget proposal to the Selectboard for discussion. The board will take the proposed budget under consideration.

Selectboard budget: It was noted that ARPA funds may cover some items, but that is not reflected in the budget. The board is considering combining computer and software line items from various departments into a separate department in order to decrease confusion and to

increase control. The board will seek approval at Town Meeting to allow for the creation of a capital fund for Town & Highway. The board will advertise for a Project Manager position. This position will replace the Town Administrator position. The Town is still awaiting detailed information on some items that will be included in the budget. In the meantime, board members will continue to work on various portions of the budget and discuss the overall budget at the January 5 meeting.

Selectboard review/action:

Petition submitted to Selectboard: Martin, Selectboard Chair, was presented with a Petition which read: We, the undersign [sic] voters of Wolcott, Vermont, petition the Select board to call a special meeting to vote on the following article: Shall Wolcott vote on Town officers by Australian ballot.

The Petition was turned over to Clegg for verification of signatures. Discussion ensued regarding where a Special Town Meeting could be held, given current health concerns at the Elementary School. Other issues touched on included the added expense of a Special Town Meeting, possible legislative action allowing Towns to determine method of voting, and the strict timelines for candidates and Australian ballots. It was noted that the Town Report must be submitted to the printer by January 21. A member of the public found the Petition disrespectful.

Appointment of negotiator with the Union representative: The board discussed options. Motion by Martin to nominate Kurt Billings to represent the Town in negotiating with the union representative. Seconded by Carpenter. Voting: Martin, Carpenter, and Klein in favor. Billings recused himself. Motion carried.

Motion by Martin to nominate Kurt Klein to represent the Town in negotiating with the union representative. Seconded by Carpenter. Voting: Martin, Carpenter, and Billings in favor. Klein recused himself. Motion carried.

Lister copier: It came to the attention of the board that the maintenance agreement for the copier in the Lister Office is more expensive than it would be to lease a new copier with more features. Clegg will check into options.

Management letter from Auditors: Clegg discussed with the Selectboard the auditor's recommendations for changes in procedure regarding bank reconciliations, and use of contractors and cash disbursement for the library. The board suggested that individual departments sign off on their statements so they know what their expenses are.

Generator contract: The annual contract for the Town Office generator is up for renewal. The board opted to renew the contract for one visit per year at a cost of \$440.

DRB/Planning Commission - vacancy: Bruce Wheeler tendered his resignation from the Development Review Board and Planning Commission effective the end of the year. The vacancy will be posted.

Permission to cross Town land in North Wolcott: James Dawson sought permission from the board to drive a logging truck across a section of Town property along the North Wolcott Road. Discussion ensued. Motion by Martin to provide a letter granting permission to James Dawson to access Town property in order to drive a logging truck through, pending receipt of a certificate

of insurance from Dawson, and from the logging company, with the agreement the property be restored to the way it was before. Seconded by Klein. Voting: All 4 in favor.

Law Enforcement Survey: Klein reviewed the work of the law enforcement committee composed of members from Johnson, Hyde Park, and Wolcott in an effort to reduce the cost of law enforcement services. Wolcott will be entering the third year of a three year contract with the Lamoille County Sheriff's Office that has a 3% annual increase. Law enforcement services represent 20% of the Town's overall budget. Klein proposed a written survey be made available to Town residents seeking input on what law enforcement services folks want, and ranking their importance. The board agreed to review the questions before the survey goes out.

Proposed Project Manager position: The board discussed creating a Project Manager position. This position would replace the Town Administrator position that was vacated this fall. The board will review the job description before the ad is posted.

Website Maintenance proposal: The Town's website is outdated and is in need of repair. Klein has been in contact with a consulting company that has submitted a proposal to bring the website up to date for a cost not to exceed \$1,500. That phase of the project would take four to six weeks. A second phase would involve integrating the website with other services, such as being able to pay taxes online, and access to public records. It is anticipated that ARPA funds can be used for both phases. The board was in agreement. Dolan Patrick suggested a YouTube channel be established so that Selectboard meeting recordings can be viewed there.

Hybrid meeting needs: The board discussed with Dolan Patrick how the Town can improve the quality of hybrid meetings. A rolling/locking cabinet for the equipment would make it easier to conduct meetings. There was also discussion of a turn-key system that could be put into place. There was further discussion regarding options for getting improved internet connection. The board thanked Dolan for all of the volunteer work he does for the Town.

Town Meeting & Covid precautions - discussion: The board discussed what options might be available for changing the date of Town Meeting. It is anticipated the legislature will address this issue once the session starts in January. The only reason to change the date would be for health and safety reasons. Changing the date could impact the school vote as well. Martin will review an outline of deadlines that must be met to see what options might be possible.

Transfer Station closed Saturday, December 25 & January 1: Notices will appear in the *News & Citizen* and on the Town's website announcing that the Transfer Station will be closed on Christmas Day and on New Year's Day.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Klein

The next regularly scheduled Selectboard meeting - January 5, 2022