

**Wolcott Selectboard Meeting
Minutes
February 1, 2023**

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, Allen Carpenter, Kurt Billings
Absent: Richard Lee
Employees: Deb Klein, Belinda Harris Clegg
Public: Dolan Patrick, Bradley Horstman, Marcie Young

Martin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Amendments to the Agenda: Martin to provide updates under Selectboard review/action on the Shared Assessor Agreement, and on the Town-owned East Hill property. No objection.

Approve Minutes of January 18, 2023: Motion by Carpenter to approve the Minutes of January 18.
Seconded by Klein. Discussion: None. Voting: All 4 in favor.

Comments from the Community/Correspondence: No comments. Correspondence:

- Notice was received that the monthly cost for a porta-let has risen to \$190 per month. Inquiries will be made to determine if there is a lower price available.
- A copy of the Lamoille County budget was received. The cost for Wolcott decreased because of a drop in population.
- Black Dirt Farms informed the Town that one of the totes was contaminated resulting in a \$20 charge. Plastic bags are not to be thrown in with the compost. The Project Manager will check on the availability of 1-gallon compost buckets for folks to purchase and use at home.
- Comcast complied with the request to submit a permit for work done on Richard Woolcutt Road.
- Notice was received that Hardwick Electric has filed for a rate increase. The proposed start date is March 1, 2023.

Project Manager Report:

Klein updated the board on document submissions. The Road Foreman approved the permit and map submitted by Comcast for work done on Richard Woolcutt Road and Walnut Lane. Comcast has no other projects planned in Town. In the spring, the Highway Department will need to check the exact location of the trench work and record that in the Highway book.

Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) is working with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on conducting a Brownfield study of the property along VT Rte 15. The parcel, owned by Champlain Oil, has been offered to the Town for purchase.

Bids will go out for the mowing of Town properties. The board discussed how best to maintain the ballfields in North Wolcott. The fields have not been used for a couple of years. Instead of regular mowing, the board agreed to brush hog the North Wolcott ball fields in the fall. If in the future there are plans to use the fields again, they can be mowed in the spring.

The Helpsy bins at the Transfer Station are emptied each week. The bins will be monitored to confirm that weekly pickup is an appropriate schedule. Regarding compost, only one compost tote is to be open at a time. When that is full, the second tote will be opened. Repair work was needed on the gate to the Transfer Station.

Of the properties listed for tax sale, two owners have applied for tax assistance with the State. The Town cannot move forward with the sale of those properties until the applications have been approved or denied by the State.

The Town has requested assistance from our legislators to determine the process for reclassifying the North Wolcott Road so that maintenance costs do not fall to the Town to the extent they do now. The initial response received from VTrans was unfavorable. The Town will continue with plans for a road study to be conducted in the spring. Martin has been in communication with Craftsbury regarding plans for their section of the road. The board will consider next steps.

Through the State, the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) will help Towns become more energy resilient. Klein has been in contact with VLCT regarding a grant for interior lighting. The Town needs to convert the long tube fluorescent lights to LED by 2024 to be in compliance with State law.

The board discussed updates regarding the rail trail. The trail will be open through Wolcott for an upcoming dog sled race, but then close for additional bridge repair work. The official opening of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is postponed to March. The board discussed future parking issues and possible signage. A parking plan will be needed, particularly if a café opens in the old schoolhouse.

Public Comment: ARPA expenditures

Martin reviewed a document outlining what ARPA funds have been committed so far, and what funds have been spent. The Town received \$504,706.09, and has a current balance of \$314,241.02. Projects committed to by the Selectboard include: 911 signs & posts (\$30,000); schoolhouse engineering study (\$6,500); NEK Broadband (\$52,917); purchase land for Town Forest (\$25,000); scanning of surveys (\$4,000). Funds already spent include: website/maintenance (\$15,947.45); hybrid meeting technology/equipment (\$13,795.34); and building improvements (\$12,308.28). ARPA funds could be used to purchase the parcel of land offered for sale by Champlain Oil. The board took comments from the public. Although it is up to the Selectboard, townspeople have been asked several times to weigh in on how the funds can best be spent. A form for comments will be available at Town Meeting next month. Funds must be obligated by December, 2024.

Marcie Young noted the need for a guard rail by the cemetery on East Hill Road.

Selectboard review/action

Liquor & Tobacco License – Wolcott Store: This year's application contains the same information as last year. Motion by Klein to approve the Liquor & Tobacco License for the Wolcott Store. Seconded by Carpenter. No further discussion. Voting: All 4 in favor.

Certificate of No Appeal or Suit Pending: This is the last document to be signed for the 2022 Grand List. Martin will sign with the board's approval.

Town Meeting – discussion: Town Meeting will be held Tuesday, March 7 at the Wolcott Elementary School gym starting at 9:00 a.m. The Town Report is still being printed. Voting for Town Officers, and the school, will be by Australian ballot. Votes may be cast between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. or an absentee ballot can be requested. The meeting will be recorded and can be viewed live, but it will not be interactive, meaning there is no opportunity to be heard.

It is anticipated that coffee, soda, and some food items will be available for purchase. Girl Scout cookies will be available for sale. There most likely will be a table set up with various committees on hand to answer questions.

Town-owned East Hill Property: Martin reported that she has had a conversation with one of the property abutters about possibly purchasing the parcel. Martin has also been in communication with Fish & Wildlife to see if the State is interested in buying the land.

Shared Assessor Agreement: Martin has been meeting with LCPC and the Towns of Johnson and Hyde Park regarding sharing an assessor. LCPC placed an ad for the position but received no response. One individual has expressed an interest, but has no experience. If hired, the salary would be less, but the individual would require training. Johnson and Hyde Park may wish to hire this individual because they do not have any listers or assessor. Following discussion, the board determined that Wolcott is in a different position. The board does not see the Shared Assessor Agreement working for Wolcott at this time, with this applicant. The board would like to withdraw from the plan.

Adjourn: Motion by Klein to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Billings. Voting: All 4 in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Klein

Next regularly scheduled Selectboard Meeting – February 15, 2023