

**Wolcott Selectboard Meeting
Minutes
March 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, Richard Lee, Allen Carpenter, Kurt Billings
Employees: Deb Klein, Belinda Harris Clegg
Public: Monica Cross, Dolan Patrick
Guests: Joe Houston, Bruce Urie, Jim Jones

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

Amendments to the Agenda: Martin asked to add flood loan payment, and School Street bridge grant agreement to Selectboard review/action. No objection.

Approve Minutes of February 15, 2023: Motion by Lee to approve the Minutes of February 15.
Seconded by Carpenter. Discussion: None. Voting: All in favor.

Comments from the Community: None.

Correspondence: Laura Williams, on behalf of Division On Addictions, emailed the Town Clerk to request that a link to their organization appear on the Town's website. The organization helps locate local rehabilitation centers. Following discussion, the board agreed the organization's link can be added to the Resources tab on the website.

The Forest Committee's request for payment of \$250 for a logo they had made for letterhead and eventually signage was accepted. Until the Forest Committee's budget goes into effect July 1, the Committee is asked to notify the Selectboard if they wish to spend any money.

North Wolcott Road Classification

Craftsbury Selectboard co-chairs, Bruce Urie and Jim Jones, were present to join in the discussion on the classification of North Wolcott Road in Wolcott, and Wild Branch Road in Craftsbury. All agree that the cost of road maintenance to the Towns is extreme. The consensus is it is not fair for the Towns to be responsible for maintenance given the heavy tractor trailer traffic cutting between VT Rte 14 and VT Rte 15, which are State Highways. In addition to road maintenance costs, there are safety issues.

Initial correspondence between Wolcott's State legislators and VTrans indicated the agency does not currently have a budget that would allow for reclassifying the road. Routes 15A and 15C were Town roads at one time before being taken over by the State. The Wolcott Selectboard is interested in building communication with Craftsbury and keeping the issue of reclassification before VTrans. The Wolcott Selectboard has brought up the possibility of an Ordinance that would close North Wolcott Road to heavy tractor trailer trucks.

Urie stated a VTrans representative will be meeting with the Craftsbury Selectboard in April to discuss preserving the road. Urie and Jones indicated they can address with VTrans the reclassification of the

Wild Branch Road. The Wolcott Selectboard has arranged for Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) to conduct a road study on North Wolcott Road this spring. The study will provide statistics on the amount of vehicle traffic, specifically tractor trailer traffic. Urie and Jones will discuss with their board conducting a similar study of the Wild Branch Road this spring. The Craftsbury Selectboard can also discuss the issue with their legislators. Legislators could introduce a Bill that would go to the General Assembly. The two boards will stay in touch regarding traffic studies.

Project Manager Report

Klein stated a request for bids for the mowing of Town properties has been placed in the *News & Citizen*.

Klein is working with UniFirst to schedule pickup of uniforms for the road crew. The Road Foreman is seeking guardrail quotes. Bids will be sought for North Wolcott Road patch paving. Repairs have been needed for one of the plow trucks. As a result, plowing has not been as efficient as it could be. Viking has been the only vendor to supply truck parts. Plow blades through Viking are about double that of last year. The Road Foreman is seeking an alternate supplier in New Hampshire. Bids are being sought for roadside mowing.

The owner of the property located at 74 School Street had applied for property tax relief through the State despite the fact that he lives in California. Following the Town's protest, the request was denied. The understanding is that the property will now default to the tax sale purchaser.

Klein is in communication with an individual who can refresh the physical layout of the screens on the Town's website, and improve the overall user experience.

Bradley Horstman, Simmons Road, was interviewed as an alternate delegate to the board, by Lamoille FiberNet, Communications Union District (CUD). Motion by Klein to validate and accept Bradley Horstman as an alternate delegate for Wolcott to the board of Lamoille FiberNet CUD. Seconded by Lee. Voting: All in favor.

Selectboard review/action

LVRT Directional Signage: Jackie Cassino, Vermont Agency of Transportation, Rail Trails Program Manager, requested input from the board on signage for the Rail Trail. Cassino proposed VTrans install a vertical directional sign on School Street that would direct folks to the trailhead. If installed, the Town would need to agree to maintain the sign long term. After reviewing a map and sign summary sheets provided by Cassino, the board agreed to installation of the sign. The State will not agree to pay for a sign directing snowmobiles to park by the ballfield, because that would be seasonal. The board can give more thought to parking for snowmobilers. The board will discuss with the State the leasing of land for additional parking.

911 Signs/Posts: A bid was received from Safety Home Address for green, reflective 911 signs. For 950 signs the cost would be \$15,510. Safety Home Address would not issue a quote for posts, stating posts are too difficult to obtain. The quote from Work Safe for 911 signs is \$14,078. Work Safe indicates they can provide posts. The quote for signs and posts totals \$29,173.69. Motion by Klein to accept the bid from Work Safe for signs and posts for \$29,173.69, using ARPA funds. Seconded by Lee. No further discussion. Voting: All in favor.

Request for use of ARPA funds: Joe Houston, Facilities Director for Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU), contacted the board to request financial support of the purchase of a standby power generator

at Wolcott Elementary School. OSSU will be using ESSER funds to install generators at schools that do not have one, including Wolcott. It is estimated a generator for the site would be in the range of \$60,000 and \$90,000. Having a generator would keep computers powered for communication, and keep the ventilation system running. The school could be used as an emergency shelter, or meeting place, in the event of a wide-spread power outage. The school could provide more space than Town Office. The request to the Town is for \$10,000 or \$15,000 in ARPA funds. Otherwise, the funds will come from the school's budget. Craftsbury approved \$15,000. Hardwick also contributed. Motion by Klein to allocate \$15,000 of ARPA funds to OSSU to be applied to the purchase of a standby generator at the site of the Wolcott Elementary School. Seconded by Lee. Voting: All in favor.

Mowing of North Wolcott ball fields: There will be a request for bids for brush hogging the North Wolcott ball fields and the Transfer Station.

Coin Drop Request – Justice for Dogs: The request to the Town for permission to conduct a Coin Drop on VT Rte 15 was withdrawn. The insurance requirement imposed by the State was cost prohibitive. Justice for Dogs is hoping to raise funds to help establish an alternative to the facility that has been used throughout the County as a pound. That facility will soon be closing.

Loan Pay Off: The Town had taken out a \$400,000 loan in order to pay the upfront cost of the Brook Road box culvert project. The loan amount, with interest, is now \$402,164.32. The Treasurer recently received from FEMA \$373,221.30 as a partial reimbursement for expenses. The Treasurer stated that additional funds have been received from FEMA that together would cover the loan amount. The Town can pay the interest of \$2,164.32 using money from the General Fund. That can go back to the General Fund once the Town receives full payment on the Brook Road culvert. Paying off the loan now will save on additional interest charges.

School Street Bridge Grant Agreement: The board discussed costs associated with the replacement of the School Street bridge. Final construction costs, including moving utilities, will be covered 100% by the State. For non-participating costs, 80% will be covered by Federal funds, 15% by State funds, with the Town responsible for 5%. The bridge grant agreement is under Selectboard review. Following discussion, Martin is given permission to sign the agreement.

Town Meeting – budget discussion: The proposed budget for 2023-2024 included over \$11,000 for the shared cost of an assessor per an Agreement with Hyde Park and Johnson. Since the board had voted to withdraw from the Agreement with the other two Towns, those funds are no longer needed. The board will amend the budget from the floor at Town Meeting, deleting this line item.

Adjourn: Motion by Lee to adjourn. Seconded by Billings. Voting: All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Deb Klein

Next regularly scheduled Selectboard meeting – March 15, 2023