

**TOWN OF WHEELOCK  
SELECTBOARD  
MINUTES – Draft for Distribution  
At Wheelock Town Hall and via Zoom  
NOV. 7, 2023 at 6:00pm**

Present: Selectboard: Jim Blackbird, Ann Lawless (chair). Carol Rossi, Clerk/Treasurer. Visitors: Dan & Heather Tanner (Lyndon Snow Cruisers), Patti Baker, Wendy Bora, Jason Bora, Nate Davis, Kathy Schmitt, Enid Ellis. Via Zoom: Vanessa Seguin

Ann welcomed everyone at 6:01pm, and asked for a moment of silence in honor of Gunnar Watson, murdered in West Wheelock.

**Changes to agenda:** Visitors: Add Dan Tanner. Admin: delete approving orders for Oct, as there are none. Under Highway Dept: Approve letter authorizing Carol to get a records request from Dept. of Motor Vehicles re hiring; vote to sign Gingue contract.

**Visitors:** Dan Tanner, Lyndon Snow Cruisers, requests permission to work on the Class 4 section of Fall Brook Rd, removing 2 dozen trees in ROW. He has spoken with several Wheelock residents who are supportive. They would come in via the Lyndon side. Ryan Delabriere is the first Wheelock resident. He will provide photos and a form/contract which is a waiver of liability. He thinks there are no issues regarding water where the state would get involved. Tabled to Nov 21.

**Administrative**

- Approve and sign minutes of meeting of October 17, 2023, moved by Ann, second Jim, so voted.
- Accept and sign report of Cemetery Task Force of October 3, 2023, amended to correct photo captions, moved by Ann, second by Jim, so voted.

**Highway Department**

- Jim reports that everything is good. The 19 truck is ready to go with tires and plow. The 09 truck is in the shop, coming back tomorrow and it will be outfitted with tires and plow. The crew has put out the whips. The crew is Luke Stevens from Barton and Sean Dernago, St. Johnsbury. Sean started last week in October w/o driving while his tests were processed. Luke started last Friday. They are getting along well and working equally – no one is supervisory.
- Ann moved, Jim seconded a motion to authorize and sign a letter from Carol to DMV enabling her to get record requests related to hiring process. So voted.
- Ann moved, Jim seconded, a motion to sign a contract with Gingue for trucking on Allard Hill. So voted.
- **FEMA Update** Ann reported Bobby Odom called last Friday 11/3 stating we were not approved for Kenniston-Welch project. We should have gotten permission to do an Alternate Project to build the concrete block bridge vs putting in a new culvert, as there were no culverts to be found and they were all backordered. He said they might be able to fund part of the project if it could be broken down and the bridge work separated out. Logan Perron at District 7 said we would need an H & H study and he could help. Andrew Flagg and his boss Kim Canarecci, VT Public Assistance Officer, wrote on 11/6 that FEMA never has and never will fund work on Class 4 Roads. Vanessa confirmed this was clearly stated at the training she and Ann attended right after the disaster. Ann has not replied back, and she may contact Katie Buckley, who attended the 9/15 meeting with the FEMA officials.

On 9/19/2023 the Selectboard voted to hold work sessions outside of warned meetings and to apprise citizens of the content at the next warned meeting. VLCT notes that work sessions are not explicitly recognized in statute and advises boards that items that might later be the subject of a board vote are best discussed in warned sessions. All agendas and minutes are posted locally and on the town website at <https://townofwheelockvt.org/>

- On all the other roads, everything is compiled and sent to Bobby. Initially they were going to do a site visit for the roads not completed, but we decided they were all done so the meeting was canceled. Bobby offered to come help fill in gaps, but that was nixed as FEMA does not provide snow tires. She and Enid went up to Chesley Hill Road to get coordinates and photos. Vanessa asked if the Selectboard has considered any other ways of recouping costs. She said lots of towns are taking out loans. Ann stated we have not considered that yet as we thought we would get help, especially after sending Class 4 policy.
- Ann is making print and digital copies of all correspondence and files so Carol has a copy at the office.

#### **Town Clerk/Treasurer Report**

- Spent to Budget Report: Carol reported we are in deficit spending now.
- Report of Taxes Collected/ Uncollected to date: some new payments not processed yet.
- Consider request of Treasurer to set date(s) for budget workshops: Ann recommended we hold special budget work sessions beginning in early Dec. to be scheduled later to include Andy.

#### **New Business**

- Sign Listers' Error and Omission Report: Moved by Ann, second Jim, so moved
- Review annual PACIF loss control report and requirements: Since the report was not included in the packet, only the cover letter, this was tabled.
- Vote on signing letter of support for Kingdom Access TV, moved by Ann, second Jim, so moved.
- Review request from Clerk to send copy of Wheelock Social Service Policy to parties who may be ineligible for appropriation. Carol stated the policy definitions of what constitutes a social service agency are narrow. This is the Selectboard's choice. Ann noted her research with VLCT Attorney Susan Senning. Susan feels the definition of a social service agency is broader, and since our voters chose last year to support Cobleigh Library, Kingdom Animal Shelter and Powers Park (all petitions the selectboard accepted) we should abide by their wishes. According to statute and our policy, if a request has been voted, there is no need for a petition, only a new request. Ann also spoke with the librarian at Cobleigh and reported on library services including computer services, and a pre-school story hour for kids to promote their success in school. Jim noted it is a slippery slope. Ann also stated that although the largest portion of income comes from the town of Lyndon, the library gets \$1,200 to \$1,500 from 7 surrounding towns, \$750 from Wheelock, a stipend from the state as it is among the largest in the state serving outlying towns. No action was taken. Ann expressed appreciation to Carol for efforts to keep Wheelock's taxes as low as possible.

#### **Old Business**

- Confirm whether or not to amend Personnel Policy. Concerns previously raised include 1 year changed from 6 months probation, remove stipend in lieu of insurance benefit, banking time in lieu of overtime, when can take vacation time before it is accrued (see SB vote in January). It was decided to prepare a draft with amendments for the next meeting. Question from Kathy to clarify reason for 1 year of probation: so the crew members and employer experience a year of weather and conditions. Confirmed the crew is hired full time with benefits.
- No bids for town hall sump pump discharge pipe were received.
- PACIF insurance settlement: Ann explained Vanessa had filed a claim for mold and other smaller concerns. Terri Crawford at PACIF responded. Mold is not eligible; but she confirmed the building is valued at \$521,126, contents \$25,000, not in the floodplain and deductible is \$1,000. We got a proposal from Cleanway for air testing and mold remediation. We paid for only the testing (\$225) and work by St. Jean to remove wall covering and debris (\$230) (both sent to Terri last week). Terri had sent Colonial Adjustment to do a site visit and report, rec'd. 10/20. The repair estimate is

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\$6,554.80. Terri confirmed we could receive the estimate less deductible in a couple of weeks. She said she is not an Underwriter, but if our premium went up it would likely be only a small amount, b/c the building is not in a floodplain, the damage had a natural cause, and was not caused by a person. The claim money would be the town's and we could decide what to spend it on. Ann will follow up if we don't receive a check soon.

- PACIF PROPERTY VALUES UPDATE- vote to change if so desired. Gallion Grader currently in at \$35,000; Loader shed currently in at \$10,000. Jim suggested raising to \$50,000 and \$15,000 respectively, and also raise the Clark property, currently at \$24,000. The building has 3 bays, an upstairs, 3 overhead door, a slab, wiring. Carol will follow up to get new premium proposals.
- BLUE CROSS/ BLUE SHIELD HEALTH INSURANCE. Increase of 13.8% for 2024. Jim and Ann reviewed many details of current BCBS Platinum plan against the most similar MVP plan. The difference in premiums and coverages is minimal (\$100 less per mo. with MVP). Employees both had BCBS in previous jobs, and have it now with Wheelock. Jim motioned, Ann seconded to stay with BCBS. So moved.

**Correspondence** – Ann noted that Caledonia County Sherrif rates are going up from \$39 to \$42/hr, yearslong contract only); Kingdom Gravel rates up 50cents/yd.

**Public comments** – Kathy asked who puts together the town report. Carol said the clerk usually does it and the Selectboard needs to sign the warranty in early January.

**Adjourn** – Jim motioned, Ann seconded to adjourn, at 7:17pm.

Signatures

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