

TOWN OF WHEELOCK
Minutes
JOINT MEETING OF SELECTBOARD, ROAD COMMISSIONER, ROAD CREW

AT WHEELOCK TOWN HALL

April 4, 2024, 1:30 – 2:30pm

Present: Selectboard: Jason Bora, Mike Richardson, Ann Lawless (chair). Roads: Sean Dernago, Luke Stevens. Absent: Glenn Cole. Guest: Logan Perron, VTrans District 7 Project Manager

At 1:33pm Ann called the meeting to order.

Added to agenda: Discussion of truck purchase

Logan not being present yet, the group began discussion of truck purchase. Sean stated our 2009 truck cannot be driven for various reasons; the burner, estimated at a \$13,000 fix. More significantly, it is in “limp mode” with safety lights and alerts about not going faster than a very low speed. In current condition it would not pass inspection. The cost to repair these new issues is unknown.

Discussion began regarding the proposals reviewed at the 4/2 Selectboard meeting. These include the Western Star Freightliner 114 SD Plus, a 6 wheeler (\$240,262) purchase agreement of 12/19/2023, that we can get out of; Western Star 47X ten wheeler quote of 3/27/2024 (\$267,548); and International Hx620 SBA ten wheeler automatic (\$265,264 – does not include warranty cost).

Sean stated a rep from ATG, for the Western Star purchase visited 4/3 and said the trade in value for our 2009 is nil.

Logan Perron arrived at 1:40pm for the discussion of VTrans resources.

He stated he will help us fill out the remaining paperwork from the VTrans mailing of February, Wheelock’s Annual Financial Plan. He collects this so the state can allocate funds to every town based on its mileage of the road classes, and the amount each town budgets for winter and summer roads. He will configure it using our adopted 2024 budget, putting us in the best position possible to receive an Emergency grant should we apply.

Certificate of Compliance: Wheelock has certified compliance annually since 2017. New codes and standards come out approx. every 5 years. There is talk of a culvert size increase. A need can be supported by a Hydrology study the state pays for, and if the work is done within the low flow season (July – Oct), we can self-verify. If outside the season, or if water is perennially present, a permit is required and the Army Corps of Engineers gets involved. Best to consult Logan.

Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP)

<https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/stormwater/permit-information-applications-fees/municipal-roads-program>: Logan brought a copy of the most recent MRGP newsletter (Dec 2023). The program is run by the Dept. of Environmental Conservation and has a new manager, Evelyn Boardman, and we can expect some changes. He explained the Road Erosion Inventory (REI), the map and its color standards. The purpose is to keep runoff out of waterways.

Hydrologically connected roads are those within 100' of an open water source. Towns are supposed to improve 15% of their segments that are out-of-compliance each year. He recommended doing the assessments and reports and photo uploads to the portal after the first "dry grading", end of May/early June, by which time many issues would have been fixed. The Grants in Aid program supports improvement efforts. There are training classes, some online, some in person.

Question: How do small towns manage the work of doing the REI reporting and photo uploads? Danville offers high school seniors the opportunity as a senior project. Another town offers a scholarship opportunity of \$500 to \$1,000 for a student doing this as a community service project.

Show Me the Money!

<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/highway/documents/ltf/Show%20Me%20the%20Money%20Guide%20-%20Jan%202023.pdf>: Logan brought a copy.

Weight Posting: A lot of towns don't bother. Can be a liability issue if there's damage it may be hard to recoup without a permit.

Question: Has Wheelock's request to withdraw from the Minister Hill Bridge engineering grant been approved? Logan will check. He suggested this may have been a bad idea. Generally if a grant is offered for engineering, the town is then in line to receive construction funds (recently up to \$200,000 from \$175,000). He encourages his 30 towns to apply, as it shows need to the legislators to keep this program funded.

Question: Planning/Budgeting for Grants: Ann stated this is difficult, as budgeting occurs in Nov Dec, one grant is due Dec, and the others in spring. Small towns have a challenge with planning ahead. Logan suggested starting a Reserve Fund for grant match. That way the money is there for the Selectboard to use if it plans the work in the early spring for these grant applications.

The Orange Book <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/sites/aot/files/operations/TheOrangeBook.pdf>:

Logan brought 2 copies. Look for a revision in late 2024. A design manual, it covers, signage, statutes, weight postings, temporary bridges, class 4 road rules, upgrades to class 3, bike-pedestrian opportunities.

Logan left at 3:04pm

Resume discussion of truck purchase: The Western Star 47X proposal is top of line, with bells & whistles we don't need (heated seats etc.). And we would have to change the plow.

discussing the International: available in 2-4 weeks, we have no trade-in info. They would have to assess it. We would have to get it to Jericho, by towing it, which could cost \$1,000. We are not locked into a trade in, we could consider selling it ourselves by setting a reserve and bidding it out. That may be our least risky option. Dealer repairs would be done in Jericho; everyone is shorthanded, which could be a contributing factor to our past poor service experience there. There was no cost spelled out for the warranty in the proposal. Sean called and he is expecting to receive it the next day.

Without sufficient information to make a decision on the proposals before the Selectboard, plus the fact that the purchase should be on a warned meeting agenda, another special Selectboard meeting was planned for Tues, April 9, 6pm.

Adjourned: 4:10pm

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Lawless

SELECTBOARD
