

Wallingford Selectboard

Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2023

Selectboard Members Present: Carolyn Behrendt, Bruce Duchesne, Justin Jankus, Kathy Luzader and Mark Tessier.

Others present: Sandi Switzer, Julie Sharon, Phil Baker, Anne Awad, Melissa Whitmore, Erica Coston and Ralph Nimtz.

Selectboard Chair Bruce Duchesne called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Agenda Amendments. Add by consensus the NEMRC Reappraisal Agreement.

Minutes. K. Luzader made a motion that was seconded by M. Tessier to approve the 07/17/23 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried (4-0). J. Jankus was not present yet.

K. Luzader made a motion that was seconded by M. Tessier to approve the 07/26/23 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried (3-0). C. Behrendt abstained as she was not at the meeting.

Pay Orders. K. Luzader made a motion that was seconded by M. Tessier to approve the 08/08/23 pay order total of \$76,969.32. Motion carried (4-0).

Road Commissioner's Report. Road Commissioner Phil Baker said the road crew was nearly finished with the Grants in Aid project on Sugar Hill Road. He said most of the roadside mowing was completed with areas on West Hill Road and Hartsboro Road left to do. He requested the Town expend \$13,000 from the gravel budget to add to the \$75,000 paving budget to pave a section of Maple Street in addition to the Sugar Hill Road intersection and part of Waldo Lane. By consensus, the Board agreed. Mr. Baker said Wilk would not be paving for at least six weeks. Town Administrator Sandi Switzer reminded Mr. Baker the Town could not pave Creek Road Bridge with funds from VTrans Structures program until the state executed a grant agreement.

The town administrator said Mr. Holden from 577 Dawson Hill Road wanted his driveway culvert replaced as it caused damage to the road and his property during the recent flood. Mr. Baker agreed to inspect it with the road foreman.

M. Tessier asked if the road crew had completed excavation for water installation at the ballfield. Mr. Baker said the Recreation Committee had not yet scheduled the work. B. Duchesne said the Conservation Commission requested clean soil from any of the road projects be brought to Stone Meadow for tree plantings in the fall.

Honorable Mentions. Wayne and Debra Kelly donated funds to the Summer Rec Program; Emergency Management Director Jim Bagnall for going above and beyond in

response to the flood event; Wallingford Thrift for administering a Vermont Community Foundation grant of \$10,000 to assist flood victims.

Public Comments. None.

Municipal Tax Rate. Town Clerk and Treasurer Julie Sharon provided an end of year summary of FY'23 with an anticipated surplus of \$78,221.47. The approved FY'24 budget with the carryover would require \$972,911.92 to be raised in taxes for a municipal tax rate of \$0.4157 (\$0.3939 last year).

Of note, the transfer station expenses were \$31,500 less than expected due to increased recycling and Highway spending was under budget by \$59,000. K. Luzader made a motion that was seconded by J. Jankus to set the municipal tax rate at \$0.4157. Motion carried (5-0).

Homestead Declaration Penalty. M. Tessier made a motion that was seconded by K. Luzader to assess a late penalty to property owners who did not file timely Homestead Declarations. Motion carried (5-0).

Town Hall Boiler Replacement Engineer Costs. Energy Committee member Ralph Nimitz provided three estimates for engineering services related to Town Hall boiler replacement. He suggested a number of possibilities ranging from switching from oil to propane or purchasing two smaller boilers. There were questions from the Board regarding the existing chimney, the property line, and historical structure restrictions for an exterior propane tank. M. Tessier noted the Town had already accepted Champlain Valley's oil bid for winter heating fuel so any changes would have to take place next year.

The matter was tabled until more information regarding the chimney and construction limitations on an historical structure could be determined.

Fireworks Ban Request. Erica Coston requested the Town consider a firework ban within the municipality. She said fireworks were harmful to the environment, animals, plants and contributed to pollution. She distributed documentation to support her concerns. J. Jankus asked if it was a big issue for the Town. Ms. Coston responded even small efforts contributed to the greater good. J. Jankus and M. Tessier questioned how to enforce a ban. Ms. Coston said a ban would at least decrease the number of firework displays among law abiding citizens. M. Tessier shared the permit requirements and checklist in order to be approved for a display. J. Jankus asked if she was aware of any Vermont community that had implemented a ban. Ms. Coston said she was not aware of any. She agreed to research the matter further.

Conservation Commission Mission Statement. Ralph Nimitz recommended the item be tabled as commissioners were refining the Mission Statement. Board members agreed by consensus to table this item.

ARPA Funds – Highland Water Supply. Anne Awad presented the Board with documentation related to her effort to obtain three bids as outlined in the municipal

Purchasing Policy for repairs to the Highland Water Supply. She said the ARPA Committee had awarded \$9,200 in funds for the project. However, she only obtained one estimate after an extensive effort. Ms. Awad said there was language in the Purchasing Policy allowing the Board to waive the three-bid requirement. By consensus, the Board agreed to waive that requirement.

State Mandated Reappraisal Notice. K. Luzader made a motion that was seconded by C. Behrendt authorizing B. Duchesne to sign a letter from the state Dept. of Taxes mandating reappraisal. Motion carried (5-0). B. Duchesne noted the Town was months ahead of the state and had already accepted NEMRC’s bid for reappraisal submitted last February.

NEMRC Reappraisal Agreement. K. Luzader made a motion that was seconded by C. Behrendt to sign the NEMRC Reappraisal Agreement with the total not to exceed \$133,800 and work to begin in July of 2024 and be completed in 2026. Motion carried (5-0).

Selectboard Concerns. None.

Other Business. B. Duchesne said Robert Soule wanted to be sure his new water line installation would coincide with sidewalk construction on School Street. It was noted the town administrator had advised Fire District #1 of this request.

The road commissioner said a VLCT representative had inspected the town garage for flood damage and would file a report/claim.

K. Luzader made a motion that was seconded by J. Jankus to adjourn at 7:44 p.m. Motion carried (5-0)

Submitted By: Sandi Switzer/Town Administrator

APPROVED THIS 7th Day of August, 2023 Wallingford Selectboard

Carolyn Behrendt _____

Bruce Duchesne _____

Justin Jankus _____

Kathy Luzader _____

Mark Tessier _____