

Wallingford Selectboard

Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2024

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

Others present: Sandi Switzer, Patricia Bowen, Sandra Hochberg, Eric Davenport, David Castonguay, George Ambrose, Wendy Savery, and Jeffrey Aas.

Selectboard Vice Chair Kathy Luzader called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Agenda Amendments. None.

Minutes. M. Tessier made a motion that was seconded by C. Behrendt to approve the 01/15/24 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried (4-0). B. Duchesne had not yet arrived.

M. Tessier made a motion that was seconded by C. Behrendt to approve the 01/22/24 Meeting Minutes. Motion carried (4-0).

Pay Orders. M. Tessier made a motion that was seconded by J. Jankus to approve the 02/06/24 pay order total of \$206,536.41. Motion carried (4-0).

Honorable Mentions. Bruce Duchesne for installing a new lock system at Town Hall; Wallingford Rotary and Mill River Interact Club for hosting a diaper drive in December to benefit the Town Hall food shelf.

Public Comments. None.

Road Commissioner's Report. Road Commissioner Phil Baker did not attend.

~ Revenue Augmentation Trust - B. Duchesne said Trustees of Public Funds withdrew \$163,891 to partially fund the purchase of a grader. He said the Selectboard voted at the January 2, 2024 meeting to apply \$160,000 from the Trust toward the grader. He recommended the \$3,891 balance be left in the General Fund to offset some of the unexpected Highway Department equipment repairs. By consensus, the Board agreed.

~ Town Road and Bridge Standards – By consensus, the Board approved with no changes the Town Road and Bridge Standards originally adopted in July 2019.

~ School Street Ending Point – By consensus, the Board agreed to follow the state E911 recommendation for School Street to end at the intersection of East Street (no home addresses would be impacted by this action).

School Consolidation Survey. Clarendon Selectboard member George Ambrose requested input from board members regarding the creation and distribution of a non-binding survey about school consolidation in the district. He said a number of Clarendon

residents commented recently about wanting relief from high education taxes. He said the school district's superintendent was in favor of consolidation discussions and Mill River School Board Chair Andrea Hawkins wanted to be kept apprised of any discussions. He said the \$21.3 million proposed education budget amounted to a cost of \$12,909 per student for the state's estimated 1,311 Mill River students (including what he characterized as phantom students). He said the actual number of students in seats was 707, which amounted to a cost of \$30,000 per student.

K. Luzader asked what role the Selectboard had in regard to the non-binding survey. Mr. Ambrose said the Board could appoint representatives to a committee to assist with questions on the survey and then distribute the survey during the November general elections. J. Jankus shared his concerns regarding students traveling long distances to school if one or more of the facilities were to be closed. Wallingford resident Jeffrey Aas said some schools like Tinmouth were costly to maintain with challenging maintenance needs for 60 youngsters. C. Behrendt responded all schools in the district faced facility maintenance challenges. Mr. Ambrose said school closure would require a unanimous vote of the school board and a majority vote of residents in the town where the school was located. K. Luzader asked what would be done with survey results. Mr. Ambrose said the school superintendent and school directors would decide the next action steps. He said he had yet to meet with Shrewsbury and Tinmouth municipal officials about the survey.

J. Jankus asked why Mr. Ambrose had approached the Selectboard before the School Board. Mr. Ambrose replied the superintendent indicated the first step was to go to the Town. M. Tessier said Wallingford board members had time to decide who to appoint to the survey committee while Mr. Ambrose was meeting with other towns. By consensus, the Board agreed to support the non-binding survey.

Town Hall Play Rehearsal Request. By consensus, the Board approved Wendy Savery's play rehearsal schedule at Town Hall on February 11, 15, 18, 22, 25 and 29 along with March 3 and 7 with performances March 8 and 9. Ms. Savery provided an insurance certificate with the Town named as additional insured.

Solar Grant Application for Town Buildings. Energy Committee member David Castonguay provided an overview of a Vermont Public Service Dept. sustainable energy grant for schools and municipal facilities as follows:

- The deadline for application is March 1.
- Minimum grant is \$25,000
- Maximum grant is \$250,000
- 20% of project cost copay by the municipality
- Must be completed by September 2025

He said Energy Committee member Jay White would investigate the town garage load capacity to support solar panels. He said energy generated would offset municipal utility costs. He estimated the project would cost about \$40,000 with the Town responsible for the 20 percent (\$8,000) match. He said the local share could be included in the FY'26

budget. After further discussion, the Board by consensus agreed to allow the Energy Committee to proceed with the application.

Appointment Recommendation for Interim MRUUSD Seat. Patricia Bowen introduced herself and indicated an interest in the interim vacant seat on the Mill River Unified Union School District Board. She said she was running for the remaining year of the three-year seat and would be willing to serve in the post until March elections. By consensus, the Board agreed to recommend Ms. Bowen's appointment to MRUUSD.

Recreation Committee Appointment. Sandra Hochberg introduced herself and indicated an interest in joining the Recreation Committee. She said she had the time and ability to serve. K. Luzader made a motion that was seconded by C. Behrendt to appoint Ms. Hochberg to the Recreation Committee for a one-year term. Motion carried (5-0).

Second Meeting in February. By consensus, the Board agreed to move the second meeting of the month to Tuesday, February 20, 2024 due to the President's Day holiday.

Planning Commission Resignation. K. Luzader made a motion that was seconded by J. Jankus to accept Lucy Thayer's resignation from the planning commission. Motion carried (5-0). B. Duchesne asked the town administrator to send Ms. Thayer a letter thanking her for volunteering on the municipal commission.

Selectboard Concerns. M. Tessier said he spoke to the road foreman about clearing snow in front of the library after storms.

B. Duchesne noted several motorists were violating the overnight parking ban on Wallingford roads that was in effect from November 15 thru March 31 from 11 pm to 7 am annually. He asked the town administrator to post a notice on Front Porch Forum.

Other Business. None.

M. Tessier made a motion that was seconded by K. Luzader to adjourn at 7:33 p.m. Motion carried (5-0)

Submitted By: Sandi Switzer/Town Administrator

APPROVED THIS 20th Day of February, 2024 Wallingford Selectboard

Carolyn Behrendt _____

Bruce Duchesne _____

Justin Jankus _____

Kathy Luzader _____

Mark Tessier _____