

Town of Woodbury Select Board

March 24, 2025

Draft Meeting Minutes

Select Board (WSB) Members: Lizzy Higgins; Diana Peduzzi; Chris Casey

Town Officials: Robin Durkee –Town Clerk; Lilly Baron–Town Treasurer; Skip Lindsay–Recovery Officer; John Reid -Auditor; Stephen Murphy-Town Moderator; John Gordon – Emergency Management Director

Town Employees: Alfred Larrabee–Road Commissioner; Michael Gray–WSB Assistant/Scribe

Members of the Public: Seville Murphy

Media: Jerome Lipani - Hardwick Community Television (Meeting can be viewed at hctv.us or Channel 1080) HCTV camera broke down shortly into the meeting. Remainder of meeting was recorded via ZOOM.

Chris called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M.

Adjustments to Agenda: Add NEK/CV CUD BEAD grant letter of support to VCCB (see acronym list) will be added during John Reid's time.

Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2025 WSB meeting minutes were approved.

Public Comment – John Gordon reported that he has prepared and will be submitting applications to the state's Hazard Mitigation program for FEMA buyouts of the Jake Shattuck property and the old firehouse in Woodbury village. The grant would pay the owners for the purchase of the properties, and would pay for demolition and site restoration, after which the properties must remain as "green space" (no building or paving).

Hazen Union Student Council request: with Seville Murphy – Hazen Union students will be engaged in a "DO DAY" on May 9th. DO DAY is a planned event where students go out into their communities to assist with projects that the community would like help with. Seville is requesting the WSB and Woodbury community offer projects that Hazen students could work on. Michael mentioned a project planned for Green Up day cleaning up flood debris in Woodbury village along the Kingsbury Branch as it runs into the wetland area south of the village.

Town Clerk's Report: Robin reminded Woodbury's dog owners that April 1st is when licenses are due. After April 1st, dogs can still be licensed but the price for a dog license will go up. So far only 57 dogs have been licensed. George Sawyer responded that he would like to be reappointed to the Woodbury Fund board, and so he was. Chris asks what positions still need to be filled. A Tree Warden, Health Officer, 2 members on the Planning Commission and a rep to the CV Solid Waste Management District are still needed.

Generator Maintenance Contract – At the last meeting the SB reviewed the proposal from Brook Field Services for maintenance on the generator at the school. Lizzy offered to call Paul Cerutti with some questions. Paul confirmed that the WVFD is still conducting monthly testing on the generator including checking fluids, etc. and will continue to do so until they are fully settled into the new firehouse, which will have its own generator. A motion was made to approve the once-yearly service. The motion was approved with Chris and Lizzy voting yes, and Diana voting no.

Town Treasurer's Report: For the previous two weeks – 03/11/2025 to 03/24/2025 - total cash received was \$430.60, from copies and dog licenses, an electronic transfer of \$90.00 for a state of Vermont recording fee and an electronic transfer of \$95.50 from traffic fines. Payroll came to \$8,759.63 and accounts payable totaled \$11,725.63 Transfers from the MM to checking totaled \$25,000.00. Lilly clarified the accounting of FEMA funds that was discussed at the March 10th WSB meeting. She now has the FEMA balance corrected and will work on changing the title for the budget line item 19 to designate the 2024 flood. The negative account item line of \$79,000 is for FEMA funds yet to come from the state to Woodbury for the 2023 flood damage repairs.

Skip shares that these funds will be sent after the TH23 and TH 24 bridge work has been completed and are funds the state owes Woodbury for their share of the reimbursement costs.

Lilly requested WSB support for taking online accounting courses through Coursera. There are four modules of courses Lilly would like to start with, anticipating about 80 hours of work. The course monthly subscription service is about \$40, otherwise there is no charge for the courses. Diana asks if the work will be done during work hours. Lilly replies that some work would be done at the town office and some work at home. Lilly anticipates about 4-6 hours above the 22 weekly scheduled town treasurer hours for the course work. She would like to take an additional 20 hour course focused exclusively on government accounting after the first set of general accounting courses. The WSB unanimously approved Lilly's request and approved re-imbursement for the Coursera subscription.

Road Commissioner Report: with Alfie Larrabee – Alfie is hoping the town may have missed a serious mud season this year...time will tell. The road crew has been doing some spot grading and raking in the bad spots. The shed for the salt truck is finished.

The time-worn struggle about bicycle warning signage came up again. RC Larrabee and SB members Peduzzi and Higgins have continuing concerns about the chosen wording "Bicycles (a figure) May Use Full Lane". Yes it's legal but they feel it could be misleading, possibly dangerous if it leads bicycle riders to feel safe taking up the whole lane, whatever they decide that is, since there are no lane markings on gravel roads. What is wanted, and we all agree, is a sign warning that visibility is obscured ahead and drivers of motor vehicles and bicycles should use caution. The plan for 14 signs at seven locations was first hatched as part of the Town Plan re-write several years ago. The WSB at the time approved the purchase of the signs for a total of less than \$1000 – not including the posts, anchors, and labor. The signs were not yet purchased or installed, and then there were two summers of flood damage that took priority of the road crew. The subject came up again and again, most recently receiving a positive (2-1) vote with the current select board, several months ago. The posts and anchors were approved and purchased in the summer of 2024. At the last SB meeting Alfie agreed to order the signs. He did so, and then cancelled the order when issues came up again among the WSB. When visiting Work Safe, where he orders signs, he noticed a large poster showing many signs available and came up with a plan for a 30-inch sign with a bike logo, then a separate small sign "Ahead". There was more conversation about why Diana and Lizzie believed the Planning Commission's sign was confusing and possibly misleading. Lizzie made a motion to rescind the prior approval and instead purchase 14 "bicycle" signs and 14 "Ahead" signs. The motion was seconded and passed with a 2-1 vote, with Chris voting to stay with the signs originally approved. Alfie will order the signs and, barring more flooding, will make time during the summer to locate and install the signs.

NEK/CV BEAD Grant: with John Reid – The NEK/CV CUD is requesting the WSB sign a letter of support to include with a BEAD grant application to the VCBB. The grant funds would provide access to 131 addresses in Woodbury along 7.1 miles of town highway. The WSB approved signing the letter of support.

Town Meeting Follow-Up: with John Reid and Stephen Murphy - John had offered to create a survey form to explore how voters feel about the Saturday town meetings. The change has not increased participation, and may have decreased participation in the school budget votes, which are still held on the first Tuesday in March. Diana pointed out that the change was made primarily to allow people to attend, who could not take time from a work day during the week. Families being out-of-town during spring vacation is unfortunate but does not outweigh the original reason for moving the date. Diana pointed out there has been no ground swell of complaint about town meeting being held on Saturday and feels the survey is premature, suggesting that town meeting remain on Saturday at least for a couple more years. The WSB decided not to do the survey this year.

Recovery Officer's Report: with Skip Lindsay – Skip has a series of questions for Nate Sicard, the engineer for the bridge replacements, regarding the upcoming TH23 and TH24 bridge replacement work. Who will be the project manager and will there be a project plan with a scope of work, milestones, payment schedules and project completion qualifications. FEMA will have its own scope of work for the bridge replacement projects and both FEMA and the state will want to sign off on the project's' completion. Diana and Alfie both remember that Nate had said he would be the project manager. Alfie believes that the contractors will be doing the work in a fairly short time frame – maybe two weeks - so there would probably be no need for partial payments. Chris recommended that Nate be invited to attend a future WSB meeting to discuss these questions. Skip will email to Nate with his questions and report back.

Skip has researched the types of projects that would be eligible as mitigation for use of any excess FEMA funding after the bridge projects are completed. Road projects of course, and possibly flood-proofing for the town office and the town hall. Chris asks if hiring a consultant could be considered a part of the mitigation expenses and Skip believes that it could. All agree the first thing to do is designate and prioritize possible projects. Forming of a committee to come up with a list of suggestions was discussed at the last meeting. Alfie, Skip and Michael would be the prime candidates most familiar with the roads and problem spots in town. Discussion then moves to whether the excess FEMA funds could be used toward the town matches for the EWPP and pending BRIC grants. So far the response from FEMA has been that the funds can't be used as match for other federal funds. The town has not budgeted any match for the proposed Cabot Road bank reinforcement project. If federal funding is withdrawn for the EWPP projects, maybe the excess FEMA funds could be used for the project itself. USDA might do the design work at no cost and the town would not be obligated to complete the project under that program.

VTrans Structures Grant: with Michael Gray – Michael and Alfie will be meeting with VTrans District 6 reps on Thursday, March 27th, to go over the VTrans Structures grant application for the Valley Lake Road culvert replacement. The WSB signed two forms required by Vtrans - one certifies that the town will comply with the state's bridge and roads standards and with the required inventory of town roads. The other is confirms that the town will be funding at or above a threshold of \$300 per mile for maintenance of its town roads, with indications also provided of winter road maintenance and other seasonal expenses for the rest of the year, including proposed construction projects designated for FY 26. Included on this form are the estimated amounts Woodbury will receive for its Class 2 and 3 roads in FY 26.

Select Board Emails, Meeting Schedule and Structure: Chris suggested that board members consider setting up email addresses specifically for town business, as they are all currently using personal emails. Skip Marchesani will help with that. Chris also continued the discussion from the last WSB meeting about changing the format of select board meetings in the future. He would like the first meeting of each month- on the second Monday – to be structured to take in the various reports and other town business concerns that residents may have and the second monthly WSB meeting –on the fourth Monday - to be more of a work meeting for the WSB, with a lighter scheduled agenda and more time devoted to tasks the select board needs to address. Both meetings would be duly warned and open public meetings. The first meeting would be held in the community room at the library; the second at the town office. The WSB agrees to try out this change, starting in April.

Updates and Other Business: Bills were reviewed and approved after the meeting adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 P.M.

Diana Peduzzi _____ Chris Casey _____

Lizzy Higgins _____ Date Approved _____

Guide to acronyms: **ACO** - Animal Control Officer; **AP** – Accounts Payable; **BEAD** – Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment; **BRIC** – Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities; **CR** – Cash Receipts; **CRC** –Consolidated Resource Center; **CUD** – Communication Union District; **CVRPC** – Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission; **CVSWD** – Central Vermont Solid Waste District; **DHC** – Department of Health; **EC** – Ethics Commission; **EMD** – Emergency Management Director; **EMS** – Emergency Medical Service; **ET** – Electronic Transfer; **EWPP** – Emergency Watershed Protection Program; **FIRM** – Federal Insurance Rate Map; **FPF** – Front Porch Forum; **FY** – Fiscal Year; **GIA** – Grants in Aid; **HED** – Hardwick Electric Department; **HERF** – Highway Equipment Replacement Fund; **HMP** – Hazard Mitigation Plan; **HPD** – Hardwick Police Department; **H&H** – Hydrological & Hydraulic; **LEMP** – Local Emergency Management Plan; **LHMP** – Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; **MMA** – Money Market Account; **MRGP** – Municipal Roads General Permit; **MOU** – Memorandum of Understanding; **MTSC** – Mountain Tamers Snowmobile Club; **MVUESD** – Mountain View Union Elementary School District; **NEK/CV** – NorthEast Kingdom/ Central Vermont CUD; **NEMRC** – New England Municipal Resource Center; **NEWT** – Northeast Wilderness Trust; **NRCS** – Natural Resources Conservation Service; **OSSU** – Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union; **PDMG** – Program Delivery Manager; **PR** – Payroll; **RBT** – RB Technologies; **RFP** – Request for Proposal; **SS** – Seacoast Securities; **TAC** – Transportation Advisory Committee; **TC** – Town Clerk; **TH** – Town Highway; **THO** – Town Health Officer; **TTr** – Town Treasurer; **USDA** – United States Department of Agriculture; **VCBB** – Vermont Community Broadband Board; **VEM** – Vermont Emergency Management; **VTRANS** – Vermont Agency of Transportation; **WHRT** – Woodbury-Hardwick Rail Trail; **WSB** – Woodbury Select Board; **WVFD** – Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department; **ZBA** – Zoning Board of Adjustment;