

**TOWN OF WILLISTON
SELECTBOARD
MINUTES OF MEETING
November 5, 2019**

DRAFT

MEMBERS PRESENT: Terry Macaig (Chair); Gordon St. Hilaire, Jeff Fehrs. (Joy Limoge and Ted Kenney were absent.)

ADMINISTRATION: Rick McGuire, Town Manager; Erik Wells, Assistant to the Town Manager; Shirley Lackey, Finance Director; Melina Scott, Conservation Planner; Bill Hinman, Assessor.

OTHERS PRESENT: Jay Labre, John Orlando, Sarah Carlson-McVally, Eric Goldmann, Joshua Parker, Jay Desautels, Diane Downer, Barbara Mieder, Karla Karstens, Karen Bisbee, Gretchen White, Evan Morrison, Miquel Reyes, Steve Perkins, Sam Graulty, Mark Simon, Laura & Stuart Meyer, Debbie Roderer, Alan Cote, Celia Cote, Fred Spencer, Vincent Westphal, Mike Wood, Jason Starr (Williston Observer), Scott Moody (Channel 17).

[Note: Minutes reflect order of the published agenda.]

1. Call to Order

Chair Terry Macaig called the meeting to order at 7 PM.

2. Minutes

October 15, 2019

MOTION by Jeff Fehrs, SECOND by Gordon St. Hilaire, to approve the minutes of October 15, 2019 with the addition of the amount of the transportation impact fee prior to the increase. VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

3. Public Comment – General Issues

There was comment on the parking at Mud Pond Country Park and support for keeping the trails open to mountain bikers. The work done to improve the trails by Fellowship of the Wheel was mentioned.

4. Health Insurance Plan Renewal

Erik Wells reported after research of various health insurance plans the recommendation is to go with the MVP Gold 3 HDHP plan for 2020. The plan is a 15% increase in cost over 2019.

MOTION by Jeff Fehrs, SECOND by Gordon St. Hilaire, to offer the MVP Healthcare Gold 3 HDHP Plan to eligible employees for calendar year 2020. VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

5. Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System Plan (VMERS)

Erik Wells said to end the disparity between non-union, certified, exempt employees in the Fire and Police retirement plans, the recommendation is to create a subgroup for leadership positions in public safety. The current plans offer better benefits to union employees resulting in a major disincentive for employees considered for promotions.

MOTION by Jeff Fehrs, SECOND by Gordon St. Hilaire, to adopt the resolution establishing a new employee subgroup in the Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System Group C as presented. VOTING; unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

6. Public Hearing: Charter Amendments

The public hearing on the proposed charter amendments was opened at 7:30 PM and the warning was read. Erik Wells gave an overview of the charter changes pertaining to changes to the charter by the town, current practices by the library board of trustees being reflective of policy, and allowing mediation rather than requiring binding arbitration if at impasse with negotiations.

COMMENTS

Chair of the library board of trustees, Steve Perkins, said the board supports the charter change related to the hiring of a Library Director and but would like to retain the language stating the Trustees are responsible for managing the library.

There were no further comments.

MOTION by Jeff Fehrs, SECOND by Gordon St. Hilaire, to close the public hearing on the amendments to the charter. VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

The public hearing was closed at 7:38 PM.

7. Proposed Charter Changes

The Selectboard discussed the library as a separate entity or a town department, and the library board of trustees setting policy for the library to be carried out by the Library Director. Staff, the Selectboard, and the library board of trustees will clarify the definition of “manage” prior to the second public hearing on the charter changes.

8. Errors & Omissions 2019

Assessor, Bill Hinman, reviewed the corrections to the 2019 grand list, and noted Williston had a \$40 million increase in the grand list.

MOTION by Jeff Fehrs, SECOND by Gordon St. Hilaire, to approve the corrections to the 2019 grand list as proposed by the listers. VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

9. Management Plan: Sucker Brook Hollow Country Park

MOTION by Jeff Fehrs, SECOND by Gordon St. Hilaire, to approve the update to the management plan for Sucker Brook Hollow Country Park. VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

10. Mud Pond Parking Report

Conservation Planner, Melinda Scott, outlined three options available to address the parking at Mud Pond Country Park: build additional parking (not feasible), do not allow mountain biking in the park (not recommended), or maintain current management practices of monitoring usage and parking (recommended). The Chair of the Conservation Commission echoed the recommendation to continue current management practices at the park.

COMMENTS

Mark Simon voiced his complaint of the loss of peace and quiet at his residence on Mud Pond Road and the negative impact on his life due to the constant human activity at the park.

There were numerous comments in support of biking on the trails and that there are other users of the park in addition to mountain bikers. The many hours of work done on the trails by Fellowship of the Wheel was cited.

There was discussion of moving the parking down the road away from the front of Mr. Simon's house or off site, posting clear signage, and having Fellowship of the Wheel spread the word to members to minimize noise as much as possible when at the park. The Selectboard urged continuing to explore ways to minimize impact on Mud Pond Road residents.

11. Assistant Manager Position

Rick McGuire explained the Assistant to the Manager position was designed as an entry level position and as the employee gained experience advancement would be offered in order to retain the employee for a longer period. The recommendation is to create an Assistant Manager position with duties that include supervising the departments of Planning, Library, and Parks & Rec. IT duties will continue as well. The Assistant to the Manager position will be vacant until needed.

MOTION by Jeff Fehrs, SECOND by Gordon St. Hilaire, to create the exempt position of Assistant Town Manager. VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

12. Town Manager's Report

In addition to the written Manager's Report, Rick McGuire noted:

- The financial report shows ambulance revenue and Police and Fire under budget, but it is early in the fiscal year so this could change. [The Selectboard had questions on the increase for RETN (fees have increased and expense is for Channel 17 not RETN) and anticipated revenue from Verizon (it is not certain when the cellular antenna will be installed by Verizon).]

- The town currently is involved in four legal cases.
- Quarterly Report (July, August, September) is available.
- Selectboard retreat is November 12, 2019.
- Staff is planning to purchase new computers with up-to-date security protection. There is money in the budget and capital fund to cover the cost (\$14,000).
- Ethan Allen Institute Report named Williston as the highest ranked community for strong financial status out of 30 communities that were ranked.
- A memo on the recent ICMA conference in Nashville, TN was provided in the meeting packet.
- The recent storm event was major (3 inches of rain in 12 hours) and caused damage to private property and roads. There were washouts and road closures. The Marshall Ave. bridge will remain closed for the coming months or years until a temporary or permanent replacement can be put in place.
- Town Hall and the Old Brick Church slate roof and chimneys need work. There is money in the budget and the capital fund to cover the cost (\$23,000).

13. Other Business

Catering Permit

MOTION by Jeff Fehrs, SECOND by Gordon St. Hilaire, to approve a catering permit for Monkey House for an event on November 20, 2019 at 400 Cornerstone Drive (O'Brien Institute) from 5 PM to 8 PM. VOTING: unanimous (3-0); motion carried.

14. Adjournment

With no further business and without objection the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 PM.

RScty by tape: MERiordan