

**Town of Wheelock**  
**Special Select Board Minutes**  
Draft for distribution - Tuesday, May 19, 2022, 6pm  
In person at Town Hall and via Zoom

**Present:** Ann Lawless (chair), Jim Blackbird

Several guests are present including Enid Ellis, Bobbi Jo Norcross, Richard Norcross, Russell Poulin, Galen Smith. Via Zoom: Vanessa Seguin (Town Clerk), Carol Rossi – joined in person mid-meeting.

6:03 pm: Select Board called the meeting to order.

**Changes or additions to the agenda:** Loader loan funding

**Business:**

1. Executive Session according to [1 V.S.A. § 313 \(a\) \(1.\) \(A.\)](#): 6:05 pm. Motion by AL, second by JB, to enter Executive Session to discuss a matter that could be harmful to an entity should it be in open session. SB goes into executive session, returns 6:23 pm. AL reports that no action was taken.
2. Garage repair bids: 1 bid from Northern Ridgeline Builders was submitted: new siding - \$30,920; inside wall insulation, attic \$8,930; 4x6 bathroom, includes framing, ceiling, 1/2 inch drywall inside painted, 7/16 OSB outside, 1x4 trim around door and baseboard, 3'x6'8" door, toilet, exhaust fan, sink, cutting floor for plumbing and on-demand hot water tank - \$10,185. JB notes a price will need to be added for septic tank and alarm; later estimated at \$1,500. Total repair = \$51,535. JB makes a motion to accept Northern Ridgeline builder's estimate for the town garage. AL seconds. Voted unanimously. VS asks for clarification as to where the money for the garage repair was coming from. JB makes a motion to take the money from the ARPA funds, as use of the greater portion of the garage reserve fund would require a special town meeting. AL seconds motion so there can be discussion. VS reads the related article: 2021 the voters appropriate \$16,500 to be added to the existing \$83,588 in the town garage reserve fund to be used for addressing the needs for a garage; original discussion when the reserve fund was established it was regarding building a new garage. Without having a special town meeting to change the use, the money in the garage reserve fund can't be used for this project, except for that money set for repairs for existing garage repairs; \$24,000 minus roof repair \$13,850, leaving an available balance of \$10,150. Special town meeting shall not to be posted less than 30 days and no more than 40 days. Richard Norcross asks how long the bid is good for; JB states there is not an expiration stated on the bid. VS states if the SB gets the warning by 5/23, she will post 5/24. 'Shall the voters authorize the use of all the funds in the town garage reserve fund to be used be spent on the repairs of the current garage estimated at \$51,535.' JB asks what the plan should be if the contractor wants to start in 2 weeks. Enid suggests that the available money in the reserve fund could be used for a deposit; by the time the remainder is due the special town meeting should have determined where the remaining money will be coming from, ARPA funds versus reserve funds. JB withdraws his motion to use ARPA money. JB makes a motion to use the money available to start the project, and to have a special town meeting. AL seconds. Voted unanimously.

3. Cemetery fees for cremains: John Perkins was approached by someone who wanted to bury three sets of cremains. Current policy states fee for one burial is \$50. JB makes a motion to accept the cost of \$50 apiece for cremains. AL seconds. Voted unanimously.
4. 8th Grade Matching Money Request (Keniston Dane fund). JB makes a motion to match the funds. AL seconds. Voted unanimously.
5. Adopt fraud prevention policy presented by treasurer. AL makes a motion to accept it as presented. JB seconds. Voted unanimously.
6. Acknowledge 3 memos from Carol Rossi. JB makes a motion.
7. Town Hall ADA project. With all due respect, AL feels the project has gone beyond going back to the Black River design proposal, the town really needs to move forward; at several meetings voters simply want the SB to focus on accessibility issues, to satisfy the requirements of the DOJ. In the meeting packet there was much information including drawings of the proposed lift. A phone line will be needed. Also, the lift will sit on top of the concrete floor, requiring a 3-inch ramp, adding to the used floor space. Carol asks we add an article to the warning of the special town meeting related to the town hall project. AL spoke with Bob Gallup, a retired architect who is willing to help with drawings of the project. He estimated the cost would be less than the usual \$1400 because of all that has already been drawn up. She would like to make sure the plans are clear for the lift, bathroom and possibly a small kitchenette. JB states there is no room or need for a kitchenette of any size. VS agrees she doesn't require a kitchen, just a shelf for a coffee pot and a small fridge. Carol asks why the proposal can't be drawn up and brought to the special town meeting, she fears the proposed plan will reduce the space making it impossible to hold town meeting in the town hall. Richard states the proposed lift project will only remove floor space of the equivalent of seven chairs in the corner nearest the stage and stairs. Bobbie Jo asks how much time the DOJ is allowing progress on the project. AL states last contact there was discussion about program accessibility and construction accessibility. Program accessibility requirements have been met with the addition of the upstairs workstation, the porta-toilet, adding staymat to parking area nearest the ramp area. They also wanted to hear progress on the construction accessibility in three months from their last letter; a letter has been drafted. Enid thinks the construction documents weren't required until August. AL spoke with Elizabeth Peebles from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation; the division is only required to review projects that use state grants, federal money or require act 250 permits; this project has none of those. ARPA money is washed of its federal designation at this point. Elizabeth feels it would be a good idea to hire an architect. The door will be considered new, requiring specs. The stage needs to be made accessible; a third stop of the lift could be a solution to this requirement. Each step of the process will need to be permitted and inspected. AL says project should be put out to bid, it is the town's policy and the way to get the best price. Bobbie reads policy exceptions; sole sources purchases if the select board determines that there is only one possible source for the purposed purchase it may waive the bid process and authorize a purchase from the sole source. Enid wonders how one can determine sole source if it isn't put out to bid; are there others who install lifts in the area? Richard does not feel it is good business practice to use the information provided by the contractors to create a bid request. AL states she has discussed this with the contractors and the procedural requirements the SB must meet.

AL makes a motion we put out to bid a simple drawing for a lift that goes between the basement, the main floor, and the stage. And, for a handicap accessible washroom in the basement where the kitchen is presently, and specifications for an ADA compliant door for the ramp. And we put this bid out as quickly as possible. VS will post and publish as soon as she gets the information. JB seconds. Voted unanimously. Bids needs to be submitted by June 7<sup>th</sup>, before next SB meeting. Bobbie Jo asks if Fire Marshall and the historical society (meaning Division for Historic Preservation) need to come first. The historical society needs pictures and drawings, they may come take a look. SB will reach out to notify both as the project moves forward. AL makes a motion to apply for the accessibility grant. JB seconds. Voted unanimously. Carol joins in-person (8:03p-8:05m) she is disturbed about what she has heard at this meeting. She notes that the SB acknowledged her notes and memos, but she asks in the minutes that it be recorded that one of the things she spoke about was a misunderstanding of the vote on town meeting day. 55 people voted yes for our garage; 55 people voted yes for article 1 and 56 for article 2. There were 112 positive votes to move forward. There were only 33 negative votes. When you considered that the people who voted yes for article 1 voted no for article 2 that is not a no vote against the project it's a no vote to show their preference. 110 people in this community wanted to move forward, 33 said no. What I see here tonight is the SB going against the will of the people. She asks the SB to put this proposal to the people at the special town meeting.

GRANTS: AL also reported she spoke with Rebecca Schrader, USDA Rural Development, Community Facilities, regarding an opportunity for grant money specifically for the REAP Zone, of which the NEK is one. Ann had researched an application for the April deadline but did not proceed following the votes at town meeting. Karen Geraghty from NCIC has also suggested we apply for the VCDP access modification grant available in the fall; the timing would be good for this project. The grant could pay up to \$100,000, leaving the ARPA funds for other much needed projects such as painting, fixing the leaks in basement floor, window repairs, etc. which would not be eligible for this grant.

8. Approve and letter to Dept. of Justice. Enid is concerned regarding the wording in the letter stating the ARPA committee is “strongly” in favor, they were not strongly in favor. JB makes a motion to have AL finalize and send the letter to the DOJ. AL seconds. Voted unanimously.
9. Loader loan: Passumpsic Bank offers 1% lower interest rate than Community National Bank. Bobbi Jo asks if it might be better to keep the old loader, rather than trade it in, and have it stay at the gravel pit to save wear and tear to the new loader. JB replied there are plans in discussion to build a simple pole shed rescind at the gravel pit to protect the new loader. VS confirms the loan papers at Community National have not been signed for the loader, yet. JB makes a motion to rescind the vote of 5/3 for the loader loan. AL seconds. Voted unanimously. JB makes a motion to accept the interest rate from Passumpsic Bank at 2.90% for a four-year loan. AL seconds. Voted unanimously.

### **Adjourn:**

8:32pm JB makes a motion to adjourn. AL seconds. Voted unanimously.

Signatures:

---

---

---