

TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN

WILLIAMSTOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2025 – PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

PRESENT: LARRY HEBERT, CLAYTON WOODWORTH, COTE GRIGGS, SCOTT MCCARTHY, TYLER MITCHELL

CALL TO ORDER: LARRY HEBERT, CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 7:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SET THE AGENDA: Clayton made motion to set the agenda with amendments – adding discussing financial audit and camper located at town garage – might be lived in, Tyler seconded. So moved.

REVIEW OF OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT: None

SELECTBOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS: Tyler Mitchell received an email from Danielle Moffett (citizen) at approx. 6:20 p.m. on 11/10/2025 RE: arrest of Jacqueline Higgins: made formal request that the Selectboard schedule a full audit of Williamstown's financial records covering the entirety of tenure, any Selectboard members who have personal relationships recuse themselves from any investigative process. Stated that she and her husband had reviewed recent town reports and previously posed questions at Town Meetings and felt that they didn't receive satisfactory answers to questions regarding funds. She would like to see more transparency from the town in regard to comprehensive financial oversight practices going forward. additional concern: Orange County Sheriff – currently spending 90k, might be increased to 110K, would like to know if this is justified going forward due to Sheriffs own violations. She also brought up about 3 years ago the Inn on Main St was sold and demolished – other investors unable to submit bids due to limited time frame. Is the current owner subject to fines or penalties for failure to meet conditions of the purchase?

Discussion: Inn: whoever purchased 1 year to start reconstruction or 6 months to demo, which was demoed within 30 days.

PUBLIC COMMENT(S): Megan Keyes on behalf of the Williamstown Rec Board made an announcement that there would be a Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on Saturday, December 6, 2025, at 4:00 p.m. There will be Christmas Carols, cookies and hot chocolate for people to enjoy.

COMMISSIONS / COMMITTEES / TRUSTEES / EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORTS / OTHER BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

APPROVE WARRANTS: SB22171: Tyler Mitchell recused himself due to a Fire Dept Item. Clayton made motion to approve, Cote seconded. So moved. SB22172: Larry Hebert recused himself due to his company. Scott made motion to approve, Tyler Seconded. So moved.

PAYROLL WARRANTS: 10/19/2025: Cote Griggs recused himself due to being on warrant. 11/02/2025: Tyler Mitchell recused himself due to being on warrant. Scott made motion to approve both warrants, Clayton Seconded. So moved.

APPROVE SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES: Clayton made motion to approve both the minutes of the 10/13/2025 meeting and the 11/05/2025 meeting minutes, Scott seconded. Discussion was had over the meeting minutes of 10/13/2025: Tyler found multiple typos and questioned the accuracy of the notation of David Dansforth's report regarding dispersed new vehicle for transporting non-emergency patients, wanted to know if it was correct. It was decided to accept the minutes as written. So moved.

TOWN MANAGERS REPORT: Larry Hebert reported that there wouldn't be a Town Managers Report at this time due to recent events; however, wanted to report on what was/had been happening: received a Letter of Resignation from the former Town Manager as of Saturday, November 8, 2025. Since we received the letter, the Town can move forward to find a replacement. The Town Managers role is under contract, which is separate from the Town Personnel Policy – different guidelines are in place when a contract is involved. It was beneficial for the Town that a Resignation Letter was received because it makes it easier, quicker, and cleaner for the town to move forward. The Town sought out the Vermont Leagues City and Town and has been working with the attorney they provided to us to make

sure the town is doing the correct procedure to get a Resignation Letter and protocol to replace the position. The Selectboard has discussed issues that are still needing to be resolved: outstanding FEMA issues, legal issues, ARPA fund issues; a new Town Manager coming in without knowledge would find hard to pick up and go without any input or knowing resources – the former Town Manager has agreed to work remotely with the replacement until December 31, 2025 and the former Town Manager will be compensated until that time. Scott sat in with a phone call/zoom meeting with the lawyer from Burlington who stated that best possible outcome for the town was to receive the Resignation Letter because it was in the best interest of the town.

Cynthia Gregoire: in the November 5th minutes it mentioned that December 19, 2025, would be the last day; now it is December 31, 2025, is the extension so that a chance to clean up a mess when there are visual examples of outstanding issues? why is the time frame being extended?

Answer: Immediately following the Town Managers' arrest: locks were changed, and all access to computers were removed. The next morning a staff meeting was held. A discussion on whether it would've been possible that funds could've been taken from the town. Back in 2009 there was a similar situation where things didn't look right, the Town at that time went to the State Auditors of Accounts with the information at hand who looked at what we had and recommended that procedures be implemented – which are still in place today. One example was the Horace used to do – provided the selectboard a monthly report; unfortunately, around COVID-19 it fell through the cracks. We will talk with Jenn and May to get that restarted at the December 2025 meeting. The Town is audited on an annual basis. The only access to funds that the Town Manager would have had would have been to collection of delinquent water/sewer and tax bills. These funds would have been turned directly over to the Treasurer for posting to accounts. If payments were made and not posted it would've been caught; and at this time, we are not seeing any discrepancies. A point was made that audits cost money. Citing in 2009 a 6% spot check audit was done for about \$6K and nothing was found; but it was only 6%. A full-blown forensic audit at that time was estimated at \$100K. E Montpelier had a similar situation, and they spent the money and found nothing. At that at time Williamstown chose to forgo the audit; follow the recommendations pertaining to annual account audits and change protocols. It was guesstimated with inflation a forensic audit would cost towards \$200K today and because we have protective protocols in place it might be a waste of the town's money. The Selectboard is not opposed to going in that direction if the town wants it, just know that we do have current procedures and the Town Manager was here for roughly 14.5 years. It was mentioned that problems usually arise when there are 3500 or less people, there are no safeguards in place, and one person has access to all parts.

Julie Henderson asked the Town Treasurer, Jennifer Allard if Jackie asked her to put money somewhere else, in any different accounts; to which Jenn replied: no.

Further in-depth discussion was had regarding the topic of the cost of a more in-depth audit versus a full forensic audit and when the earliest a vote could be held for the Town to vote in either direction with more information. Barbara Graham said that if the vote was held at Town Meeting Day there would be no extra cost to the Town; otherwise, there could be a cost of about \$500.00, which would include: paying coverage of the voting day, cost of ballots and counting ballots.

Horace let the Selectboard know that he'd be interested in assisting the Town to make sure the accounting reports to the Selectboard were done correctly.

Tyler made a motion that The Town of Williamstown does a third-party forensic financial audit from the time Jackie Higgins was hired as Town Manager to December 31, 2025. Scott seconded. So moved.

NEW BUSINESS: It was brought to Tyler's attention that there was a camper down at the Town Garage and it appeared that it might be lived in. Barbara Graham said that the camper wasn't being lived in. It had been recently purchased and had sustained a flat tire while in transit and was only there until a new tire could be changed out. It was decided that they would talk to the Road Foreman and have it removed within 14 days. No vote was needed.

Barre Town sent an Abutter Notification for a public hearing meeting on 11/12/2025. Research was done on the location, and it was decided that no action needed to take place as it wasn't in town and it was a letter of formality.

Tiffani Zydonyk sent an email to the Town Manager's attention requesting that the speeding on Hebert Rd be addressed. Discussion revolved around the current speed in Tiffany's area, which is within the school limits and is currently 25 mph. Currently, there are no speed bumps; it wouldn't make sense to install them at this time due to plowing season around the corner, however, the Selectboard will investigate. It was further discussed that there is a speeding issue in the area; there is adequate sign coverage and warnings of speed zone changes and that it was agreed that an Orange County Sheriff be present in the area and issue tickets if need be. Several people gave permission to utilize their driveways if needed to be present in the area.

Julie Henderson asked if we could get the Flagpole in front of the Town Hall replaced. She felt that it's disrespectful to not be able to maintain proper flag protocol due to the outdated construction of the flagpole.

OLD BUSINESS: It was discussed that the turnabout near Pike Industries needs to be cleaned up. Due to the location of it being on State highway we would need to have them assist.

AROUND THE TABLE: A formal announcement that the Town Offices would be closed for Veteran's Day on Tuesday, November 11, 2025.

Scott made a motion at 8:46 p.m. that a 10-minute recess be taken to go into Executive Session; Clayton Seconded. So moved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – 1 V.S.A. SECTION 313 – Discussion revolved around the need to accept the Letter of Resignation from the former Town Manager and the steps needed to be taken to move forward with the recruitment process. The following votes / motions were made:

1): Tyler made a motion to accept the Resignation Letter from Jacqueline Higgins with the stipulation to pay her until December 31, 2025. Scott Seconded. So moved.

2): Scott made a motion to authorize the Selectboard to pursue upgrades to the Personnel Policy and to the Town Managers Contract. Clayton Seconded. So Moved.

3): Cote made a motion to warn around town, the newspaper, and internet about the RFP for Town Manager per our Town Policy. Tyler seconded the motion. So Moved.

ADJOURN: Scott made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 p.m., Clayton seconded the motion. So moved.

Respectfully Submitted,

May Edson



LARRY HEBERT



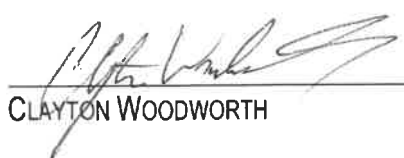
COTE GRIGGS



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