

TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN

WILLIAMSTOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2026 – PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

FINAL

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

ALSO PRESENT: BARBARA GRAHAM, RODEY GRAHAM, LAURA CARTER, HELEN DUKE, HORACE DUKE JR., RICH TURNER, SHERRY RUSSELL, STEPHEN HARDAKER, AMY GILBERT, JEN GILBERT

CALL TO ORDER: RYAN LOCKWOOD, CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 7:00 P.M.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SELECTBOARD ORGANIZATIONAL VOTE (CHAIR & VICE CHAIR): Clayton made the motion to nominate Larry Hebert as the Chair; Scott seconded; so, moved. Larry Hebert thanked everyone for their support and made the announcement that this was his final year. He stated that between serving on the Regional Planning Commission and the Select Board he had dedicated 39 years and would like to focus on retirement. He felt that the Selectboard needed a strong Vice Chair to be ready to make the transition when he steps down. Clayton made the motion to nominate Scott McCarthy as Vice Chair; Cote seconded; so, moved.

SET THE AGENDA: Tyler made a motion to set the agenda with the amendment of adding the 2/9/2026 Selectboard meeting minutes and discussing the two turnarounds on Route 14 – near Pikes and the bottom of Chelsea Rd under Old Business, as well as the removal of the Highway Truck Refurbishment w/ David Wilder and Executive Session; Clayton, seconded; so, moved.

REVIEW OF OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

SELECTBOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT(S): Helen Duke requested that the microphones that the town used to have be found so that she and others could hear soft spoken commentary more clearly. It was discussed that the karaoke machine that had microphones be found and assessed to make sure that would work. Cote stated that he would bring equipment, if needed.

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

APPROVE WARRANTS: Tyler recused himself due to a Fire Department item on SB22182; Clayton made motion to approve, Cote seconded; so, moved.

PAYROLL WARRANTS: Both Larry and Clayton had to recuse themselves from warrant 03/08/26. Cote made motion to approve, Tyler seconded; so, moved.

APPROVE SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES: Scott made motion to approve the minutes of the previous two meetings dated: 2/9/2026 and 2/23/2026, Clayton seconded; so, moved.

TOWN MANAGERS' REPORT: Ryan reported that he and Jenn had successfully navigated the audit being performed by the Vermont Department of Public Safety; specifically targeting the towns handling of FEMA funds that were awarded from both flooding events of 2023 and 2024. The town received a letter of acceptance from the Department of Public Safety contingent on the adoption of four (4) policies that were introduced in February and recommended that they be approved by the Select Board no later than the April meeting in case there was any follow-up.

On the topic of Highway Garage: Ryan had been looking at funding from the USDA Rural Development Grant, however research concluded that the town's median household income being \$70K as of 2024 exceeds the limit of qualification. He has been continuing his research and is hopeful about the Northern Borders Commissions Timber for Transit Program. This has a 50/50 match on the provided

we alter the proposed design of the project to include more domestic wood products. He contacted Black River Design and was quoted around \$6K for a design remodification with wood products as primary material resource. He met with a team which included an engineer who said that they could create a design that would not require wooden support beams within the space of the truck bays to reduce the risk of accidental exposure due to daily truck operation.

Larry suggested that Ryan work with the committee that was in place from the inception. He also asked to see if when a redesign is done that two designs are presented: one with support columns and one with 20 ft steel beams to save money on the roofing system. It was discussed that a benefit of the Timber for Transit Program is that they have funded other Highway Garages in Vermont. In the preapplication meeting Ryan had with them it was disclosed that they have a goal of working within each of the Vermont counties in and at this time Orange County has not been awarded a grant.

Ryan has also become aware that all the senators have a congressional appropriations program which opened at the beginning of March. Ryan applied for Senator Welches program; however, it is quite competitive as it includes monies being distributed throughout the entire country. He can apply to all of them and could stack multiple grants to pay for the Garage project and will continue to apply for all the monies that are available to us to keep our costs down. Ryan disclosed that at this time we have \$89K in a building fund for this project alone. As part of the discussion, it was decided that Ryan go through with having Black River Design complete the redesign since it would take about a month to complete.

On the topic of the Salt Shed Expansion, Ryan reported that the VTrans grant program application window does not open until November and is awarded the following Spring which means that we will have to wait until 2027 to get that done. He will look for other programs as well; however, VTrans is a sure thing. It has an environmental clause that requires that salt is not stored on the ground where it can leach into the groundwater. Since we are creating a shed that will cover that prerequisite. Larry mentioned that he had the proposed expansion measurements; he would get those to Ryan so that the bidding process could be started to move forward.

Due to the salt shortages that both the town and the state have been dealing with, Ryan talked with Dave and has been reading up on the situation and researching viable solutions. Cote mentioned that he read an article that the folks in Richmond have been using calcium magnesium. Ryan said he and Dave met with a company called Innovative who services all New England and currently works with many of our neighboring towns producing a magnesium chloride solution that requires calibration. The premise is that the solution is applied prior to a storm since it works with the precipitation as it accumulates to hinder bonding to lessen the creation of ice. This solution reduces salt use by at least 30%; however, it does require constant calibration of the spray compressor unit head that attaches to the truck and the solution ratio. Further discussion revolved around doing more research around the type of impact on our roads after use and whether we would still need to increase the size of our salt shed. Ryan was going to compile the actual amounts of salt we have used to get a proposal that may work for us. Ryan said that he felt comfortable with putting in the time to do the research after talking with a number of other Road Foreman around the state who have been using the product successfully in their areas.

Ryan reported that he met with Evan Johnson, the owner of the transfer station, and worked up a new contract which extended our agreement from an annual contract to a three-year contract. Evan requested that Ryan make an inquiry to the Select Board regarding the consideration of subdividing the land and running it as a private transfer station with the land. It was decided to keep things the same at this time.

Ryan brought up the Memorial Day fireworks. He contacted our local supplier, which was NorthStar Fireworks and is now Pyro Technica who is a large nationwide corporation. The estimate for the same fireworks display that we have in the past has increased from \$7K to \$10,360. The budget we have for the line item is \$7,500.00 giving us a funding gap of \$3,360.00. Discussion centered around the lack of attendance for the fireworks display versus the daytime festivities; the events held during the day are well attended, whereas the fireworks are not. It was pointed out that the Town of Williamstown would be celebrating our 250th anniversary in 5 years (2031). The idea came up and Scott made the motion to create a Fireworks Display Reserve Fund for the purpose of collecting the annual fireworks display budget to grow a nest egg for the 250th Anniversary celebration; Clayton seconded; so, moved. Ryan was going to bring this motion back to Jenn to make sure that the Reserve account could be created without any delay if she could do so.

Ryan reported that he hired Melinda Martin who owns and operates Twinkle and Shine Cleaning Co to maintain both the Public Safety Building as well as the Town Hall. She is fully insured, experienced, and willing to work within our budget. She will be starting on March 13, 2026. Since she has her own company she will be paid as a vendor versus employee.

Ryan reported the current delinquent tax total is: \$258,983; we have received \$22,803 since last report. The current delinquent utility total is: \$36,598; and we have received \$4,663 since last report.

Members of the Select Board commented on how they like how Ryan presents his reports and found it helpful on knowing the differences in each month's calculations.

REORGANIZATIONAL: Clayton made the motion to keep the set dates, time, and locations for future Selectboard meetings as they are now. Cote seconded; so, moved. Tyler made the motion to keep the legal posting places the same: Town Hall bulletin board inside as well as outside, Pump & Pantry, and Bar Harbor Bank & Trust and our website; adding: Front Porch Forum and our Facebook page. Clayton seconded the motion; so, moved. Clayton made motion to keep the set newspaper as the Times Argus; Scott seconded; so, moved.

APPOINTMENTS:

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT: Abandon

TOWN SEWAGE OFFICER: Scott made the motion to appoint Ryan Lockwood; Clayton seconded, so, moved.

CIVIL DEFENSE REP: Scott made the motion to appoint William Graham; Cote seconded, so, moved.

GREEN UP CO-CHAIRS: Scott made the motion to appoint Barbara Graham and Ryan Lockwood; Clayton seconded, so, moved.

CV REVOLVING LOAN FUND GOV BOARD REP: Clayton made the motion to appoint Rodney Graham; Scott seconded, so, moved.

CVRPC REP: Tyler made the motion to appoint Rich Turner as well as to appoint him to the Transportation Advisory Board. Clayton seconded, so, moved.

HEALTH OFFICER: Three-year position; no need to vote on currently.

DEPUTY HEALTH OFFICER: Tyler made the motion to appoint Jasmine Couillard. Cote seconded, so, moved.

FENCE VIEWERS: Tyler made the motion to appoint both Jasmine Couillard and Richard Powell; Clayton seconded, so, moved.

OTHER VACANT ELECTED POSITIONS:

Library Board of Trustees: Cote made the motion to appoint Laura Carter for one year; Clayton seconded, so, moved.

Henry S Baker Fund: Cote made the motion to appoint Jasmin Couillard for one year; Clayton seconded, so, moved.

Trustee of Public Funds: Will wait until April to make an appointment.

Cemetery Commissioner: Will wait until April to make an appointment.

NEW BUSINESS: Ryan reported that in working with the audit currently being done by the Vermont Department of Public Safety regarding the FEMA money the Town of Williamstown received as aid to recover during the 2023 and 2024 floods they found that the language needed to be updated for two of our policies: Purchasing Policy and Code of Ethics Policy. These policies were previously in place; however, they needed an update to reflect correct wording for how Federal funds would be managed. The audit also found that to comply the Town needed to create and adopt two new policies: Grant Management Policy and an Inventory Policy. These policies contain specific language on how federal funds are to be managed. The handling of Federal funds is far more restrictive with more rules in place in comparison to the handling of State or private grants or funding. The policies do not change how the Town operates; they do increase the number of rules and assist in going into any future audits by being aware of and following rules. Focus was on the procurement of federal funds - in whole or in part, the bidding process, conflicts of interest – what to do when gifts are offered, federal pass-through requirements, and vendors and contractors to use when utilizing federal funds. It was found that any vendors or contractors used should go through a background check utilizing specific agencies to verify that they are in good standing and have not been flagged for any financial crimes.

It was discussed that our policy is that anything more than \$10K has had to be put out to bid and that depending on the type of funding the bid would need to be sealed. The recommendation put forth by Ryan was that regardless of the funding bids should all be sealed. The only deviance from that would be in emergency situations of a sole source; for example: waterline break. Cote made the motion to adopt all the updated and new policies as approved by the auditor. Clayton seconded; so, moved.

Barbara Graham reported that two applications for the 2026 Liquor Licenses have been received: Pump & Pantry and Dollar General. Tyler made the motion to accept them both pending payment; Clayton seconded; so, moved.

OLD BUSINESS: Ryan wanted to make sure townfolk knew that he was aware of the need for a new Flagpole in front of the Municipal Building and that it had previously been agreed upon prior to his appointment of Town Manager and he was making it happen.

Tyler wished to discuss the turnarounds located on Route 14; one being at the entrance of Pikes and the other at the bottom of Chelsea Rd. There has been a lot of debris accumulation in both sites in the past; people dropping off mattresses as well as household trash. Tyler was looking for a way to resolve the issue since it is not sanitary or safe. Discussion included following up with the State to see what their plans were and whether cameras could be put in each location. Closing/throwing up the two turnarounds was also discussed; however, it was pointed out that both places are in locations that give travelers a place to have cell phone coverage before going into a dead-zone.

AROUND THE TABLE: Tyler wanted to say thank you to all those who voted for him again. Clayton and Scott thanked Ryan for doing a fantastic job and making it through his first Town Meeting. Larry wanted to share that he would like to have John Benson, who is the Chairman of the Brookfield Selectboard and who has also been recently appointed by the Governor to take the Vermont State Senators seat vacated by Republican Larry Hart to be included on our April 13th meeting agenda so that he could properly introduce himself and speak with anyone who would wish to do so.

ADJOURN: Clayton made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m., Tyler seconded the motion; so, moved.

Respectfully Submitted,

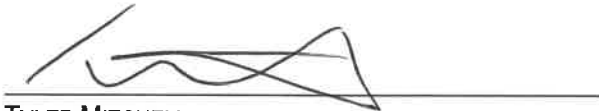
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