

TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN

WILLIAMSTOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2026 – PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

FINAL

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

ALSO PRESENT: BARBARA GRAHAM, RODEY GRAHAM, RICH TURNER, MYRON COBURN, DAVID WILDER II, SUSAN LYONS, JENNIFER ALLARD, WILLIAM GRAHAM, JOHN BENSON, MICHEAL MCPHETRES

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SET THE AGENDA: Clayton made a motion to set the agenda. All were in favor; so, moved.

REVIEW OF OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

SELECTBOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT(S): None.

COMMISSIONS / COMMITTEES / TRUSTEES / EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORTS / OTHER BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Rich Turner, Chairperson of the Planning Commission brought three matters for discussion with the Selectboard. First, he currently holds the appointment as Tree Warden by the Town of Williamstown which is an appointment required by The Urban and Community Forestry Program. In his most recent Urban and Community Forestry Program meeting he was asked whether the Town would like to continue his appointment as Tree Warden. He expressed the wish to continue in the position should the Selectboard vote to reappoint him. He is planning to attend the Urban Community Forestry Conference on May 28, 2026, and will need the voted appointment documented in the minutes for him to continue in the office. Secondly, The Planning Commission is now at a point where they are looking to work on the Town plan and would like to initiate public outreach regarding items that were identified in the survey that was conducted last fall. One of the repeated key topics in the survey was resilience. He asked whether it would be possible to have a table outside the polling space on Special Town Meeting Day, Wednesday, May 6, 2026, so that they could initiate some dialog with Townspeople. Thirdly, he mentioned that the Town of Williamstown was selected as one of six (6) communities in the state to work on a Municipal Climate Planning Guides which covers three (3) primary categories: Municipal Planning Climate Guide, Social Resilience Process Guide, and a Capital Program Climate Guide. Teams of two communities are selected to work on each topic; Williamstown will be focusing on the aspect of Municipal Planning Climate Guide. Rich explained that this is a pilot project designed to gather feedback and work with the Town's leadership to discuss hazard mitigation and the like. It is an enhancement of the Town's plan - work effort from the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission which allows additional hours to work on parts of the currently expired local hazard mitigation plan as well as the enhanced energy plan. Working through the process gives the Town some additional resources at no cost to the Town and it will in turn enhance our own Town plan. Rich said that he will continue to keep the board updated. Cote made the motion to appoint Rich Turner as the Town's Tree Warden. Tyler seconded; so, moved.

As part of the discussion with Rich, Larry asked if he had heard any updates on the \$20K Sidewalk Grant that was awarded to the Town in late winter; it was decided that Ryan would follow up for a report at the next meeting. The discussion also covered the basics of what the appointment of Tree Warden does: health maintenance of trees in a Town, removal of diseased trees, awareness of invasive plants and insects, bio controls and working with the Town to beautify and keep spaces hazard free.

William Graham, Fire Chief made a public announcement that one of Williamstown's firefighters, Michael Greenia, had passed away on April 1, 2026, after fighting a courageous battle with cancer. Michael had been a firefighter in his hometown since he was a teenager and

when he retired relocated to Central Vermont and joined the Williamstown Fire Department. William said that as a first/second year Fire Chief he found that knowledge and years of experience Michael brought helped him and the department in profound ways. He felt that Michael helped set the backbone of the Fire Department's administrative processes. Shortly after joining he began serving as Safety Officer, which had been a vacant role for quite some time; and continued to fill that role for the 11 years he served the community. Michael had at one point served as the President of the Vermont State Firefighters Association; he was a quiet man, but a big deal in the fire community. His memorial service with fire service honors is being held in Jericho, VT on Saturday, April 18, 2026. The Williamstown Fire Department is taking three trucks including the Ladder truck to hang the American Flag. They will be out of Town for about four (4) to six (6) hours; during that time, Barre Town will be present and cover the Town while they honor Michael.

APPROVE WARRANTS: SB22184; Tyler made motion to approve, Clayton seconded; so, moved. SB22185; Tyler recused himself due to a Fire Department item, Scott made the motion to approve, Cote seconded; so, moved after a brief discussion resulting from an inquiry made by Cote regarding inconsistencies in the amounts from Charter. Ryan will follow up for the next meeting.

PAYROLL WARRANTS: 03/22/2026: Cote recused himself due to being on the warrant. Clayton made the motion to approve, Tyler seconded; so, moved. Tyler recused himself due to being on the warrant. Clayton made the motion to approve, Scott seconded; so, moved.

APPROVE SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES: Scott made motion to accept the minutes of the March 9, 2026, meeting as written, Clayton seconded; so, moved. Tyler made motion to accept the minutes of the March 30, 2026, meeting as written, Clayton seconded; so, moved.

TOWN MANAGERS' REPORT: Ryan reported that he spent two days at the Municipal Solutions Summit in Woodstock. The summit is a hands-on conference where Town Managers and Town Administrators come together to participate in all discussions versus being lectured on topics. He found the summit beneficial for networking as well as finding resources to assist in updating the Personnel Policy, handling HR issues, and figuring out where grant help and other municipal tools can be found. Present at the summit were Town Managers who shared experiential advice stemming from two decades or more making the event one of the most worthwhile for him.

He heard back from Town Attorney, Nick Low, concerning the Town's ability to put articles on a ballot to be voted on by Australian ballot. The Town did not have the ability to call for voting by Australian ballot unless the issue is backed by Vermont Statute, like a bond vote, or the voters allowing for Australian ballot by a majority vote at Town Meeting. Which unfortunately does mean that the forensic audit vote is invalid since it was decided on Australian ballot. Tyler made a motion that Article 2 for the 2026 Town Meeting "Shall the voters approve of adding \$250,000 to the General Budget in order to hire an independent contracted firm to perform a forensic audit on the Town's financial systems, records, and internal controls?" be moved to Article 2 of the 2027 Town Meeting. Scott seconded; so, moved.

He has arranged for the warning of the upcoming bond revote meeting to be published in the paper the appropriate number of weeks, which will be every Tuesday, until the actual meeting day in May. He has also posted the meeting in the required five spots in Town: Town Hall, Pump and Pantry, Post Office, library, and bank. He will continue to communicate the news regarding the pending informational meeting a revote via electronic avenues: our website, social media, and Front Porch Forum. He is open to other avenues for generating communication with the public as well.

Ryan pitched the idea of designing a phone app for Williamstown through a company called GoGov. He was familiar with this company as Administrator for Fairlee, VT when he started an app which was called Fairlee Focus. The app reaches out to those various groups who want connection; however, they do not read newspapers or use social media. The app provides ability to push information out in real time. Information shared can be anything from emergencies to fun events to anything that the residents should be aware of. The app is customizable and can support many features that residents would find beneficial such as paying their bills and a centralized location for accessing other essential information links. He shared that the cost would be \$3,900 for the design and first-year annual fee. He said that we currently have it in our General Operating budget to cover the cost.

Ryan met with the Recreation board to see if he could assist them in generating new excitement and events planned throughout the year. There were two members who gave their resignations; but there was renewed interest from other folks joining and event planning. Due to prior lack of interest and volunteers, the usual Memorial Day parade will be pushed out to the Fall to coincide with the Pub's Fall

Festival. He shared that the Pub, the Billtown Wheelers and the church are interested in collaborating and helping with events, most of which will utilize the pavilion.

Ryan reported the current delinquent tax total is: \$234,603; we have received \$34,380 since last report. The current delinquent utility total is: \$34,486; and we have received \$2,112 since last report.

Discussions revolved around putting through a poll or petition and generating conversations to see whether Townsfolk would be open to a "Williamstown App" and where the best places would be to start those conversations. Larry and Rodney volunteered to be the first two committee members on the 250th Town of Williamstown Celebration Committee being held in 2031 when the formal committee creation takes place.

NEW BUSINESS: David Wilder, Road Foreman, presented a proposal to replace the dump body on the 2015 Western Star Tandem dump truck. Dave was able to obtain a written quote from Viking-Cives of Vermont in Williston for a new primed body and hinge which would replace our current Tenco body. He disclosed that he had also requested a written quote from HP Fairfield for a Tenco body in February 2026; however, after multiple attempts still had not received one. The quoted Viking body is \$39,700 and would be available for pick up on or around September 1, 2026. After the body is received it will then go to NTS Truck Repair for installation, which has been quoted as being between \$4,500 and \$5,000, and then go to Bob Tassie for painting and completion which has been quoted for \$6500, bringing the total cost of the new Viking body to \$51,200. Primary benefits of going with Viking-Cives for a Viking body: Town of Williamstown's highway trucks would have the same body type which would ensure that parts could be used interchangeably and the parts would be available at a more local resource. Dave mentioned that if the proposal was approved at this meeting we would have the truck for the Rehab project and would still be done before winter starts. Cote made the motion to spend \$51,200 to purchase the Viking body. Scott seconded; so, moved.

Ryan presented the board with a QTR-3 budget review; mentioning that he was not seeing anything out of the ordinary at this time other than the line item for Legal Aid is over budget due to the issues that the Town has been dealing with since the previous Fall. He felt that it would be good practice to start going over the budget on a regular basis at the meetings for transparency and for department heads to know where their numbers are as well. He would like the members to review these numbers and ask questions or open dialog if there are any concerns. There wasn't anything that needed to be acted on now that he could see. Tyler wanted some clarification on what should be in the Tax Stabilization fund; Jennifer and Ryan said that they would research and update the board at the next meeting. Rodney Graham advised the Selectboard that since the Town voted from going from an elected treasurer to an appointed treasurer they would find all the reports that she ran under the state statutes and title 24.

Fire Department Reserve/Emergency Medical Service Reserve Balances: Ryan reported that in reviewing reserve account balances it was discovered that in 2024 when the Fire Department had a refurbishment project done on a truck that a little more than \$20K was taken from the Emergency Medical Service Reserve to pay for the project and that the balance in the reserve account needed to be reinstated since those funds weren't supposed to be used for anything other than purchasing an ambulance. There was some discussion on which Fire Department reserve accounts the money could be taken from to correct the error. Tyler read a document that he had notarized as well as the Conflict-of-Interest Policy as he is a Williamstown Firefighter and a Selectboard member. His statement of account was an itemization of what he documented during the time that the refurbishment project had taken place and what he had noted as the sources of funding for the project. His documentation also detailed various conversations that he had with the former Town Manager, Jackie Higgins, and other items of importance. Cote made a motion to replace the missing \$20,365 from the Fire Department Truck Replacement Fund and move it to the Emergency Medical Service Reserve immediately. Scott seconded; so, moved.

Ryan brought forward two Recreation Board resignations to be approved by the Selectboard. The two individuals resigning were Tyler Ballard and Pete Diverna. Scott made a motion to accept the resignations submitted. Tyler seconded; so, moved.

Ryan submitted the 27 Municipal Roads Grants in Aid Program Letter of Intent to the Selectboard to vote on, and if accepted, sign. He explained that the letter is part of an annual process that states that the Town would like to accept grant money that could be given to us when we work on ditching and culverts projects; this year's award is \$12K, and it is guaranteed grant money. Ryan confirmed that there

Senator John Benson introduced himself to the Selectboard as the newly appointed Vermont State Republican Senator that had been previously vacated by Larry Hart. He has been in office for a little over three months and wanted to take the time to meet each of the Selectboards in the thirteen towns that he represented and introduce himself. He said that up until the January 2nd appointment he had been retired and had spent most of his working career as a civil engineer. In that scope his focus was to do what he could do to make life better for people by solving problems with infrastructure, housing and wherever he could. He and his wife live in a home they have had for 50 years in Brookfield where they raised their two sons; one of which works for DMS in Barre and the other flies for JetBlue. He has been on the Selectboard in Brookfield for 17 years and currently holds office of Chair. As Senator he has been appointed to two committees: Health and Welfare and Institutions Committee. He mentioned that he recalled hearing a comment regarding less money being made available for transportation; he confirmed this statement due to the state seeing less revenue being raised based on the gas tax. This is in relation to more fuel-efficient vehicles being on the road; they either require less fuel consumption or electric consumption which means less tax money being made to support the transportation fund. Annually the state tries to pave two hundred miles a year and this past year they could only pave one hundred miles. The anticipation for this year is less. He said that both he and Michael McPhetres (who was present with him) sit on Selectboards that have been hearing related topics of discussion that he heard while being present. To that end he wanted to share that the Governor has indicated that it was his intent to veto any new taxation that comes across his desk citing that Vermonters are taxed enough and that there needs to be focus put on creating revenue in other ways. On the topic of Health Care, the costs have been increasing, which affects everything: school budgets, businesses, everyone's wallet. One of the issues being cited is our state's demographic as a small state with an aging population. There are multiple sections in Health care: Medicare, Medicaid, and Self-insured; the majority of what we are dealing with are the Self-insured health care costs, and since we are a small state we find ourselves at a loss with advantages. The State of Vermont has one major insurance company; coupled with a lack of competition for our health care coverage, we see a reduction in our ability to be competitive. On the topic of education, he shared that the Governor is pushing for consolidation; however, the Senate passed a bill that focuses on cost per student in contrast to consolidation which provides some flexibility in spending. Some prominent issues being set forth at this point that should be monitored are voluntary redistricting and Act 181. He said that the Governor has made it clear that Legislative Session will not recess until he is happy with the education situation Vermont sees itself in. John asked if there was anything that the Town of Williamstown would like him to investigate which opened the floor to discussion on various areas concerning education, health care requirements, and Act 181.

AROUND THE TABLE: Tyler asked if there were updated Policies that needed signatures. Clayton asked if it would be possible for Ryan to find out if there would be a way to get more education for citizens and if there would be a way to get and sign a petition against it if it was wanted.

ADJOURN: Scott made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m., Clayton seconded the motion; so, moved.


Respectfully Submitted,

May Edson


LARRY HEBERT


COTE GRIGGS


TYLER MITCHELL


SCOTT MCCARTHY


CLAYTON WOODWORTH