

TOWN OF WILLIAMSTOWN
WILLIAMSTOWN SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2026 – PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
FINAL

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

ALSO PRESENT: BARBARA GRAHAM, RICH TURNER, MYRON COBURN, CHRIS DESSUREAU, LENNY MCCARTHY, SARAH BUXTON, SHARI RUSSELL, STEVEN HARDAKER, SAM PUNCHER, MIKA PRES, PATRICIA PIERCE, RYAN LOCKWOOD, MAY EDSON, ERIN MOORE

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SET THE AGENDA: Tyler made the motion to set the agenda with the following amendments, Liquor License and Hammer Attachment after Road Rehab topics. Clayton seconded. So, moved.

REVIEW OF OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT

SELECTBOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

PUBLIC COMMENT(S): None

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

APPROVE WARRANTS: SB22190 and SB22191: Clayton made the motion to approve, Cote seconded; so, moved. SB22192 and SB22193: Clayton made the motion to approve, Scott seconded; so, moved. Tyler asked why REM was hired to do the culvert work on Elm Street versus the Town doing it on SB22192; answer was because their machine was smaller and allowed for a better fit on the street. Tyler wanted to verify that by paying the invoice to CVTV on SB221393 that we weren't going to go over budget since he noticed that there wasn't a budgeted line item. Ryan stated that it was something that we hadn't been billed for previously; the services were being provided, and the decision was made to pay for his services and to budget for it in future budget sessions. Tyler requested that all the Selectboard members have a listing of all account numbers and names for each department so that they know where all monies come from. His request was made due to the expensive Fire Truck Replacement item on SB22193 that he couldn't verify. Tyler also wanted to verify that the VLCT PACIF was correctly being paid out of the Unanticipated Expense account on SB22193. It was explained that when Mr. Donahue was driving to the back parking lot the snow/ice mixture on the Town Hall's roof released covering his vehicle and damaging it quite extensively. Subsequently the adopted policy going forward is that whenever the roof is snow covered, road cones will be put in place to stop access to the back parking lot.

PAYROLL WARRANTS: 05/17/2026: Cote recused himself due to being on the warrant. Tyler made the motion to approve, Clayton seconded; so, moved. 05/31/2026: Tyler recused himself due to being on the warrant. Clayton made the motion to approve, Cote seconded; so, moved.

APPROVE SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES: May 11, 2026: Scott made the motion to accept the amended – with "Youth" inserted - meeting minutes as written. Clayton seconded; so, moved.

TOWN MANAGERS' REPORT: Ryan reported that there was an unannounced audit from MSHA (Mine Safety and Health Administration), which is a department of the Federal Department of Labor. The Town received five citations: not having a safety berm at the gravel pit entrance, no available training plan upon request, no available safety program for the mobile equipment, not updating contact information when Town leadership changed, and not having a record of screening equipment at the pit having gone through an annual continuity and resistance test. The inspector was however, understanding that both he and the Road Foreman were new in their leadership roles and had given a grace period until June 15, 2026, to make corrections to the violations to avoid unnecessary fines. Ryan said that three of

the five had been corrected and he was confident that the remaining two would be completed within the time given which primarily included paperwork and having an electrician on site to test the Screener. The electricians report will be provided to the inspector to avoid any fines. In going through this process Elwin asked Ryan to inquire on the Selectboard's thoughts on closing the pit at a future point due to the low quality of materials produced after the screening process and instead purchasing winter sand. Discussion on the subject lead to a – no, not at this time, answer; citing that another town is paying roughly \$80K for 3,400 yards of sand, sand is scarce and other towns are having a hard time finding resources, screen and pit training could be done to optimize quality of the materials produced and how to source them correctly.

Ryan reported that a date needed to be set for David Wilder's public hearing. The members did a quick review of their individual schedules and set a tentative date for the public hearing as Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at the Public Safety Building pending the availability of both David Wilder and his lawyer.

Ryan reported that Utility bills were sent out in a timely manner; however, due to not having the correct software and not able to get a timely workaround the bills were created by using the usage averaging calculation method again. He has contacted EJ Prescott to set up a meeting with their meter salesperson to talk about a better alternative for us that could potentially save \$4000 in support fees with Census. EJ Prescott has made a proposal that would include support assistance, meter upgrades and replacements at time of need. The predominant issue is that the software currently used is being phased out and a scanner device could cost us \$16,000 versus using a tablet for just a few hundred dollars with a widget. Ryan stated he will update the Selectboard with the results of that meeting and noted that we had time to get a working solution in place for the anticipated utility bills generated this coming Fall. Discussion included acknowledging that there will not be any additional costs for the homeowners and meters will be phased in/replaced as needed.

Ryan has still been receiving positive feedback on the Williamstown App survey. The company has agreed to decrease the cost from \$3,900.00 to \$3,600.00; if he has approval he will be able to use money still in this year's budget prior to June 30th, end of year. Discussion revealed that Ryan had received about 30 more physical surveys and 80+ online surveys, all being positive. Tyler made the motion to go forward with creating the Williamstown App. Scott seconded; so, moved.

Ryan reported that there is currently a 3-acre Storm Water Permitting Project in both the Business Center and Commercial Center areas. He had been notified that the design stage of the project needs to be drawn up no later than August. This process will require that the Town will need to pay impact fees for both places: \$16,520 for Business Center and \$57,525 for Commercial Center, just to obtain the permits. The Town has applied for two grants to help cover the expenses of the design and impact fees. The Town will still need to cover roughly \$23,000 between the two after reimbursement. After discussion with the Treasurer, it was found that the Town currently has the funds in this year's surplus which will allow for the designs and permits to be paid prior to the end of the fiscal year. The scope of the Business Center project includes installing multiple big dry wells and water gardens to capture stormwater. This design will not capture all that the State requires and due to the extended timeline there is a one-time impact fee of \$16,000.00. The Commercial Center project has a different set of challenges due primarily to the swamp which doesn't allow for the ability to properly build anything; we will have to pay a much larger one-time impact fee.

Ryan reported the current delinquent tax total is: \$215,181; we have received \$13,467 since last report. The current delinquent utility total is: \$31,524; and we have received \$1,464 since last report.

NEW BUSINESS: Nuisance Dog Hearing: 140 Casino Rd: Animal Control Officer, Samantha Puncher reported that she received notification from Patricia Pierce, who lives at the end of Casino Rd on the 29th of May stating that she and her neighbor lost a total of 12 birds; 8 hens and 4 Guinea hens. She stated that neighbors of different residences; Dale VanderBloom, and Erin Moore, both have security cameras that captured footage of a dog wiping out the bird population between 3:00 a.m. and about 6:30ish a.m.. Sam reported that she recognized the dog from the footage because she had written a ticket for it running loose 4 days after the last Selectboard meeting regarding dogs running loose from the 140 Casino Rd property. While Sam was doing research on the dog she found an adoption advertisement on Facebook from about 2022 with a photograph stating that the animal was aggressive with other dogs, cats, and chickens. The notice said something to the effect that it preferred meals of fresh chicken. Sam said that she contacted the Orange County Sheriff's Department and supplied them with multiple photos of the massacres as well as security footage showing the dog

entering a chicken coop. She also gave him the bills from both Patricia and Dale. Sam stated that since she cannot enforce repayment for the lost animals, she submitted them to the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff visited the dog's owner and notified her of what the dog had done; she claimed that she didn't know. Sam stated that the statement was unclear as to meaning; didn't know that the dog was out or didn't know what the dog had done. The owner hasn't reached out to either Patricia or Dale. The Sheriff said that Patricia and Dale would have to sue civilly to have the bills paid.

Samantha pointed out that there are multiple situations concerning 140 Casino Rd. The neighborhood is getting tired of having animals getting loose and creating situations. Sam can only write tickets for fines of \$500.00 per incident, and there have been multiple incidents of extended periods of time that the animals are loose. In this case; this is the second time that this specific dog has gotten loose. The first time it went in the other direction, and was found in a yard on Hebert Rd with two small children. The owners sent Sam a picture of the dog with the children hugging it, which luckily didn't end badly. This time it headed for properties that had a barn and coops. The animals attacked weren't free roaming; the animals attacked weren't eaten, they were mangled.

Sam said that she thinks something should be done because it seems that writing fines and money doesn't seem to be a deterrent. She hasn't received any notification of any ticket being contested because she hasn't been summoned to appear in court. She also stated that the funds are sent to White River when tickets are paid. She doesn't know what happens after that point. The maximum amount she can fine is \$500.00 on a municipal ticket.

Sam stated that a few weeks back Sheriff George Contois stated that they were going to go to 140 Casino Rd to gather up dogs, but the State was allowing 40 to stay. She said that the State allowed her to keep 49 dogs, 12 cats, and 11 chickens. The chickens are surrounded by electric fencing; there is speculation that some of them have been caught and replaced.

Neighbor Erin Moore spoke about the loose dog being caught on camera and stalking about on her property, both the front and back yards for about 45 minutes. She isn't certain due to lack of camera coverage, but it might have injured one of her pigs. She stated that a couple of years prior that the owner of the dog had warned her to be very concerned about her person should it get loose. She said that she found it very concerning that the owner was aware that she had an aggressive dog; it liked to get loose, and she wasn't out looking for it. Mika also reported that in this incident if she had been aware the dog was loose and had gone looking for it that she would have easily found it milling about at the neighbor's house because Dale's camera shows that it was in his yard for hours.

Samantha stated that currently the owner has 44 dogs registered. The State and Sheriff visited her property recently and found 5 unregistered dogs. She was told that those needed to be registered. The owner said that at this time she is unwilling to give any to the State or allow any to go to another shelter. There have been other incidents of other dogs getting loose and going after other fowl; a white Husky named Idol, but she didn't believe that he got any of the birds. An Akita was picked up twice, a Beagle that ended up at the Humane Society, and a small Beagle mix that went missing and wasn't found.

Patricia spoke to the effect that she is concerned about the health and wellbeing of the animals as well as the owner of 140 Casino Rd. She feels that there are too many animals; it's a concern, nothing she's against, but just unsure of whether they can be controlled by the owner. She is concerned about her property, whether animals that are 140 Casino Rd are going to attack either her, her small dog, or any of her other animals. She expressed concern about the particular dog in question needing to be euthanized due to situations and reputation for being dangerous. But overall, she wasn't sure of what she could do about the situation at hand.

Chris Desurreau stated that he too was a dog owner, and his neighborhood had also been in a similar situation and was told that this type of situation was a civil matter, and he wasn't sure of what it was that the Selectboard would be able to do unless it bit a human. He felt that euthanization was not the word for this situation due to many dogs in the town being considered dangerous breeds and it didn't go after a human. He felt that if it were his animal that got loose and attacked and killed the neighbors chickens then he would expect to pay a fine and restitution. He felt that since the owner wasn't at the meeting to defend herself and what was being said about statements about the dog were hearsay. He understood that the situation was hard and the situation with animals for animal lovers hit home. He wasn't an advocate for death kennels; he felt that there is most likely a solution where this animal could have a better living situation elsewhere. He didn't agree with the State allowing the owner to have 49 dogs on top of other animals; but it was allowed and the Orange

County Sheriff's Office is aware of it. He wasn't sure of how it would be dealt with even if the Town was to obtain an attorney over the situation; the Town might just be told it is a Civil matter.

Larry confirmed with Ryan on whether the owner of the dog was aware of the hearing being held; he said that he sent a certified letter.

Cote stated that the Town had a Policy and there was another step that could be taken by the Town. He invited Town Attorney Sarah Buxton to proceed with an explanation. Sarah explained that she reviewed the Town Policy and shared some background in this area. She stated that this is one case where a town has more authority than either the State, the State Police and Sheriff's Office because the State had granted towns that authority. She stated that in reviewing the Town Policy, she saw that in 2016 fines and fees were set and being enforced to that extent. She said she could assist in researching whether the Town is receiving their portion of fees owed. She stated that when a hearing is set and parties are duly notified they can present themselves and give their story; when a party fails to present themselves, they waive that right. Other circumstances can be taken into consideration as well as damages in these situations. Ordinances hold more power than Policies; however, it is beneficial that the Town has already drawn up a Policy that gave guidelines on how to proceed when dealing with biting animals and repeat offenders. As long as the Town is following Policy and there is consistency in application it can be asked for other fines to be assessed, impounding of certain animals until fines are paid, including damages, and if necessary if found to be reasonable cause have the animal humanly disposed of. She said that the process wasn't an easy one as it is multi-stepped and considers multiple factors and much research. She said that it would be something that the Selectboard would start at this meeting at the earliest. She recommended that the Town update the policy as there have been changes in this particular area and should also be considered.

Tyler made an inquiry regarding the VSA 20 3545 which refers to a right to kill domestic pets or wolf hybrids generally. The State Statute under Section B states that a domestic pet or wolf hybrid found wounding, killing or worrying another domestic pet or wolf hybrid domestic animal or fowl may be killed when the attendant circumstances are such that the killing is reasonably necessary to prevent injury to the animal or fowl that is subject of the attack. This is State Statute and takes it out of the Town's hands. He stated that the Town had a committee set up at one time however it disbanded due to changes being made in legislature.

Sarah commented that at the local level the process requires a hearing and a notice of an opportunity to be heard by neutral parties to act as impartial adjudicators on the claims being presented. She also said that as long as this process is in place, this kind of local substitute for what can be very personal and very difficult issues falls in the lap of the Selectboard. Otherwise, it would need to be in the hands of law enforcement which would have had to have special training AKA sensitivity training in this field. She also stated that according to the Policy the Town had in place that it has been claimed to be within the Town's power to seize the dog if the dog; and if the owner doesn't allow it, then it is within your right to go to the Court who can authorize local law enforcement to support you in seizing the animal or it can also authorize law enforcement to do it themselves on the Town's behalf; however, it would take a warrant or an order to enter private land.

There was discussion pertaining to what the Selectboard could do such as issuing a \$500.00 fine for the loose animal, \$640.00 for the replacement of the chickens and Guinea hens, the cost of boarding the animal during the evaluation period, any requirement that would need to take place for the animal to be returned if possible to the current property, and whether other fines could be assessed. It was within the Town's rights to petition the Court to have a judge order her to pay fines, damages, restitution; if payment wasn't made then she would be held in contempt and ramifications could follow suit as the Court has the authority to compel payment in a settlement. It was noted that this can be a lengthy process.

It was stated that parties in the neighborhood had spoken to one another and they would be content with removing the dog from the neighborhood not necessarily having the Selectboard say that the dog needs to be euthanized. It was felt that the dog should be removed from Williamstown and that it could either be evaluated by Central Vermont Humane Society or a non-biased reputable rescue to determine if it was a candidate for adoption. They felt that proof of the adoption would need to be documented so that the animal control officer in the new homing town could be contacted and made aware of what happened prior to adoption. They expressed concern that the dog would not be able to have any kind of rehabilitation due to the life experiences it's had due to not having had the opportunity to be with someone who was of capable hands for such a dog. It was expressed that it should be evaluated by a dog behaviorist. Sam

stated that she would advocate for the dog to go to a kennel in Orange, Vermont called Country Canine where it could be kenneled for 10 to 14 days and be evaluated by a certified trainer. She stated that charges \$25 dollars a day if the Town was paying and \$30 dollars a day if the owner is paying. The certified trainer would provide a report to the Selectboard of their findings and whether the dog would be eligible for adoption. She felt that there should be a disclosure stipulation that the dog is already done damage.

Scott stated that he felt that there have been a series of issues stemming from 140 Casino Rd since he's been on the Selectboard going back to 2018 and felt that something should be done to stop opportunities like this happening once and for all. It was felt that at this time the decision of the Selectboard was to investigate further, seek legal counsel, and have a discussion during Executive Session that evening. They would reach out to the parties involved. Larry asked Samantha to work with Ryan and Canine Country.

53 Beckett Street Tax Sale: Chris Dessureau stated that in 2024 the Town sold the property at 53 Beckett Street at Tax Sale and at that time the Town used Jeffrey Lewis as the attorney who worked with the former Town Manager. He stated that he had submitted a Federal Public Information Act request to the current Town Manager, Ryan, which allows three days if not involved in a criminal case, of all public records and communications involving a sale to be disclosed. Ryan abided by the request and met with my council, Katherine Hayes. The nature of the situation is that Mr. Lewis was paid by the Town to do due diligence in the tax sale which included notifying all parties having ownership, any parties having bills or liens against a property that the property in question was going to Tax Sale. It should be done in a certain process that would include written notification with signature requirements for receipt of notification. At this time his office has refused to fulfill the requested information on notification to Down Street Housing, which is Vermont Land Trust, and to the Vermont Historic Preservation Board who provides grants to individuals, in this case Brandi Todd who was a single mother. She owned the property and the mortgage was held by USDA. The Historic Board provided a \$20,000.00 grant plus a clause that they get paid a certain amount of interest of the profit on any subsequent sale from that point forward on the property. They weren't duly notified and neither was the Vermont Land Trust who had provided \$1,500.00. Chris stated that on the 16th of June he had a closing to sell the property and due to the lack of due diligence he is having to pay the minimum of \$21,500 that should have been gotten at the time of tax sale to cover what is owed to the lien holders. He said that he felt he should notify the Town that it is his intention to seek restitution from the Town due to fact that they had council and that council didn't perform due diligence correctly. He said that he understood that it is within the rights of the Town to go after Mr. Lewis's malpractice insurance to recoup the lost funds due to the situation of lack of relinquished interest in property. He said that he had reached out to both lien holders who were only asking him to provide the sum given due to the complexity of the situation and that he wasn't the one awarded the Tax Sale originally. Chris also stated that had the tax sale been done correctly that he would have an insurable title prior to now, not a Tax Sale Title. Subsequently the Title Insurance Company as well as his own council needs to be paid as well as part of this pending sale. He wanted it to be known that he doesn't hold the Selectboard and the Town liable for the situation, he holds the council used in the tax sale liable. He said that in the process of the pending sale it was found that there were lien holders.

Larry asked him why he wasn't going after his own council as it should have been found in the process of the clean title search at the time of him taking ownership. He said that neither attorney found the discrepancy; however, he found it himself when he was doing research with Town Clerk, Barbara Graham, because he didn't know what he was doing. But he felt that liability should fall on the original council at the time of Tax Sale.

Cote suggested that this matter be added to the discussion list of Executive Session later that evening.

Town Health Officer Appointment: the current Health Officer is Courtney Wade who has agreed to continue to hold office if appointed. Coted made the motion to appoint Courtney Wade as Health Officer. Clayton seconded the motion; so, moved.

2026 LEMP adoption: Ryan reported that on an annual basis the Emergency Management Plan must be updated which requires contacts for the various departments heads where needed. He has updated it where necessary; the body of it wasn't changed, just the contacts where needed. So, his name and Elwin Chambers were added due to their positions, some were removed due to leaving the town. He requested the Selectboard approve so that it could be sent to the State to stay in compliance. Discussion covered that in case of flooding the emergency shelter in town is at the High school; which has a supply closet of their own, and Marie Graham is the contact for that. It

was noted that it should be verified that cots are available, and Gillespie's information be added to the Emergency Management Plan. Tyler made the motion that the amended updates be approved. Cote seconded; so, moved.

Larry opened the discussion on the Flint Rd Rehab Project by stating what had recently happened with the original Road Rehab Bond Vote and the subsequent revote. During mud season both he and Ryan went through the Town and identified areas that needed drainage work, they also identified areas that had previously had drainage work done and how it held up. One of the areas looked at was Theriault Hill, a section of Gilbert Rd, and Flint Road. At this time, they have chosen to work with Flint Rd due to the amount of traffic that it sustains and that there are 80 homes on it which would make for a great preliminary test to see what can be done with resources on hand and to make any adjustments to any future plans of road rehabilitation projects.

Ryan shared that he worked with the Treasurer and created a plan that would cover roughly 1.8 miles of Flint Rd, stopping at Moore Rd. The project would include significant underdrain work, ditching, culverts, and resurfacing. Spending would include roughly \$7,500 for underdrain, \$116,000 for crushed granite – this includes coverage for primarily 22-foot road width, this is the largest expense for the project, \$8,500.00 in ¾ inch stone and \$500.00 a roll for filter fabric, \$8,000 for plant mix material. The total project cost is estimated to be \$140,942.00. Currently we have just over \$96,000 in our reserve fund and then at the turn of the fiscal year the fund receives an infusion of \$150,000.00 bringing the fund to \$246,268.00 to work with. This will leave \$105,326.00 to work with on other areas once we complete the Flint Rd project. The only outside expenses that could be foreseen at this time is that extra dump trucks hired during the resurfacing phase of the project unless something comes out of left field. Larry talked about getting a hydraulic hammer attachment for the John Deere 60 that could be used to break up ledge to decrease the interruption in drainage. The quote received for the attachment was \$10,500.00 from United Ag.

Larry explained that by having the equipment on hand that it will make it possible for the drainage to be laid correctly without having water bubble up into the road due to uneven underground structure. The expense of having this work done is quite pricey, \$10,000.00 can be spent fast and causes project shut down time which also costs money; each time a project is shut down it costs almost \$3,000.00 to stop and restart. He said that by having it on hand we'd be able to utilize it on many projects throughout the Town. The attachment itself has a quick-change assembly, which the road crew will be able to do themselves. The attachment requires a certain amount of maintenance to stay in good condition; the cost savings are still worth owning vs renting or paying a contractor for the services.

During the discussion Cote expressed concern about equipment purchases but not being utilized nearly enough to offset the expenses long-term. This concern was heard and taken into consideration; examples were given where there are more opportunities for differing pieces both on hand and this piece as well. It was discussed that while the project is in progress there will be signage closing the road to through traffic. There will be detours mapped out when and where necessary.

Cote made the motion to approve the Flint Road Rehab Project and the purchase of the hydraulic hammer. Clayton seconded; so, moved.

Barbara Graham, Town Clerk reported that Embers who purchased the property on Route 14 has applied for a First-Class liquor license for the outside dining and Third-Class liquor license for the inside dining space. They haven't paid yet. The proposed opening date hasn't been confirmed yet. She was asking for approval pending payment from the Selectboard. Tyler made the motion to approve the 2026 Liquor Licenses for Embers pending payment. Scott seconded the motion; so, moved.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

AROUND THE TABLE: NONE.

Cote made a motion at 8:57 p.m. that a 5-minute recess be taken and then go into Executive Session for Legal Issues; Clayton seconded; so, moved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – 1 V.S.A. SECTION 313 – LEGAL ISSUES

Tyler made a motion at 10:20 p.m. to come out of Executive Session. Clayton seconded; so, moved.

Cote made the motion to authorize Ryan to work with legal counsel and the animal control officer to draft a decision consistent with our deliberative discussion. Scott seconded; so, moved.

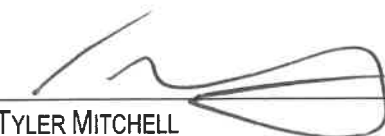
ADJOURN: Cote made the motion to adjourn at 10:21 p.m.. Tyler seconded; so, moved.

Respectfully Submitted,

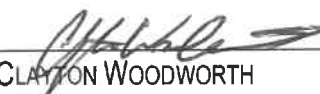
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LARRY HEBERT

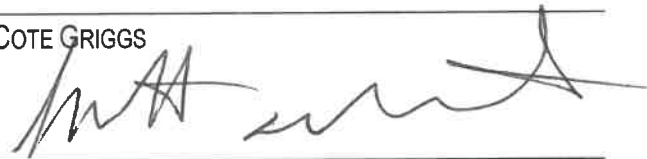


TYLER MITCHELL



CLAYTON WOODWORTH

COTE GRIGGS



SCOTT MCCARTHY