

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order:** First Selectman M. Alberts called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm
Present: First Selectman M. Alberts, Selectman C. Paquette, Selectman F. Olah
Absent: None
Others Present: John Navarro (Highway Dept), Jim Trowbridge, Bill Bradley, Bill Guillot (Woodstock Academy Interim Head of Operations and Finance), Crystal Adams Recreation Director), Jill Grant, Marla Butts, Dorothy Durst, WINY Reporter, Terri Lasota (Recording Secretary), and 4 others.
2. **Approve the Minutes of the January 17, 2019 Regular Board of Selectmen's Meeting:**
F. Olah noted in item #5 on page 2, the word "oxygen" should be replaced with the term "medical support". C. Paquette **MOTIONED to APPROVE** the meeting minutes of 01/17/2019 with the correction to reference "medical support" in lieu of the word "oxygen" in item #5; **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
3. **Consider a Request from Charles and Jill Grant for a License to Temporarily Place a Mobile Home on Their Property:**

M. Alberts referenced the trailer ordinance in place.
Jill Grant talked about the January 17th chimney fire with extension at her home and the resulting extensive smoke damage in the home, and said her insurance company offered to place a temporary mobile home on her 5 acre property for three months while her home was being repaired, so she followed all of the various 6 steps needed for an application to obtain a license from the Town to place the temporary mobile home on her property.

F. Olah **MOTIONED to APPROVE** the application for a mobile home at 75 Brockway Road;
M. Alberts noted there is a formal penalty, which states "any person found guilty of violating the ordinance shall be fined not less than \$5.00 nor more than \$100.00 for each day such violation exists." M. Alberts said if the application is approved, there would be a violation of 2 days at \$5.00 per day, plus the \$10.00 fee; \$20.00 in total. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**
4. **Discuss Current Ordinances Dealing with Tax Abatement Exemptions for Farms:**

M. Alberts said the Agricultural Commission was asked to help determine ways to support agriculture in Woodstock and added that the Agricultural Commission expressed their belief of having tax abatements for fruit and dairy farms with an opportunity for expansion to be more encompassing. M. Alberts went on to say Emily Carlone (Town Assessor) found that the requirements of the current ordinance had not been followed correctly.

M. Alberts said the information and materials were forwarded to and reviewed by Attorney Roberts who provided an outline of how the abatements could be applied for this year. M. Alberts felt this would be problematic due to the amount of financial information that would need to be solicited and obtained in a short amount of time, adding that the total abatement encompassed approximately \$11,000.00 per year.

M. Alberts said J. Walberg noted another ordinance which addresses abatements for farm buildings which provides \$100,000.00 and recalled this ordinance being discussed as a potential vehicle to replace the current ordinance in question. No effort was made to rescind the other ordinance, so both ordinances are on the books. M. Alberts said he had written a cover letter to the people impacted to let them know, but has not yet had any replies back.

M. Alberts also noted there are flaws in the ordinance which has not been updated and felt a new ordinance should be created from scratch, and felt the structure of the present ordinance is not workable as is.

C. Paquette asked if the Agricultural Commission was working on how this could be expanded; M. Alberts said the Agricultural Commission wanted this expanded to include all of the exemptions of how a farm is described in State statutes, and added the Selectmen agree they would like to better agriculture in Woodstock but the question is how to do it effectively and fairly.

The Board of Selectmen agreed this issue should be looked into and discussed further before deciding to make necessary changes to the ordinance, expand on the ordinance, or rescind the ordinance, which would need to be done through a town meeting.

F. Olah said essentially what they are looking at is an ordinance that deals with tax abatements based on a redefinition of what the farm is, as right now it is limiting to dairy and fruit orchards; M. Alberts noted that most ordinances are based on State statutes and as the statutes change the ordinance changes as well. He added it is important to look at the net effect of the ordinance and a less obtrusive way of bringing this forward to the people. The Selectmen agreed that using the information from the present ordinance would be a cumbersome process with a great deal of information from a private operational standpoint that doesn't need to be divulged.

5. Consider the Agreement Between the Town of Woodstock and The Woodstock Academy Regarding Use of Tennis Courts:

Crystal Adams gave a brief summary of the agreement and noted the current unsafe conditions of the tennis courts. She added that the agreement would be beneficial to Woodstock Middle school students and the Woodstock community as a whole, as they would be able to use the courts.

M. Alberts confirmed with B. Guillot that this would allow the school to operate a successful varsity and junior varsity program that the academy does not currently have. B. Guillot added that once the Selectmen have signed off on this agreement they can move forward. M. Alberts reiterated that this agreement would not only make the tennis courts accessible to academy students, but to the middle school students and the public as well.

C. Paquette and F. Olah agreed they were not comfortable with the agreement language as written as it leaves the Town open to responsibilities for initial paving and does not give any responsibility to the academy. M. Alberts noted there would be no Town responsibility for the paving work adding that would need to be contracted out and pursued by the academy.

C. Adams mentioned several of the estimates, one of which was a \$20,000 surface repair and another which involved a \$100,000.00 long term 20 year solution.

M. Alberts suggested bringing a draft agreement to the Town Attorney for review which would eliminate the Town's obligation with regards to the initial paving and repair, but limit our responsibility to assist with future repair and maintenance obligations. F. Olah agreed and added if the academy put the money in they would rename the courts as noted in article 5.

C. Paquette asked if the intent was to apply the \$20,000 repair of the courts or redo the courts entirely; M. Alberts said it was his understanding they were looking for a long term solution and build new courts from scratch. M. Alberts added the recreation funds may be \$50,000 to \$60,000 in total but over the years those represent receipts in excess of what's been used to maintain programs.

M. Alberts **MOTIONED** to rewrite article 4 of the agreement to reflect the initial paving repair obligations will be bore by Woodstock Academy, and future maintenance would be by mutual agreement. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

M. Alberts noted they will ask Attorney Roberts to make the necessary edits to reflect the motion made, and the Board of Selectman will review the final agreement.

6. Discuss the Condition of the Trout Pond Dam in Crystal Pond Park:

J. Navarro explained that the current spillway is failing, and although they did work with NECCOG on plans last year to rebuild a spillway in a new location, there were no firm plans to abandon the current spillway. The D.E.E.P. has recently requested a regulatory inspection and decision on what would happen with the pond.

J. Navarro said there were discussions on whether to eliminate the pond, breach the dam, making it safe, and also repairing it, but the determined figures were expensive. J. Navarro went on to say the problem with the pond is its remote location making it difficult to get equipment and materials to it, adding they did have plans but they were halted. He provided a hand sketch of the plans which had not been formally drawn.

M. Alberts noted D.E.E.P.'s notification of regulatory inspection by December 31, and recognized the two dam owners as the Town of Woodstock and the Town of Eastford, and the inspection must be done by a Connecticut licensed civil engineer. M. Alberts added Jim Trowbridge and Bill Bradley discussed the different options with him and noted the two essential options were to repair the dam at an estimated \$150,000.00 to \$200,000.00, with as much as \$20,000.00 for an engineered plan, or to decommission the dam at an estimated \$75,000.00 to \$100,000.00 and a \$10,000.00 engineered plan. There is a potential for damage to Weeks Road if the dam broke free.

J. Trowbridge said breaching would have to be done according to an engineered plan with consideration of grading and width of the banks, and the original stream bed to allow water to flow without backing up. F. Olah confirmed that essentially the stream needs to be restored to a pre-dam condition. J. Trowbridge noted the safety issues due to the deteriorating pipes and added though the initial estimates to address this were high it may not cost as much as they had expected. M. Alberts said this was a new process for Woodstock and was not sure the Town had previously dealt with the decommissioning of a dam.

J. Navarro said he talked to J&D Engineering who will write up a proposal for the regulatory inspection and a proposal for if they intend to breach the dam, as well as one to drain the pond.

M. Alberts said historically the associated expenses of the facility at Crystal Pond had been equally split between the two towns and would talk with the Eastford First Selectwoman. J. Trowbridge said the Boards of Selectmen for the two towns need to decide what to do because the park commission's letter did not include any recommendations for repair or breach, and a permit from the State is required in either case. He felt if that if the work was going to be done this year it would be more cost effective to have the inspection done after the breach, if that were the intended plan of direction.

Marla Butts of the IWWA noted the dam's classification as B-Hazard, and said typically it is necessary to review the D.E.E.P. records and then review the site to determine what repairs might be needed, and what is routine maintenance verses repairs, adding until it is known what repairs are needed you will not know what the costs will be. M. Butts said her advice would be to have the inspection done and find out what the costs would be and then decide on repairing or breaching the dam.

The Board of Selectman agreed that J. Navarro should get the quotes for the inspection of the dam. C. Paquette asked J. Navarro about the residence in front of the dam for easier access; J. Navarro said he would reach out to the owner.

J. Trowbridge thanked the Board of Selectmen for their time and consideration and for the input from IWWA so a formal letter could be written to both Woodstock and Eastford BOS.

7. Tax Rebates: tax rebate is for an adjustment for double payment of real estate taxes. Payment made by both old and new owner.

C. Paquette **MOTIONED** to **APPROVE** the following tax rebate:

Tax rebate to Lereta, LLC in the amount of \$1,554.53

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8. Correspondence and Announcements:

M. Alberts briefly reviewed the Troop D report.

M. Alberts talked about the bill passed to establish a Tax Deferment Program for Federal Shutdown Affected Employees, noting no one in Woodstock came forward or expressed any concerns. He added and ordinance may need to be established if this were to happen again in the future.

Toni Berlandy is the new Eversource outreach person.

A letter of resignation from the Woodstock Economic Development Council was received from Carol Ryniewicz.

Grand List total for October 1, 2018 was received from Assessor Emily Carlone; they equate to a 1.05% increase over the 2017 Grand List which could result in approximately \$180,000.00 of additional revenue.

Annual Fire report – the Town of Woodstock has been approached by town of Thompson, who may be interested in using the services of Dick Barron and the deputy fire marshals. While Mr. Barron would like our fire marshals to earn revenue, and a mutual aid agreement would be beneficial especially at the beginning of the Woodstock Fair, discussions with the Town attorney were concerns with protecting the Town from any liabilities.

State Employees Retirement Commission has accepted a recommendation to lower the long-term expected return on assets assumption from 8.0% to 7.0%, and is now directing municipalities who participate in MERS to increase the contribution rate from 11.74% of compensation for employees enrolled in the program in steps over the next several years to 14.22% for the upcoming fiscal year by 2.0% - 2.5% of payroll until fiscal year 2024, which would be almost 22% of compensation.

J. Navarro briefly explained the Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy to look for ways to reduce municipal solid waste regarding composting food waste and would like the Town to come up with a plan showing the movement towards that at the transfer station. J. Navarro added that he has begun collecting data and will provide that to the BOS soon.

M. Alberts said Friday's primary focus of discussion with the Town attorney was on the previous concern regarding residents who have had salt contamination, and help us to understand what role we might have in terms of a community in terms of addressing this with State resources. M. Alberts also noted he requested feedback from Attorney Roberts as quickly as possible regarding Prop 46.

M. Alberts said members of municipalities that were part of NECCOG were invited to participate in an executive session, and based on news reports it appears the preliminary phase of the NECCOG report indicates there is no evidence of a sexual harassment claim. F. Olah asked if the report also included the conditions at the pound and the animals; M. Alberts replied both of those items were to be addressed but the part dealing with the State of Connecticut Department of Agriculture which was focusing on the animals was not yet completed.

9. Citizen's Comments:

Marla Butts noted Section 1-1Q of the CT General Statutes says unless otherwise defined provides a definition of farming which the wetlands act also uses. M. Butts also thanked the Town Clerk for being at the transfer station this weekend selling permits.

M. Butts was concerned with uploading minutes and agendas to the Town website in a timely fashion. F. Olah and M. Alberts agreed this represents part of the issue with the current website; M. Alberts said Joni Cullan and Judy Walberg have reached out to the company who handled the website for Putman, it is not inexpensive but is included in the first draft of the new budget. M. Alberts agreed the current website is not user friendly.

M. Butts last item of concern was in regard to funding of the IWWA budget through a correspondence dated January 16, 2019 which has not yet been replied to. She asked what the process was or if there was any feedback or input regarding the letter that was sent to each of the Selectmen.

M. Alberts replied the BOS was starting the budget process and meeting on February 13, 20, and 27 between 4:00 and 6:00 pm and the material sent would be included and reviewed by each of the Selectmen.

M. Butts said there were two parts to the letter that was sent; one was requesting a budget increase for next year to replace some of the monies taken out of the building inspectors budget and put back in order to cover the Wetlands Agents functions that the building inspector used to do; the second part was they felt they had enough money in their budget to pay for 2 additional hours for Tina Lajoie during the remainder of the current fiscal year giving her up to 39 hours with 2 of those hours being dedicated and paid for under the current monies in the IWWA budget.

M. Alberts said he would be happy for IWWA to come to the meetings but if the money is not budgeted for those items we have to find another way to staff it, adding that unfortunately in the case of T. Lajoie one of the challenges is that she is an employee of the Town and we have certain contractual obligations to honor as a result of her being a member of the union. M. Alberts hoped that as a result of the new budget process there would be a solution, as T. Lajoie appears to be overworked in her capacity as ZEO Agent, IWWA Agent, and as Planning and Zoning assistant. He added one of the things to consider are which are the priorities and how do we make her job more manageable to benefit both her and the Town of Woodstock. M. Alberts commented regarding this fiscal year as a board they need to determine what can be adjusted and will be looking at this at the February 13 budget meeting.

10. Other From Committee:

C. Paquette inquired about feedback from Roger Gale.

M. Alberts shared his review of the 911 recording noting it was difficult to listen to, and although it was a chaotic situation the dispatcher did a good job keeping the victim's husband focused.

11. Adjournment:

C. Paquette **MOVED to ADJOURN; MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**
The meeting was **ADJOURNED** at 5:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Terri Lasota (Recording Secretary)

DISCLAIMER: These minutes have not yet been approved by the Board of Selectmen.
Please refer to next month's minutes for approvals/amendments.