

Wilmington Selectboard Meeting Minutes December 5, 2023

Present: Tom Fitzgerald, John Gannon, Vince Rice, Sarah Fisher, Tony Tribuno

Others Present: Scott Tucker, Jessica DeFrancesco, Matt Murano, Andrew Kirkman, Mike Garber, Therese Lounsbury, Bonnie Lorimer, Nicki Steel, Anthony Knox, Charlie Foster, Joe Testa, Cliff Leinonen, Pat Drury, Matt Santiago, Rachel Rosenbloom, Hugo Gomes, Meg Streeter

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

1. Visitors, Public Comments, Possible Changes to the Agenda
 - #7-add an addition of Fannie Hill
 - #8 add 2 liquor requests
 - Streeter complimented the police department; she thinks they are doing a wonderful job.
2. Approve Minutes of November 21, 2023

Tribuno moved to approve the minutes, Rice second; all in favor.
3. Social Services
 - VNH; still providing support in long-term and maternal health program, and are not able to accept patients in home health or hospice due to staffing shortages.
 - SafePlace
4. Action Items
 - Fisher moved to approve the Vermont 250th Anniversary resolution, Rice second; all in favor.
5. Police Department
 - Chief Murano discussed the need for a School Resource Officer at the Twin Valley Schools. There has been discussion over the years about starting an SRO position. There have been increasing incidents at the TVMHS to which WPD has responded. This causes some strain on staffing and the school issues are becoming more complex. A letter was sent to the school principals and the Chief is waiting for an official word to go forward. This is very early in the planning and there are a lot of unknowns at this point. The proposed SRO would spend time at both schools. Gannon is concerned about the process since this was voted down about 10-years ago at town meetings. The SRO would mentor students, while promoting safety and security. The SRO would carry the full gear as any police officer.
6. Town Meeting
 - The Town Clerk shared her recommendations for Town Meeting (attached).
 - The idea of mailing town reports to every voter will increase the cost of printing and postage significantly; in 2013, voters approved distribution when requested, with an electronic version available on-line.
7. Stump Jumpers
 - Fisher moved to approve the annual road request from Deerfield Valley Stump Jumpers, Tribuno second; all in favor.
 - Tribuno moved to approve adding Fannie Hill Rd with a crossing at Gatehouse Trail to the town line subject to the approval of HMC, Rice second; all in favor.

Fitzgerald moved to enter into Liquor Commission at 6:55 pm, Rice second; all in favor.

8. Liquor Licenses

Tribuno moved to approve;

- A Request to Cater and Open Container Exemption permit for an event at Ratu's Market on 12/16 from 12-3 pm, catered by Wilmington Inn;
- A Second-Class renewal for Farmhouse Market, Rice second; all in favor.

9. Other Business/Correspondence

- Budget Meeting; December 18th at 1:30 pm

10. Select Board Members Comments

- Fitzgerald commented on attending the Cannabis Control Board training.

11. Town Manager's Updates

- Hall Road Dam with culvert/structure and dry hydrant replacement is complete.
- Heading into interrogatories in Teitelbaum case in federal court.

Meeting adjourned at 7:09 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved by the Wilmington Selectboard:

Thomas Fitzgerald, Chair

John Gannon, Vice Chair

Vince Rice, Clerk

Sarah Fisher

Tony Tribuno

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOWN MEETING 2024

- Town Reports get mailed.
 - Time/Day Change? Evening meeting makes voting day too long – the day starts at 6am to open polls for 7am, and we do have voters at that time (could count to see how many and whether we could open later); by law the polls close at 7pm and BCA has work to do to close out the tabulator and count write-ins, and Town Clerk has transport back to the vault, completing election night results for the Secretary of State’s office, and media outlets to contact. Evening hours would also discourage our Seniors. Weekends disenfranchise the residents that work in the hospitality industry, and while it may seem helpful to keep the schools open – that means those residents don’t get to attend. There is no legislation providing for virtual attendees. My recommendation is to remain at 10am on the traditional first Tuesday of March.
 - More than one Informational Meeting, choosing different nights of the week. Any of the ten days prior to the election can be used for informational meetings. We could try to do one back-to-back with the school – they traditionally do the 4th Tuesday in February.
 - Make use of social media outlets, the town e-newsletter, and school newsletters. An ad could be placed in three newspapers for a listing of the seats that have terms that are ending.
 - Encourage employers to allow staff to go and not lose pay.
 - I will ask to borrow the tax time sign to announce Town Meeting Day & Voting. The voting signs that are placed at either end of Beaver Street a minimum of four days before the election can be placed a week before and monitored daily for snow removal and visibility.
 - Let’s be honest - voting is a fundamental right which is protected under federal and state law; [17 VSA 2666](#) says that the official election materials cannot have “improper influence”, and [17 VSA 2017](#), which talks about bribery and undue influence on voters – while that primarily addresses the physical process of voting a ballot, there is no need to blur the lines of the polling place’s integrity, or to draw in unregistered voters. We already have an entity providing lunch in the building, and morning coffee & snacks. Residents will have to make their own daycare arrangements – there isn’t a space in the OSEC building to accommodate additional children. We cannot combine it with the school meeting – the unified union means it is two towns voting at the same time – you can’t vote that from the floor in two separate locations.
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- Things of note for March 5th: Presidential Primary – voters will need to declare which ballot they would like to take to the voting booth; a Presidential Primary tends to increase the voter turnout; the Whitingham BCA will transport the school ballots from Jacksonville to Wilmington at the close of the polls on March 5th.
 - Things of note for November election - Since once again the SoS will be mailing the November election ballots, I am trying to decide on the best method to get people to review their mailing address with the Town Clerk’s Office – especially students that often change their residential location.