

**Town & Village of Woodstock**  
**Town Selectboard & Village Trustees Special Joint Meeting**  
**May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**5:00 PM**  
**Town Hall & Zoom**  
**Minutes**

**Draft minutes are subject to approval.**

Meeting attendance: 19 attended in person and 24 on Zoom

**Present Selectboard:** Chair Susan Ford, Norm Frates Jr., Cliff Johnson

**Present Trustees:** Brenda Blakeman, Chair Lisa Lawlor, Stephen Stuntz, Jamie Fox, Vice Chair Jeffrey Kahn

**Staff:** Eric Duffy, Kitty Mears Koar

**Public:** Nicholas Seldon, Bonnie Clement, John Steinle, Wendy Marrinan, Al Alessi, Roger Logan, Steve Fulkerson, Lynda Fulkerson, Susie Stultz, Anna Ingraham, Dick Sweeney, Mary Ann Sweeney, Clay Reed, Barbara Kennedy, Marybeth Defalco, Sofia Lanlois, Michelle Sutherland, Byron Kelly, Eric Nesbitt, Peter Shoemaker, Margaret Fraser, Deborah Gravel, Gay Travers, Susan Chiefsky, Wendy Spector, Peggy Fraser

**A. Call to order**

**1. Selectboard**

- a. Chair Susan Ford called the Selectboard Meeting of May 28<sup>th</sup> to order at 5:00 PM

**2. Trustees**

- a. Chair Lisa Lawlor called the Trustee Meeting of May 28<sup>th</sup> to order at 5:00 PM

**B. Additions or Deletions from the posted Agenda**

**Ethic Liaison**

**C. Citizen Comments – Three Minutes per participant**

Deborah Gravel expressed distress over a news article in the Vermont Standard regarding what she characterized as the exploitation of a young man's death and his family's grief for personal gain in a legal matter.

Byron Kelly raised concern about the recent closure of the last pharmacy in Woodstock, noting that a significant segment of the elderly population depends on prescription medications that cannot easily be obtained in nearby communities. He urged the Boards to treat this as a community priority even if it falls outside the typical scope of Board business.

Nicholas Seldon called on the Boards to exercise "ethical reflection and morality". Mr. Seldon cited a pattern of alleged misconduct including misleading the public regarding tax dollar spending, along with other topics. Mr. Seldon also alleged that two named Board members had not corrected their homestead status as had previously been represented to the public.

Steve Fulkerson spoke of his appreciation for the Woodstock community and acknowledged the progress made on long-deferred infrastructure maintenance. He expressed sadness at the level of community discord played out publicly in recent years and extended his gratitude to those who serve in local government.

## **D. Discussion**

### **Quarterly Update**

Eric Duffy presented a quarterly progress report on the Joint Boards' strategic goals, with PowerPoint prepared by Chief of Staff Stephanie Appelfeller. He noted that the Boards had established four overarching objectives in 2024: housing development, effective and efficient government, affordability, and climate resiliency.

Regarding FY25 achievements, Mr. Duffy reported that the Town had purchased the Woodstock Aqueduct and approved of approximately \$8.3 million in infrastructure and property investments, both with roughly 80% voter approval. Software systems for short-term rental tracking and permitting have been updated. Town Hall technology had been improved, including the return of equipment loaned by a community member during the COVID-19 pandemic. A five-year capital plan was developed collaboratively by the Finance Office and department heads. Economic Development Director, Abbie Sherman, was hired and meets monthly with the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce; a marketing committee was restructured to report directly to her. A downtown restaurant map initiative was launched and deemed successful. Water and sewer billing reconciliation remained ongoing, with the finance staff working to untangle longstanding billing complexities. Over \$2.5 million in grants had been secured, supporting water, wastewater, and community infrastructure.

Regarding FY26 goals, Mr. Duffy noted that an RFP for a housing strategy plan was out, a housing working group had been formed by the Selectboard in early May, and the Town plan update would commence once the Planning Commission completes its work on the Bylaws. A review of advisory committee structures had been placed on hold pending the Planning Commission's bylaw recommendations, with the current expectation being that reporting structures would be clarified rather than consolidated. The main Wastewater Plant Bond passed at Town Meeting with approximately 80% approval, and schematic design review was now complete. The merger analysis, which had been a FY26 goal, was deferred pending the seating of new Selectboard members following two open seats.

### **Village Conservancy Presentation**

Wendy Spector representing the Woodstock Village Conservancy, presented two related memoranda to the Joint Boards. She prefaced her remarks by noting that a letter of agreement between the Conservancy and the Municipality had been signed earlier in the

year, and that the purpose of this presentation was to move from that general agreement toward a more specific shared process.

### **Process Framework (Steps A–F)**

The first memo outlined a proposed six-step framework for shepherding Conservancy initiatives from idea generation through execution. Step A involves generating ideas from community members, Municipal staff, and Conservancy leadership, with the Conservancy assessing its capacity to pursue them. Step B involves developing an initiative outline — a structured document addressing the goal, scope, cost range, stakeholders, permits, timetable, and next steps — through an internal working group that may include community members and Municipal staff. Step C involves refining that outline through the Conservancy's leadership team. Step D involves sharing the outline with the Municipal Manager and relevant staff for input. Step E involves presenting the initiative to the Joint Boards, who determine how to bring it to the public. Step F involves returning to the boards for final approval and execution.

The Boards engaged in substantive discussion about this framework. Chair Susan Ford encouraged more robust public involvement at the idea generation stage (Step A), before concepts become too developed. Wendy Spector acknowledged this concern and noted that for certain initiatives — such as the rehabilitation of the Green — informal public outreach through surveys and stakeholder focus groups had already occurred prior to engaging the Boards. Norm Frates Jr. asked for a concrete example of a Conservancy initiative, prompting Wendy Spector to describe several in brief: "Branch Out Woodstock" (a multi-year downtown tree planting initiative), the rehabilitation of the Green, the Conservancy Corps (a twice-monthly volunteer maintenance program under DPW guidance), a bicentennial celebration committee for the Green, and a rehabilitation project for Tribou Park. It was asked whether the Conservancy's first point of contact for all initiatives would be the Municipal Manager, and Wendy Spector confirmed this was stipulated in the letter of agreement, with broader staff engagement occurring only after board approval. Stephen Stuntz also suggested that the breadth of public feedback gathered for any given initiative be documented, noting that the scale of a project should correspond to the depth of community input obtained.

Gay Travers asked why a formal agreement was necessary rather than a simple approval process. Mr. Duffy and the Chair Lisa Lawlor clarified that because the initiatives involve municipal land and may implicate state and federal requirements, insurance, drainage, infrastructure, and DPW coordination, a structured process is essential. Mr. Duffy further clarified that the letter of agreement governs the working relationship, not contractual obligations, which would be handled separately if and when construction or physical work is undertaken by the Town.

### **Green Rehabilitation — Request for Public Feedback Sessions**

The second memo addressed a specific request related to the rehabilitation of the Woodstock Green. Wendy Spector summarized that following prior stakeholder outreach, surveys conducted at Market on the Green, and engagement of a landscape designer using philanthropic funds, the Conservancy believed it was ready to hold dedicated public feedback sessions. She requested the Boards' approval to: publish information about the initiative via listserv and other channels; conduct a public survey; and hold at least one

public feedback session at Town Hall over the summer. The proposed feedback sessions would focus on educating the public about the current physical condition of the Green, sharing initial design concepts based on stakeholder priorities, and gathering broader community input to refine those concepts.

Peggy Fraser of the public asked who the "stakeholders" were; Wendy Spector identified them as including abutters, the Woodstock Inn, the Friends of the Green, Friends of Faulkner Park, Sustainable Woodstock, the Rotary, the Garden Club, the school superintendent and principals, the Thompson Senior Center, and the former DPW Director, among others.

Susie Stulz urged the boards not to rely exclusively on the listserv for public notice, noting that many community members no longer read it. Wendy Marrinan suggested the Town of Woodstock website as a preferred and more reliable public information platform. Because the Boards had not been formally warned to vote on these requests, no action was taken at this meeting. Mr. Duffy recommended that the Selectboard consider the matter at its Tuesday, June 2nd meeting, and that the Village Trustees take it up at their June 9th meeting. Wendy Spector was asked to submit a written summary of what she was requesting the Boards to consider at those respective meetings.

#### **E. Approval of Minutes**

Prior to the vote, board members noted several corrections. Chair Susan Ford identified that the name of Bruce Gould was misspelled in the April 1st minutes, that the meeting time was listed incorrectly as 4:00 PM rather than 3:30 PM, and that a Trustee's first name was spelled incorrectly ("Stephen" not "Stephan"). Chair Susan Ford also noted that the name "Carl Anders" was misspelled throughout the April 1st minutes and requested additional time to review that set of minutes more thoroughly.

Motion: by Chair Susan Ford to approve the minutes of February 17, February 23, and March 25 with the corrections noted, and to table the April 1st minutes pending further review (5:54 PM)

Seconded: by Cliff Johnson

Vote: 3-0-0, passed

Motion: by Stephen Stuntz to approve the minutes of February 17, February 23, and March 25 with the corrections noted, and to table the April 1st minutes pending further review (5:54 PM)

Seconded: by Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

#### **F. Adjournment**

Motion: by Chair Susan Ford to adjourn the Meeting (5:55PM)

Seconded: by Cliff Johnson

Vote: 3-0-0, passed

Motion: by Chair Lisa Lawlor to adjourn the Meeting (5:55PM)

Seconded: by Brenda Blakeman

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Kitty Mears Koar*