

**Town of Woodstock
Selectboard Meeting
July 22nd, 2025
4:30 PM
Town Hall & Zoom
Minutes**

Draft minutes are subject to approval.

Present: Chair Ray Bourgeois, Laura Powell, Greg Fullerton, Susan Ford

Staff: Eric Duffy, Kitty Mears Koar

Public: Byron Kelly, Roger Logan, PJ Eames, Mariza McKee, Lauren Fisher

Call to order

1. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of July 22nd to order at 4:30 PM

A. Additions to & deletions from posted agenda

Dispatch Contract

Propane Bid

Other Business

B. Manager's Report

Eric Duffy reported that water bills are due at the end of the month and encouraged residents to submit payment within the next eight days.

Eric Duffy announced that at the next Selectboard meeting on August 19th the company conducting the Town Reappraisal will be present to give a presentation on their process and requirements for residents.

Eric Duffy also shared good news that the town will likely be able to receive a revolving fund with a zero-interest loan for the 1B project, potentially up to \$4,100,000, after a period of public comment ending in September.

Eric Duffy reported that the fiscal year was closing out successfully, with the Village, Town, and Sewer all ending the year with a surplus. For the town, this was particularly impressive considering approximately \$450,000 of Undesignated Fund Balance was used for the purchase of the water company. Despite this expenditure, the general fund still ended with a surplus, meaning the Undesignated Fund Balance should not be impacted. The Manager thanked the finance department and all department heads for their work in maintaining the town's financial security.

C. Votes

Liquor Licenses:

Liquor License: Bradens, LLC- 1st, 3rd and OCP

Motion: by Susan Ford to approve an : Bradens, LLC- 1st, 3rd and OCP. This motion was based on the assumption that the state is reviewing the application since the board no longer receives detailed information (6:33 PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

32 the Green – Sewer Abatement

Mariza McKee requests a refund for an overpayment on their sewer bill. She explained that their bill reported incorrect usage, which they paid in full, resulting in an overpayment of approximately \$2,400.

The Manager confirmed that the meter reading was incorrect, resulting in an erroneous bill. This item had been on the agenda two meetings prior, but the requestors had emergencies and couldn't attend.

Motion: by Laura Powell to refund the other payment to Mariza and Patrick McKee at 32 the Green as it meets the criteria for being a manifest error. (6:35 PM)

Seconded: by Susan Ford

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

WES Sewer Abatement

Joe Rogoli, Facility Director for Mountain Views Supervisory Union, requested an abatement on penalties and interest for a sewer invoice for Woodstock Elementary School. He explained that they had received the high school bill but not the elementary school bill until June 6, which included interest and penalties. Their accounting department indicated they had not received the original bill.

Mr. Rogoli presented evidence that they had been receiving invoices from the town with incorrect addresses, showing recent examples where addresses were incorrect or mislabeled. He noted that they had already paid the principal amount in full and were only requesting abatement of the late fees and penalties.

Motion: by Laura Powell to abate the late fee and penalty for the school district for the Woodstock Elementary School bill. (6:39 PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

SB Protocol Packet

This item was not discussed during the meeting.

Vondell Cobb Conservation VLT

Eric Duffy presented a map showing areas to be excluded from conservation on the Vondell property. Previously, Susan Ford had worked with the Land Conservation Trust to identify areas that could be conserved or not conserved. However, upon further investigation, it was discovered that much of the property originally excluded from conservation would not be buildable due to animal habitats.

The Planning and Community Development Department, with assistance from Harry Falconer and the Ottawaquechee Regional Commission, identified alternative plots of land that could potentially be built on more easily than the originally excluded land. This proposal maintains

the same amount of land excluded from conservation, so the assessment on appraisal and potential grant from the Land Conservation Trust would not change, while opening up some potential land for future development. The excluded areas were marked in purple on the map presented.

Motion: by Susan Ford for the board to exclude the areas noted by purple in the proposed grant. (6:41PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

Marketing Committee Appointments

Eric Duffy explained that they had planned to promote and receive applications for the marketing committee but were still finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Chamber of Commerce.

Susan Ford indicated they were close to finalizing the MOU and suggested proceeding with advertising for the appointments. She proposed having a five-member committee with two members from the Chamber of Commerce. Roger Logan had previously indicated interest in serving.

Susan Ford recommended seeing what applications they receive and fitting them to the skill set needed, rather than specifying required skills in the advertisement.

Motion: by Susan Ford to create a marketing committee under the jurisdiction of the Select Board to be comprised of five community members with two Chamber members, and to advertise those vacancies as soon as possible.

(6:44PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

South Woodstock Design Review Committee Appointments

Susan Ford noted at Charles Humpstone, a valued member of the South Woodstock Design Review Committee, had died the previous week. She thanked him for his service and noted that his passing created an opening on the committee.

The board discussed that proper procedure would be to advertise the position and have interested parties fill out an application. The committee is either a three or five-member board (not an even number), and it was noted that it would be appropriate to advertise the position and review all applications received.

Dispatch Contracts

Eric Duffy explained that in 2023, the Sheriff's office conducted an RFP for dispatching services. The town's proposal was accepted, and a contract was negotiated with the Sheriff. Since then, the Sheriff has expanded services to numerous new communities, nearly doubling what they originally covered when the RFP went out.

Interim Chief Chris O'Keefe met with the Sheriff to renegotiate the contract based on the increased workload flowing through the town's dispatch services. The new contract almost doubles the current revenue from around \$50,000 to approximately \$90,000, reflecting the difference in workload. Eric Duffy confirmed that payment terms are quarterly.

Motion: by Susan Ford moved to approve the dispatch contract with the sheriff's office. (6:48PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

Propane Bid

Motion: by Susan Ford moved to approve the propane bid for Dead River dated July 15th 2025 (6:49PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

Housing Advisory Group

Trena Tolliver joined online to present a request for funding approval for a rent-to-locals incentive program. They had received an application from Todd Ulman for one of his units at 2706 East Woodstock, a fully furnished one-bedroom apartment. He had secured a tenant who works locally as a general contractor.

The lease term runs from June 23, 2025, to June 30, 2026. Trena Tolliver requested approval for a \$6,000 program incentive for the one-year rental, to be paid in two payments of \$3,000 - one at the beginning and one at the end of the lease.

Ray Bourgeois raised concerns about what would happen if the property (currently listed for sale for over 230 days) were sold during the lease period. Trena Tolliver explained that the new owners would need to maintain the existing lease as part of the purchase terms. Susan suggested strengthening the language in the agreement from "every effort must be taken" to "the owner shall ensure the lease is not broken."

Trena Tolliver confirmed that after board approval, they would create a legal agreement with Todd incorporating the suggested language regarding property sale. The first payment would be made after the agreement is signed, and the second payment would be made at the end of the lease around June 30, 2026.

Motion: by Laura Powell approves the incentive for private major enterprises for a one-year lease for a local worker at 2706 East Woodstock. (6:54PM)

Seconded: by Susan Ford

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

Future of Fireworks

Eric Duffy explained that since his tenure began, the planning, organization, and contracts for the annual July 4th fireworks celebration in Woodstock have been handled through his office. The SelectBoard had previously expressed a desire to end that process, hoping a local

organization or volunteer group would take over, though whether the board would still provide funding remained undecided.

With July 4th, 2026, being a significant anniversary for the country, the board wanted to discuss the future of fireworks in Woodstock.

Susan Ford shared research she had conducted on the fireworks dating back to 2009. She noted that historically, the town wasn't involved in organizing the event - it was managed by either the Chamber of Commerce or Rotary Club, and attendees paid for parking. It was previously a full-day event run by various nonprofits, with games for children run by Spectrum Teen, music funded by Pentangle, and approximately 15 different sponsors including the Woodstock Inn, Chamber, Pentangle, and Dead River.

Susan Ford observed that over time, responsibility had shifted solely to the Town. She suggested returning to a community-driven event with multiple organizations sharing responsibility.

PJ Eames joined the meeting and expressed interest in helping with the event, suggesting expanding it to include a community picnic on the Green. She offered to be involved but not as the lead organizer. Lauren Fisher, a Village resident, asked if the town would be willing to fund the event even if they didn't organize it.

Eric Duffy indicated that approximately \$13,000-14,000 was budgeted for fireworks, with some already spent on this year's event, leaving about \$7,000 available. He noted that next year's celebration might be more expensive due to the anniversary. He also mentioned that the Town doesn't currently have a company reserved for next year's fireworks, as the board had previously decided not to move forward with arrangements.

The board and attendees discussed potential approaches to organizing the event, with PJ Eames volunteering to collect emails from interested parties. Eric Duffy agreed to contact the fireworks company to check availability for next year.

Discussion of Short-Term Rental Policies

Eric Duffy provided context on the short-term rental ordinance situation. Previously, the Town and Village worked together with the Planning Commission to develop a short-term rental ordinance. Both boards passed it, but both ordinances were challenged individually. The Village ordinance was upheld, but the Town's ordinance was overturned, resulting in two different regulatory frameworks.

Susan Ford expressed concern about having no cap on short-term rentals in the Town and raised issues about safety and the fact that many short-term rentals are advertising but not registered. She noted that the town is a different demographic from the Village regarding short-term rentals, with more rural spaces, so mirroring the Village ordinance might not be appropriate.

Laura Powell notes that surrounding communities like Ludlow, Londonderry, and West Windsor are all developing their policies. They suggested exploring whether short-term rental privileges should be an exclusive benefit for primary residents, as has been done in other towns.

They also proposed developing the ordinance with the intention of putting it to a referendum vote around Town Meeting Day to ensure broad participation.

Safety concerns were emphasized, with the board noting that during recent floods, they were unable to reach guests in short-term rentals who were under boil water and do-not-drink notices. Additionally, some short-term rentals don't comply with fire safety and smoke detector requirements.

The board discussed next steps, considering whether to involve the Planning Commission, which currently has a full workload with Bylaw Review and Town Planning. They decided to review the previous ordinance, incorporate feedback received, and hold public meetings to gather input before making revisions.

Roger Logan, commented that one major complaint about short-term rentals is the unlimited number of stays. He suggested limiting participation in discussions to Woodstock residents, noting that during previous discussions, professional lobbyists from outside the community had significant influence on the outcome.

The board agreed to schedule public meetings and include the topic on future agendas.

D. Potential Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313

Motion: by Susan Ford to go into an Executive Session 1 V.S.A After making a specific finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage:

Contracts Discussion (5:12PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed (Returned 5:23PM)

Motion: by Susan Ford to exit executive Session (9:23PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

E. Approval of Minutes

Susan Ford noted that she had made some changes to the minutes, with the only substantive change being to the sewer abatement for 498 South Road, adding that the property owner was reminded that under the guidelines, they would need to come back in three years.

Motion: by Laura Powell to approve the minutes of 05.29.25 and 06.26.25 with the changes noted (9:25PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

F. Citizen's Comments

Byron Kelly, a Woodstock resident, shared three concerns:

1. He referenced an email he had sent to the Manager regarding financial issues, noting that upon further research, he believed the amount in question was over \$300,000 rather than

the \$100,000 initially mentioned. He stated that his research into this matter through public records requests was not meant to be adversarial.

2. He expressed concern about executive sessions, particularly regarding the police contract discussion in June. He believed that if the two boards discussed the contract in Executive Session, it might have violated open meeting laws since it was a contract between two public bodies.
3. He commented on the placement of citizen comments at the end of the meeting, suggesting it disenfranchises citizens who might have to wait through a long meeting or miss the opportunity if the board goes into executive session before citizen comments.

G. Other Business - None

H. Adjournment

Motion: by Susan Ford to adjourn
the meeting at (5:28PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Mears Koar

Susan B. Ford

Raymond Bourgeois

Greg Fullerton

Laura Powell

Signature: 
Susan B. Ford (Sep 10, 2025 09:15:52 EDT)

Email: sford@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 
Raymond Bourgeois (Sep 10, 2025 09:20:32 EDT)

Email: rbourgeois@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 
Greg Fullerton (Sep 10, 2025 12:38:02 EDT)

Email: gfullerton@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 
Laura Powell (Sep 12, 2025 14:17:50 EDT)

Email: lpowell@townofwoodstock.org