

**Town of Woodstock  
Special Selectboard Meeting  
November 10<sup>th</sup> , 2025  
4:30 PM  
Town Hall & Zoom  
Minutes**

**Draft minutes are subject to approval.**

**Present:** Chair Ray Bourgeois, Laura Powell, Vice Chair Susan Ford, Keri Cole

**Staff:** Eric Duffy

**Public:** Chris Williamson, Norm Frates, Roger Logan, Joe DiNatale, Cliff Johnson, Clayton Reed, Susan Fuller

**Call to order**

1. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of November 10<sup>th</sup> to order at 4:30 PM

**A. Additions to & deletions from posted agenda**

A reminder was given about tours of the Wastewater Treatment Plant scheduled for Saturday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

**B. Interviews of Selectboard Applicants**

The Selectboard conducted interviews with six applicants for the vacant Selectboard position. Each candidate was asked the same set of questions regarding their interest in serving, priorities for town goals, ability to make difficult decisions, and availability to attend meetings.

**Chris Williamson**

Chris Williamson introduced himself as a Woodstock native who is now raising his family in town. He expressed deep appreciation for the community and stated he feels fortunate to be raising his own family in Woodstock. Williamson highlighted his professional experience in project management where he was responsible for overseeing scope, budgets, timelines, and risk assessments. He also mentioned his experience as a landlord managing rental units in Woodstock, which has given him insight into housing issues and requirements. Regarding town goals and priorities, Williamson emphasized the importance of maintaining a stable and predictable tax base while focusing on growing it.

He identified the Capital Plan as critical, particularly the Woodstock Aqueduct and wastewater projects. He stressed that Woodstock's affordability was very important, noting that expanding housing opportunities and supporting thoughtful development were essential. Williamson expressed interest in exploring how the Selectboard could work more closely with Woodstock schools, which he views as inseparable from the community.

When asked about making difficult decisions, Williamson stated he would approach different viewpoints with empathy, working to understand perspectives while explaining the reasoning behind board decisions.

### **Norm Frates**

Norm Frates introduced himself as a longtime resident of over 50 years who attended Elementary and High School in Woodstock. He has been in the mortgage banking business for over 35 years in Woodstock, bringing knowledge of financing, real estate, budgeting, and business relationships.

Regarding the Town's goals and objectives, Frates agreed with the current priorities, particularly infrastructure with Water and Wastewater Management. He mentioned he would like to take a hard look at possibly merging the Selectboard and the Trustees. He stated he doesn't come with any particular agenda and agrees with the current prioritization of actions. Concerning difficult decisions, Frates expressed comfort making unpopular choices as long as decisions are made in the best interest of the town and taxpayers. Frates confirmed his commitment to attend all regularly scheduled meetings and special forums within reason.

### **Roger Logan**

Roger Logan stated that having attended many Selectboard meetings in recent years, he believes Woodstock government has been on the right track, addressing problems decades in the making and making hard choices despite public blowback. He expressed that the Town is being put on a path to a healthy, sustainable, and civically vibrant future, and he would like to help with that effort. Logan's background is in marketing communications with strong project management skills. He has been engaged in the community since moving to Woodstock in 2018, working with the Thompson Center, Woodstock Community Trust, and currently serving on the Town and Village Marketing Committee.

Regarding priorities, Logan identified housing as a key issue, emphasizing the need to find strategic levers that allow for major housing development rather than just one or two houses at a time. Logan noted that governance and communication with citizens have improved significantly but could be enhanced further. He expressed interest in developing a strategic communications plan with appropriate policies and procedures to ensure the Town communicates with one voice. On making difficult decisions, Logan stated that if all points of view are heard and incorporated into the discussion, then evidence-based hard

decisions must sometimes be made. He emphasized the importance of continuing to communicate the rationale behind decisions.

### **Joe Dinatale**

Joe Dinatale stated he has lived in Woodstock since 1990 and has served on various Town committees including Design Review, the Planning Commission, and most recently on the Economic Development Commission. Dinatale expressed deep love for the Town and emphasized that the single greatest driver of economic conditions in Woodstock would be a new school. He stated he would like to work hard to help make that happen. When asked about making unpopular decisions, Dinatale indicated he doesn't shy away from conflict and believes it is his responsibility as a citizen to have opinions.

### **Cliff Johnson**

Cliff Johnson expressed feeling fortunate to be part of the Woodstock community, which he described as close-knit with solvable problems. Having moved to the community about five years ago, Johnson wishes to give back and help as much as he can. Johnson described his unique skill set as including his background growing up in a lower middle-income working-class family on a farm, which drew him to Vermont where farming remains strong yet struggling. He emphasized wanting to ensure voices from all segments of the community are heard. Johnson worked as an attorney with experience in affordable housing initiatives. Johnson noted his multiple perspectives on community issues: he has commercial office space in the Village and owns Sleep Woodstock giving him insight into tourism.

Regarding priorities, Johnson identified four key areas: communications planning (internal and external), the capital plan to address funding needs, infrastructure investments (wastewater treatment plant, school, water improvements), and future-proofing for challenges like flooding. On making difficult decisions, Johnson stated his professional experience as both an attorney and business leader has prepared him to navigate challenges and ensure everyone is heard even if they don't get everything they want. Johnson confirmed his ability to attend meetings and forums, noting he has support from both his company and family to prioritize this commitment if selected.

### **Clayton Reed**

Clayton Reed introduced himself as a 13-year resident of the Village who initially thought Woodstock was "the cutest little Town in the whole world" but has since recognized its needs and challenges, motivating him to help. Reed described getting

involved with the community through the Rotary Club, where he served as President for two consecutive years. His background includes 20 years in ministry, and he currently works in IT from his home in Woodstock. Regarding Town priorities, Reed emphasized the merger of Town and Village governments as a high priority, describing the current structure as inefficient and confusing. He also highlighted completing the Aqueduct repairs and housing development as critical issues. Reed noted the Town had only added one net housing unit in the past year despite a goal of adding 150 over a few years. He mentioned the need for incentives to build, incentives for owners to rent, planning and zoning changes, and water infrastructure improvements. Reed also expressed support for using the 1% tax monies for Town capital projects to catch up on backlog rather than finding new ways to spend the money. On his specific goals, Reed reiterated his interest in the Town-Village merger and helping to explain and "sell" it to the community. Regarding difficult decisions, Reed stated he has experience making unpopular choices in different roles. His approach involves having fair discussions, choosing what is best for the community, standing by decisions, and remaining open to explaining the rationale both before and after decisions are made.

### **C. Citizen's Comments**

Susan Fuller from Woodstock commented that she thought it would be good to have a Selectboard member from the town (rather than the village) given the current composition of the board with Greg leaving. She also noted that the board should not be biased toward people who think one way or another about the town-village merger, and that this is another reason to balance town versus village representation.

#### **Proposed Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313**

Motion: by Laura Powell to enter executive session under 1 VSA section 313 after making a specific finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage, to discuss the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that the public body shall make a final decision to hire or appoint a public officer or employee in an open meeting and shall explain the reasons for its final decision during the open meeting. (5:09 PM)

Seconded: by Keri Cole

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

Motion: by Laura Powell to exit executive Session (5:24 PM)

Seconded: by Ray Bourgeois

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

After returning from executive session, the Selectboard thanked all the candidates who applied, noting they were impressed with the slate of candidates on such short notice.

Motion: by Laura Powell to appoint Cliff Johnson as Selectboard member based on his experience with housing solutions as well as his business experience. (5:25PM)

Seconded: by Ray Bourgeois

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

**A. Other Business -None**

**B. Adjournment**

Motion: by Laura Powell to adjourn the meeting( 5:26 PM)

Seconded: by Keri Cole

Vote: 4-0-0, passed

*Respectfully submitted,*

Kitty Mears Koar