

**Town of Woodstock
Selectboard Meeting
October 21st, 2025
6:00 PM
Town Hall & Zoom
Minutes**

Draft minutes are subject to approval.

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

Staff: Eric Duffy

Public: Seth Webb, Roger Logan, Emily Friedman, Susan Chiefsky, Keri Bristow, Karim Houry, Jon Spector

Call to order

1. Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of October 21st to order at 6:00 PM

A. Additions to & deletions from posted agenda

Vote for quote on work for the middle bridge

Bid Approval for elevation work with FEMA

Budget for Water allocation

Liquor License

B. Citizen's Comments

Seth Webb, a school board member and chair of the Rebuild Group, provided an update on the March bond vote for the school rebuild. He explained that the high school/middle school is now ranked as the worst physical school building in the state. The state of Vermont created a program to fund at least 20% of eligible school construction costs, and since they have pre-approval, they only need to pass a bond vote. He noted that voters would only be responsible for about 75% of the cost if it passes, which could offset inflation since 2024. The plan aligns with state redistricting, which focuses on consolidation of administration rather than facilities. Mr. Webb invited residents to reach out to the working group with questions or to sign up for updates.

Roger Logan thanked Greg Fullerton for his time on the board and all his contributions to the Town. He also thanked Eric Duffy and the staff for making the new website more user-friendly and functional.

C. Manager's Report

Eric Duffy reported that the VDRB meeting scheduled for tomorrow had to be canceled because the agenda was not posted on the website. Notification of the cancellation has been posted on the website, listserv, and substack.

He announced a vacancy on the Selectboard with applications being accepted until the end of October. Interested applicants should reach out to his office for information about the process.

The goals and objectives conversation with the Selectboard and Trustees will continue Thursday morning at 8 AM, focusing on overarching goals and short-term goals to guide the budget process and staff allocation. The public is encouraged to attend to advocate for certain goals.

The Selectboard voted last week to have the wastewater renovation project on the March Town warning. Engineers are preparing language for the websites describing the plan and its necessity. Eric Duffy and Susan Ford will be meeting next Friday to discuss allocation of costs.

He thanked the Police Department and public works crew for their efforts during the busy foliage season, noting that there were few complaints from residents this year about tourism.

Finally, he mentioned that the team visited Saint Albans to meet with Dominic Cloud to discuss ideas that could be implemented in Woodstock. Despite Abby Sherman only being with the Town for a month, they are already seeing progress and new ideas being brought back.

D. Discussion

Friends of East End Park Endowment Presentation

Emily Friedman, representing Friends of East End Park, presented a proposal for creating an endowment called the "East End Park Forever Fund." She provided background on the park, explaining that it was developed from a former snow dump site through community funding, private donations, and state funds over more than a decade. The park was developed with three intertwined goals: environmental restoration, economic development, and community building.

She explained the current management structure, with Friends of East End Park operating as a project of Woodstock Community Trust, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The Town and Village own the property, while Friends of East End Park handles maintenance responsibilities according to a Memorandum of Agreement.

The proposed endowment would be established through the Vermont Community Foundation as a nonprofit reserve fund, which offers flexibility in how distributions are used. The fund would be used for long-term maintenance and replacement of key infrastructure. Ms. Friedman noted that the endowment would not cover the full budget of East End Park but would provide a consistent and reliable funding source. The fundraising

campaign would take approximately 5-7 years to reach their goal, with distributions being reinvested during that time.

Laura Powell asked about the number of volunteers involved with the project. Ms. Friedman responded that about half a dozen people handle administrative work, with an additional dozen or two who help with events and gardening. She mentioned that they plan to update the memorandum of understanding with the Town in the coming months to clarify how funds would be managed, and decisions would be made.

Fireworks Volunteer Committee Presentation

Susan Chiefsky and Keri Bristow presented on behalf of the Fireworks Volunteer Committee. They shared plans to expand the Fourth of July celebration into a three-day weekend of events. The committee includes store owners, the nurse from the elementary school, Artistree groups, and Change the World Kids.

Planned activities include a Friday night concert at East End Park, a road race, a bike parade for children, a pool party at the rec center (weather permitting), and culminating with fireworks on July 5th. They are considering having nonprofit groups like booster clubs set up fundraising booths at the high school before the fireworks. The committee is currently fundraising with plans for gate tickets at the fireworks event and potentially asking participants who raise funds to contribute 25% toward the fireworks fund.

The committee will keep the board informed on a monthly basis and plans to meet tomorrow at the Town Hall at 3:15 PM to continue planning. They noted that a trustee has expressed interest in bringing back the lobster dinner.

Appointment of New Selectboard Member Process

Eric Duffy reported that the deadline for applications for the vacant Selectboard position is the end of October. Applications will be reviewed at the next meeting on November 18th, though the board discussed the possibility of having someone join sooner to participate in budget conversations. The position announcement has been posted on the listserv and website.

Vondell Cobb Conservation Public Forums

Eric Duffy announced that two public forums are scheduled regarding the Vondell/Cobb property: tomorrow Oct 22nd at Mon Vert at 10 AM and next Thursday October 31st at Abracadabra Coffee at 9:30 AM. The purpose is to gather feedback from the public on what to do with the land. Susan Ford has been in contact with the Vermont Land Trust about potentially receiving a grant to conserve all or a portion of the land.

Susan Ford added that they need to make a decision on how much land to conserve, noting that conserving more land would result in more funding. They are seeking public input to help with this decision, and private fundraising is also underway.

Pausing of current EDC Grants and deadlines for outstanding grant funds

Laura Powell discussed pausing the current Economic Development Commission (EDC) incentive programs now that Abby Sherman, the new Economic Development Director, is in place. This would give her time to evaluate the funds and make recommendations going forward. She suggested pausing the advertised incentive programs, including housing programs and the storefront incentive, and setting a deadline of the end of this year for anyone with outstanding grants over two years old to apply for reimbursement.

Eric Duffy noted that they are working to determine what money has been allocated, what has not been given out, and what is encumbered. The board agreed to add this as a voting item for the next meeting.

Budget for the Water Rates

Eric Duffy initiated a discussion about how to allocate employee time and salaries between Town, Village, sewer, and water budgets now that the Town owns the water system. He explained that his salary is currently allocated 55% to the Town budget, 25% to the Village budget, and 20% to the sewer budget. He asked if the board wanted to see certain employees allocated to the Water Department and if so, how much. The board indicated they would like to see staff time properly allocated across all departments, including water. Eric Duffy will prepare a spreadsheet with proposed allocations for the upcoming budget season.

E. Vote

Sewer Abatement- 61 River Street, Woodstock

Karim Houry of 61 River Street requested an abatement of their sewer bill, stating they had been incorrectly billed since purchasing the property. The error was based on a default cubic feet calculation rather than their actual meter reading. Eric Duffy and Robert Densmore calculated the overcharge at approximately \$1,700.

The board discussed whether there was a precedent for crediting back charges from seven years ago. Unable to determine the precedent immediately, the board decided to table the discussion until the November 18th meeting to research past decisions.

Motion: by Susan Ford to table the discussion until next month's meeting

On November 18th (6:42 PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Bid approval Elevation project with FEMA

Eric Duffy presented bids for a FEMA-funded home elevation project that had been approved a year and a half to two years ago. After multiple attempts to secure qualified bids, the project was divided into separate components to make it more attractive to

individual contractors. Susan Ford explained that while FEMA is providing the funding, the Town must administer the bids and contracts.

Motion: by Susan Ford to approve the three bids as outlined (6:44 PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Ambulance Write offs

The board reviewed a memo regarding ambulance billing write-offs totaling \$119,592.32. Susan Ford expressed concern about the number of non-residents reporting no insurance who receive ambulance services. Eric Duffy noted that this amount is higher than the \$90,000 budgeted for the year.

Roger Logan suggested looking into how other municipalities handle this issue and whether collection efforts could be outsourced to reduce the amount written off each year.

Motion: by Susan Ford to approve writing off \$119,592.32 in ambulance billing and to explore ways to improve collection in the future (6:49 PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Extension of Woodstock's Marketing Coordinator Contract through November 2025

Eric Duffy explained that Jessica Kirby (Marketing Coordinator) contract was expiring and requested an extension through November to allow time for discussion about future marketing efforts and potential changes to her role.

Motion: by Susan Ford to extend the Marketing Coordinator's contract through November 30, 2025 (6:51 PM)

Seconded: by Keri Cole

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Selectboard Procedures

The board discussed protocols for meeting agendas and timelines. Eric Duffy noted that while they had voted on an agenda process in summer 2023, they had gotten away from it. The goal is to have agendas locked 10 days before meetings to allow for better preparation by board members, reduce surprises, and improve efficiency. The policy would provide guidelines for when late additions would be allowed.

Motion: by Susan Ford to approve the Select Board protocols and timeline for meetings and agendas (6:53 PM)

Seconded: by Keri Cole

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

July 4th Fireworks Contract

Eric Duffy presented a contract with Pyrotecnico for fireworks on July 5, 2026, at a cost of \$18,000. This represents an increase of \$4,000-5,000 over last year, attributed to it

being the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. He noted that the contract includes a 10% cancellation fee if the Town decides not to proceed. Currently, \$8,000 remains in this fiscal year's budget for fireworks.

Motion: by Susan Ford to approve the fireworks contract with a requirement to confirm by June 4th whether to proceed with the fireworks (6:56 PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Reserve Fund Transfer

Eric Duffy explained that at the last Town meeting, residents voted to create a reserve fund and allow the board to transfer any percentage above 15% of the general budget from the end of the fund balance to this fund. The audit undesignated fund balance is \$1.65 million, leaving a surplus of \$397,199.07 that could be transferred to the reserve fund. This fund can be used at the Selectboard's discretion for any purpose.

Motion: by Susan to transfer \$397,199.07 to the discretionary reserve fund (7:00PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Funds for Village Flower Baskets

Chair Ray Bourgeois received an email requesting \$2,000 to purchase flower plugs and seeds for the Village flower baskets. The high school needs to make this purchase now to grow plants for next year. This expense is separate from soil, watering, and other costs associated with the flower baskets.

Roger Logan suggested that such expenses should be funded through business organizations rather than using Town funds or local option tax money, arguing that development funds should be reserved for significant projects rather than small beautification efforts.

Motion: by Susan to approve \$2,000 from the local option tax for flower basket plants (7:00PM)

Seconded: by Keri Cole

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Re-appointment of David Green as Town Health Officer

Eric Duffy explained that David Green's appointment as Town Health Officer was expiring at the end of the month and needed to be renewed.

Motion: by Greg Fullerton to appoint David Green as Town Health Officer (7:09PM)

Seconded: by Susan Ford

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Liquor License

Motion: by Vice Chair Susan Ford to approve a second class liquor license for Woodstock Village Market based on the assumption that the state is reviewing the application because they no longer give us the material to so (7:10PM)

Seconded: by Keri Cole

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Approval of Quote for Covered Bridge Repair

Eric Duffy presented a quote from Daniels Construction for repairs to the Covered Middle Bridge. The quote included two options: replacing 4 broken cables for \$54,500 or replacing all 16 cables for \$69,500. He recommended replacing all 16 cables since the majority of the cost is for setup and staging. The Town has \$149,000 in the bridge work reserve account. Furthermore other bids were requested but not received. The repairs to the bridge were somewhat of an emergency necessitating going forward with one bid.

Motion: by Vice Chair Susan Ford to approve the proposal for \$69,500 to replace all 16 cables (7:12PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

F. Proposed Executive Session 1 V.S.A 313

To Discuss Matter

Motion: by Susan Ford to enter executive session to discuss a contract matter under 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(1)(A) to discuss a potential contract that, after making a specific finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage (7:13 PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Motion: by Susan Ford to exit executive Session (7:24 PM)

Seconded: by Greg Fullerton

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

G. Other Business -None

H. MOU with Chamber of Commerce

Following executive session, the board voted on the memorandum of understanding with the Chamber of Commerce regarding marketing and the website.

Motion: by Susan Ford to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Chamber of Commerce detailing marketing and the website (7:24 PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

I. Approval of Minutes

Motion: by Susan Ford to approve the minutes of August 19, 2025, September 16, 2025, and October 6, 2025, with minor non-substantive corrections to the August 19 minutes (7:25 PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

J. Adjournment

Motion: by Greg Fullerton to adjourn the meeting(7:26 PM)

Seconded: by Laura Powell

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Respectfully submitted,
Kitty Mears Koar

Raymond Bourgeois

Susan B. Ford

Greg Fullerton

Keri Cole

Signature: Raymond Bourgeois

Raymond Bourgeois (Nov 19, 2025 16:59:39 EST)

Email: rbourgeois@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Susan B. Ford

Susan B. Ford (Nov 20, 2025 08:53:27 EST)

Email: sford@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Greg Fullerton

Greg Fullerton (Nov 20, 2025 07:02:37 EST)

Email: gfullerton@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Keri Cole

Keri Cole (Nov 20, 2025 11:28:22 EST)

Email: kpcole@gmail.com

Signature:

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