

**Town of Woodstock
Selectboard Meeting
March 4th 2026
9:45 AM
Town Hall & Zoom
Minutes**

Draft minutes are subject to approval.

Present: Chair Ray Bourgeois, Laura Powell, Cliff Johnson, Susan Ford, Norm Frates Jr.

Staff: Eric Duffy, Kitty Mears Koar

Public: Nicholas Seldon, Tom Debevoise, Donna Foster, Kevin Lynch, Mark Harris

A. Call to order

Chair Ray Bourgeois called the Selectboard meeting of March 4th to order at 9:45 AM.

B. Additions to & deletions from posted agenda

**Vote - Vondell Cobb Conservation purchase and sale agreement
Main Wastewater Plant update**

C. Citizen's Comments

Nicholas Seldon addressed the Board, He welcomed Norm Frates to the Selectboard, expressing hope that he would bring fresh perspective. Mr. Seldon then made several comments regarding the March 2nd and 3rd Personnel hearing of the Village Trustees.

Tom Debevoise made a comment to address legal fees for reviewing the purchase and sales agreement. He noted that having a finalized sales agreement was important for both the grant and fundraising efforts, and that while legal fees would be required, he believed there were potential donors who could cover these expenses even without a finalized agreement. He mentioned that Donna Foster was already on Zoom and that Mark Harris might join later.

D. Reorganization of the Board

Motion: by Chair Ray Bourgeois to have Vice Chair Susan Ford become
Chair of the Selectboard (9:52 AM)

Seconded: by Cliff Johnson

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Motion: by Chair Ray Bourgeois to have Laura Powell be Vice Chair of
the Selectboard (9:52 AM)

Seconded: by Chair Susan Ford

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

E. Adopt Newspapers of Record

Chair Susan Ford explained that typically the Vermont Standard serves as the primary newspaper of record with the Valley News as the alternative. Eric Duffy noted that over the past year, they had used the Valley News more frequently for Community

Development and Planning Permits because it was often easier to get items published quickly, but emphasized they needed both options available.

Motion: by Cliff Johnson moved to adopt the Vermont Standard as primary newspaper of record with the Valley News as alternate. (9:53 AM)

Seconded: by Ray Bourgeois

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

F. Municipal Appointments

Kitty Mears Koar prepared a comprehensive list of municipal appointments. The process would involve the Selectboard making appointments, sending letters to appointees, who could then accept or decline. Kristen Murphy was noted as a new appointment as Truant Officer.

The board chose to approve the entire list with the understanding that confirmations would be needed, and some positions might need to be filled later.

Motion: by Cliff Johnson to approve the entire municipal appointments list with the understanding that confirmations would be obtained and vacant positions filled as needed (9:55AM)

Seconded: by Vice Chair Laura Powell

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

G. Discussion

Wastewater Plant update

Eric Duffy announced that the Wastewater Renovation Project bond had passed by a vote of 808 to 209, representing approximately 80 percent approval, similar to the Water Department vote. He thanked the Selectboard, staff members Tim, Alex, and Cody, all Town staff who helped during advocacy efforts, and most importantly, the people of Woodstock for trusting them to move forward with the project.

H. Vote

Vondell Cobb Conservation

Chair Susan Ford provided a comprehensive summary of the current status. The board had previously voted to conserve the property according to maps approved by the Land Trust and VHCB for a total of \$1,000,000, anticipating a \$600,000 grant from VHCB and \$400,000 from donations. The grant application deadline was tight, requiring a signed purchase and sale agreement by March 9th. No private donations had been secured to date.

Donna Foster clarified that the VHCB board would vote on the \$605,000 recommendation at their March 26th meeting, with materials due to board members by March 9th. She explained that the additional \$400,000 fundraising had no time limit and could occur after the grant was awarded. The purchase and sale agreement would include a contingency allowing the Town to withdraw if only \$250,000 was raised and the Selectboard deemed it inadequate.

Tom Debevoise stated that he and Mark Harris remained committed to raising the full \$400,000, though it might take until October. He felt confident they could reach the \$250,000

Signature: Cliff Johnson
Cliff Johnson (Mar 25, 2026 05:47:52 EDT)

Email: cjohnson@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Raymond Bourgeois
Raymond Bourgeois (Mar 26, 2026 18:48:43 EDT)

Email: rbourgeois@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 
Norm Frates (Mar 25, 2026 15:56:43 EDT)

Email: nfrates@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: Susan B Ford
Susan B Ford (Mar 25, 2026 07:50:46 EDT)

Email: sford@townofwoodstock.org

Signature: 
Email: jpowell@townofwoodstock.org

minimum required by VHCB and believed the full \$400,000 was achievable, particularly once a finalized purchase and sales agreement was in place. He acknowledged he couldn't guarantee a specific timeline but expressed confidence in completing the fundraising within six months.

Vice Chair Laura Powell asked about the contract contingencies, and Chair Susan Ford confirmed it was the Town's contingency based on fundraising amounts rather than the seller's contingency.

Kevin Lynch joined via Zoom expressing concern about the tight March 9th deadline and asking about the possibility of an extension to March 26th. Donna Foster confirmed she felt confident an extension could be obtained and would discuss this during her morning meeting with VHCB.

Chair Susan Ford clarified that while there would be other grant opportunities throughout the year, this was the closest vote where the \$600,000 could be guaranteed, and future funding couldn't be assured.

Motion: by Vice Chair Laura Powell moved to proceed with the purchase and sale agreement contingent on obtaining an extension for attorney review (10:09 AM)
Seconded: by Cliff Johnson
Vote: 5-0-0, passed

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

Motion: by Chair Susan Ford to go into a Proposed 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: that pursuant to 1 VSA313 Section 1A2 (10:10 AM)

Seconded: by Cliff Johnson

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Motion: by Ray Bourgeois to exit executive Session (10:17 AM)

Seconded: by Cliff Johnson

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Eric Duffy thanked Ray Bourgeois for his leadership as chair over the past two-plus years, noting significant accomplishments during his tenure.

H. Adjournment

Motion: by Vice Chair Laura Powell to adjourn the meeting (10:18 AM)

Seconded: by Norm Frates Jr.

Vote: 5-0-0, passed

Cliff Johnson

Respectfully submitted,

Susan B Ford

Kitty Mears Koar

Norm Frates

Raymond Bourgeois