



WHEELOCK NEWS

Wheelock Community Initiative on the Web: <https://wheelockcmty.org/> and on Facebook!

Email: wheelockcmty@gmail.com Phone: 802-626-3109, leave message



Meeting notices and documents available on the Town Hall message boards and online:

<https://townofwheelockvt.org/>

REMOTE ACCESS INFO

By Phone: +1-646-558-8656

Meeting ID: 810 8003 1813

Passcode: 055553

By Zoom: <https://bit.ly/3oCNpFI>

Meeting ID: 810 8003 1813

Passcode: iN9YcK

**2024 DOG LICENSES
DEADLINE EXTENDED
PENALTY WAIVED
UNTIL MAY 1**

Neutered/Spayed \$9.00

Not Neutered/Spayed \$13.00

\$2 late fee after May 1, 2024

**WHEELOCK
COMMUNITY INITIATIVE**

- **Thursday May 9 11:00 am**
Field trip to "The Albany Genny"
To learn about the Albany Community Trust and the Albany General Store

**PROPOSALS FOR
A PROFESSIONAL AUDIT**

- **Due By Thursday May 16th**
For review at the May 21st
Selectboard Meeting

SELECTBOARD MEETING

- **Tuesday May 21**
@ 6:00 pm In-Person and Zoom
Upstairs Wheelock Town Hall
Regular meetings on the 3rd Tuesday at 6:00 pm, May through September

Selectboard News and Notes



Selectboard:

Ann Lawless, Chair

Mike Richardson

Jason Bora

In a followup to **Wheelock's 2024 Town Meeting**, the Selectboard appointed the full roster of remaining municipal positions at their March 19th meeting:

Emergency Officer: Marc Brown; **E-911**

Coordinator, Shane Lanpher; **Animal Control**

Officer: Cindy Cady; **Agent to Convey Real**

Estate: Town Clerk; **Agent to Prosecute and**

Defend and Tree Warden: Selectboard (The Road Commissioner appointment needs to be confirmed.)

Pay rates were also established: **Town Clerk**, \$18,252/year; **Town Treasurer**, \$22,308/year; **Assistant Clerk/Assistant Treasurer**, \$21/hour; **Lister** with state Level 1 Certification and/or 2 years experience and additional training, \$25/hour; **Beginner Lister:** \$18/hour; **Janitor and Officer Coverage**, \$18/hour.

With the approach of the spring/summer road maintenance season, the Selectboard has been discussing repairing and/or purchasing the necessary equipment with the Road Commissioner and road crew. At Town Meeting voters approved authorizing "the purchase of a new dump truck to replace the '09 International, in an amount not to exceed **\$240,262.00**, less the trade in of \$25,000 and subject to reduction by other sources of funding, total to be financed over a period not to exceed five years, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. Sec 1786a." Voters also appropriated an additional **\$30,000** to the New Road Equipment Reserve Fund, which can also be used at the Selectboard's discretion towards a purchase.

Given the number of staff and equipment available, Selectboard members scaled back some of the summer road projects and notified the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) program of their intent to withdraw from the grant for a bridge engineering study and is considering withdrawal from two Grants-in-Aid projects.

Recruitment to fill the position of **Minutes Clerk for Selectboard Meetings** is underway. The Selectboard is seeking a candidate who will attend and record regular and special meetings in person, and produce draft minutes within 5 days of the meeting. **Compensation:** \$100 a meeting (which typically last 1.5-2.5 hours). Apply for the position by sending a letter of interest and three references to the Town Clerk.

Town Clerk/Treasurer Carol Rossi

Hours: Tues./Thurs. 8:30-3:00; Wed. 10:30-5:30

Email: wheelocktown@gmail.com **Phone** 802-626-9094

P. O. Box 1328, 1192 Route 122, Wheelock VT 05851



GOT HISTORY?

There's no time like the present to learn more about Wheelock's past.

This edition focuses on honoring and preserving our **past** history by caring for our cemeteries; and imagining our **future** history in our **Town Plan**. Both projects require **volunteers** who will share some time, energy, and ideas to help our community.

Looking Back

Five of Wheelock's 10 cemeteries are public/town-owned: **Sulfur Springs, South Wheelock, Drown, West Wheelock,** and the **Village Cemetery**.

During the pandemic and to the present, the **Cemetery Taskforce** (appointed by the Selectboard), have tackled our cemeteries' long neglect. People of all ages, abilities, and time available (students are welcome) come together to learn new skills, such as how to correctly clean and reposition old stones, and apply this learning in a specific cemetery once a month during May to October.

Volunteer **Liz Muckerman** coordinates the Taskforce's efforts. To join, text her at **802-535-4860**.

Looking Forward

Every Vermont town has a **Municipal Town Plan**. In a town plan, communities plan for future changes in ways that reflect their town's priorities, needs, and values. Vermont statutes outline what a town plan contains. Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA) provides staff to support a town's Planning Commission work and offers grants to cover the costs. Our recent plan was completed in **2019** <https://bit.ly/4aBrbt6>.

Wheelock's Planning Commission- Scott Lange and Enid Ellis need one more member before they can begin their work. **Contact the Selectboard with your interest to join them!**

What's Next For the Kingdom East School District?

For the second time in a little over a month, residents of the eight towns of the Kingdom East School District (**KESD**) voted down the school board's **FY'25 budget** proposal. All the towns votes are co-mingled, so there is no separate Wheelock tally.

Town Meeting Day (Australian ballot) total votes 1889: **778 Yes** (42%); **1091 No** (58%) for a proposed FY'25 budget of **\$49.2 million**.

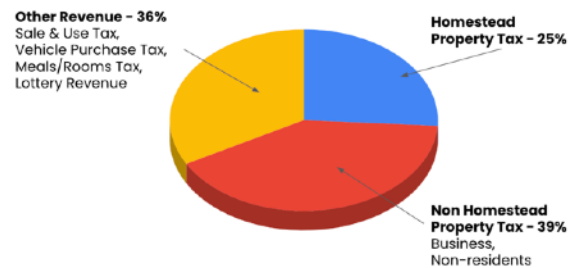
The **4/9 Revote** total votes 970: **318 Yes** (33%); **652 No** (67%) for a proposed FY'25 budget of **\$48 million, a reduction of \$1.2 million**. The new proposal is \$6,931,910; 17% higher than the FY'24 budget.

The KESD provides a detailed explanation of the drivers behind this budget <https://bit.ly/3JijJHd>; chief among them steep increases in health plan premiums, transportation costs, and building maintenance.

Without a doubt, Vermont's school funding formula is complicated. In the FY '24 budget the **income sensitivity** component meant that KESD taxpayers provided 47.69% of the budget with **63% of Wheelock's households receiving a tax break**.

A third of Vermont school districts experienced a defeat of their FY'25 budgets. The Vermont legislature is working on cost containment measures and new funding rules, but these would not take effect until 2026. The KESD is developing a revised budget and timeline in the coming weeks. If they are unable to secure approval for a revised budget before June, current Vermont law allows districts to borrow up to 87% of their last passed budget to pay for operations.

Education Funding Sources



Community Trusts



The **Wheelock Village Store** has come on the market <https://bit.ly/3TRm7Ko>, so we note with appreciation owners John and Judy Powell's many contributions to our community. Several Vermont towns have formed non-profit

"community trusts" to support local development. The Albany, East Calais, and Elmore trusts purchased their village stores and are working to ensure their continued success. WCI has participated in the Vermont Council on Rural Development's online forum to learn about the challenges and opportunities of such trusts. A visit by the WCI to the "Albany Genny" to learn more is scheduled for May 9.

A small team with a mighty mission!

Enid Ellis, Ann Lawless, Hèlène Millas, Carolyn Nolan, Linda Rhodes, Eileen Boland...**new members are welcome!**

