

DRAFT

WESTMINISTER BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY

Meeting Minutes

July 30, 2025 – Westminster, VT Town Hall

Present: Margaret (Peggy) O'Toole, Susan Harlow, Charles (Chuck) Lawrence, John Ewald, Adrienne Major, Stephen Major, Susan Roman, Sarah Waldo, Millie Barry, Jeanette Staley, Craig Allen, Francis (Nancy Dalzell), Rachael Cohen, and Matt Conklin

Absent: K. Sheldon Beebe, Elizabeth Harlow, Real Bazin, Jason Perry, Pauline O'Brien, Jackie Atwood, and Paul Banik

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Town Clerk, Millie Barry at 5:45 p.m. This meeting was recorded and is available on Zoom.
2. **Board of Civil Authority (BCA) Reorganization:** Elect Chair and Vice Chair – Millie Barry asked for nominations for chairperson of the BCA. Peggy O'Toole nominated Sarah Waldo, seconded by Susan Harlow. Sarah Waldo was elected as chairperson of the BCA by unanimous voice vote. Sarah Waldo asked for nominations for a vice chairperson. Sarah Waldo nominated Susan Harlow, seconded by Craig Allen. Susan Harlow was elected vice chairperson of the BCA by a unanimous voice vote.
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** October 24, 2024 – Craig Allen moved to accept the minutes, Chuck Lawrence seconded, minutes approved by members present at the meeting by voice vote.
4. **New Business:**
 - A. **Appeal of tax assessment:** Great River Hydro, LLC, parcel #011046 USG. Jocelyn Barrett appeared by Zoom, representing Great River Hydro, LLC. Ms. Barrett took an oath of truth, stated by Sarah Waldo. Ms. Waldo administered the oath to the BCA and requested members to state ex parte communication. The Board agreed there were no conflicts of interest or ex parte communication. Rachael Cohen stated until this year the assessment was \$10,000.00. This year the SOV provided the Town with the utility assessment based on a 2013 appraisal. Ms. Barrett said their opinion was that there was no change in value. In one single year, for a value to change by 16,000 percent is unproportional and unfair to any taxpayer. Their taxes went from \$240.00 to \$42,000.00. She added flowage easements were granted by their predecessor and protected the company from

being sued by other taxpayers. The SOV report references 1,046 acres of flowage easements over someone else's land. The landowner can use the land

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as they see fit, as Great River Hydro impacts the land minimally. They do not own any land but have the right to flow water on the land if necessary. Barrett added that Great River Hydro would like to reach a fair resolution with the Town and pay its fair share of taxes. Ms. Barrett said people do not build houses on floodplains because the land may flood. She added that people owning the land do not care if there is an easement, as the land is used to farm. Rachael Cohen said it was beyond the lister's training to know what the land should be valued at. Craig Allen stated the SOV had a formula for the 1.5 million value. If this formula and value were not correct, he asked the reason Great River Hydro had not calculated a value. Susan Harlow said that when farmland floods, farms could lose hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost crops. Ms. Barrett said she would like to participate in the inspection process. Stephen Major motioned to appoint an inspection committee: Matt Conklin, Sarah Waldo, and Stephen Major. Matt Conklin seconded.

5. Other Business:

- A. Review of voter checklist – Craig Allen suggested emailing the current checklist to BCA members to review, and a list of the names of challenged voters whose ballots were returned in the general election. Ms. Barry said the list of challenged voters included anyone who has not voted in the last two general election cycles.

6. Adjournment: Sarah Waldo adjourned the meeting to Wednesday, August 6, 2025 at 7:01 p.m.

Sarah Waldo, Chair

Date

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