

# WELLS RIVER VILLAGE ANNUAL REPORT

## YEAR ENDING 1/31/2025



PHOTOS ARE TAKEN BY JOE MITCHELL OF LOCAL WITH JOE, [HTTPS://LINKTR.EE/LOCALWITHJOE](https://linktr.ee/localwithjoe)

2024 COHASE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

MEETING INFO: MARCH 18<sup>TH</sup>, 7PM @ VILLAGE OFFICE

## **Wells River Village Info**

**Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8am -12 Noon**

**Trustee Meetings: When: Second and Fourth Thursday of every Month**

**Time: 4pm**

**Location: Village Office, 15 Creamery Street Wells River**

**Phone: 802-757-3401**

**Mailing Address: PO Box 581**

**Wells River Village**

**VT, 05081**

**Email: [Wellsrivervillageclerk@gmail.com](mailto:Wellsrivervillageclerk@gmail.com)**

**Website: [www. Wellsrivervillage.org](http://www.Wellsrivervillage.org)**

**Link to Village Agenda:**



*inside front cover*

# **Village of Wells River Annual Report**

## **For year ending 1/31/2025**

### **Table of Contents**

<b>Village Warrant</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>2024 Officers</b>	<b>Page 2</b>
<b>Trustees Message</b>	<b>Page 3, 4</b>
<b>Village Financial Statement</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Treasurers Misc. Report</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>General Fund Budget</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>Water/Sewer Dept. Budget</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Water/Sewer Dept Report</b>	<b>Page 9</b>
<b>Wells River Fire Dept Report</b>	<b>Page 10, 11</b>
<b>Baldwin Library</b>	<b>Page 12</b>
<b>WRAP</b>	<b>Page 13-14</b>
<b>302 CARES</b>	<b>Page 15-16</b>
<b>The Way it Used to be</b>	<b>Page 17-18</b>
<b>2024 Village Minutes</b>	<b>Page 19-21</b>

Warning  
Annual Meeting Wells River Village  
March 18, 2025 7PM

The legal voters of the Village of Wells River are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Village Garage/Office at 15 Creamery Street, Tuesday March 18, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. to transact the following business by floor vote.

Article 1: To elect Village officers by floor vote: One

Village President for a one year term

Three Village Auditors for a one year term

One BMU School Board member for a two year term

One BMU School Board member for a three year term

Trustee for a three year term

One Village clerk for a one year term

Village treasurer for a one year term

One Village tax collector for a one year term

Two Baldwin Memorial Trustees for a three year term Article

2: To hear and dispose of Village Reports

Article 3: To see if the Village will authorize the Trustees to borrow money in anticipation of taxes.

Article 4: To see if the Village will vote to collect taxes as follows:

½ payable by September 20, 2025 & ½ payable by November 20, 2025 and set interest rate: 1% per month for first 3 months and 1 & ½ thereafter Delinquent Penalty of 8% after November 20, 2025

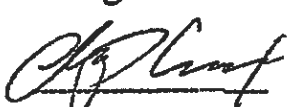
Article 5: Shall the voters of the Village of Wells River raise and appropriate the sum of \$353,190.00 for the operating budget for the Village for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

Approved and adopted at a meeting of the Trustees of the Village of Wells River duly called, noticed and held February 6, 2025

Received for record this 6th day of February 2025 by



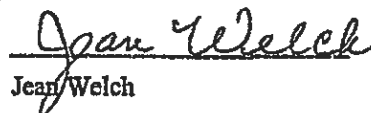
Mary Schilke  
Village Clerk



Chip Conquest



Mike Thomas



Jean Welch

## 2024 Wells River Offices

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Term Expires</b>
<b>Village Clerk</b>	Mary Schilke	2025
<b>Village Treasurer</b>	Mary Schilke	2025
<b>Village Tax Collector</b>	Mary Schilke	2025
<b>Trustees:</b>	Chip Conquest	2025
	Jean Welch	2027
	Mike Thomas	2026
<b>Auditors:</b>	Mary Corey	2025
	Lyndia Melchin	2025
<b>School Board</b>	Kelsey Root - Winchester	2025
	Alyssa Smith	2025
<b>Water Department</b>	Jeff Morin	
	Jason Winchester	
<b>Highway Department</b>	Shannon Young	
<b>Fire Chief</b>	Jeff Morin	
<b>Animal Control</b>	Glen Godfrey	
<b>Charter Committee</b>	Brian Emerson	
	Chip Conquest	
	Richard Roderick	

## Village Trustees Report

Your Village Trustees have been busy with a number of issues over the past year. Below are a few highlights, but if you want to know more, please come to a Trustees' meeting (first and third Thursdays), or just ask one of us.

The infiltration of groundwater into the sewer system continues to be the most pressing issue we face. Though we have found and repaired some sizeable leaks – through the unrelenting work of our Water and Sewer Department and the consultants they brought in – we still have significant infiltration, so we are in the process of hiring the DuBois and King engineering firm to bring their expertise and their high-tech tools to bear on the job of resolving this problem.

An oil spill in January threatened our Village water supply (which you can learn more about in the Water Department Report). That event heightened the urgency of the work we are already doing to address issues state regulators have identified with our water system, including finding an alternate water supply (outside of the heavily developed Main St. area) among other things. We received a \$500,000 grant to help with this work. The engineering report and preliminary design for each of the items has been completed and some work may begin this summer.

Flooding over the past two years caused a need for repairs to Water St. (one year) and Schaeffer Hill Rd (both years). The cost of these repairs was largely covered through FEMA, for which we're grateful, but the work required to receive those funds seemed never ending. Thanks in large part to the work of your Village Clerk we've finally received our full reimbursement.

The flooding also exacerbated the erosion of the river bank below the Wells River Motel and the apartments behind it, damaging the motel foundation, and that of one of the apartments. The apartment owner has applied for a FEMA buy-out of his property. If successful, the buildings will be torn down and the land will become the property of the Village and must remain as open land. The Motel owner would like to remain in business and the Trustees are working to find funding to do the work necessary to stabilize the riverbank so that business can remain in the village.

Among other work on the Trustees agenda this past year were a thorough analysis of the Water and Sewer Department budget, the start of work on a 10 year Capital Budget, and preparations for tax sales of some delinquent properties this summer, including the old school house.

Submitted by,

Chip Conquest

Head Trustee

# Treasurer's Notes 2024 Village Report

As the treasurer of our village, it is my responsibility to provide a detailed account of the financial health and progress of our community. The 2024 Village Report aims to offer transparency and insight into our financial operations, budgeting, and future projections. Please see the following notes for a breakdown of accounts.

## **Revenue and Expenditures**

Our village's total revenue for the year was \$798,070, showing an 11% increase from the previous fiscal year. The primary sources of this revenue were property taxes, local business taxes, and state grants.

Expenditures, on the other hand, totaled \$734,431. These were allocated to various sectors such as infrastructure, education & technology.

## **Infrastructure Development**

A significant portion of the budget was directed towards infrastructure development. Several key projects were undertaken, including:

- Upgrading of the main water and sewage systems
- Repairing Flood Damage from July Storms with FEMA assistance
- Repairing Culverts with assistance from Grants in Aid

## **Future Projections and Goals**

Looking ahead, the village has set goals to improve the sidewalks and visual appeal of Wells River, Sale of Abandoned Buildings and delinquent taxes per state law, Implement state mandated Water Dept. Guidelines and obtain Grant Funding for areas of need such as our Sewer System. Negotiation of Woodsville Sewer Fees due to the leak must be addressed.

## **Acknowledgements**

Much appreciation and thanks go to Newbury Town treasurer Mary Collins for her continued mentoring and assistance of learning the correct procedures and implementation of our Village Funds. Her knowledge and experience are unmatched.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mary Schilke

Wells River Village Treasurer



**Treasurer's Report Fiscal Year Ending 1/31/2025**  
1/31/2025

**General Fund**

<u>Beginning Balance:</u>		\$469,127
Revenue	\$798,070	
Expenses	\$297,340	
Payment to BMU	\$437,001	
Prior Year Adj	\$1,234	
Net Gain		\$62,495
<b>Fund Balance 1/31/25</b>		<b>\$531,622</b>

Water/Sewer Account

<u>Beginning Balance:</u>		-\$49,526
Revenue	\$168,705	
Transfer From Rev.		
Loan Fund	\$123,537	
Prior year Adj	\$29	
Expenses	\$271,025	
Net Gain		\$21,246
<b>Fund Balance 1/31/2025</b>		<b>-\$28,280</b>

**Treasurer's Misc INFO**

	<u>Est 2024</u>	<u>Actual 2024</u>	<u>EST 2025</u>
Current Property Tax	\$342,100.00	\$273,860.00	\$355,171
Hold Harmless	\$7,000.00	\$5,198.00	\$6,000
State Class 3 Hwy	\$8,770.00	\$7,440.00	\$8,000
Delinquent Tax	\$0.00	\$23,953.00	\$0
Tax Int	\$0.00	\$1,356.00	\$0.00
Tax penalty	\$0.00	\$1,724.00	\$0.00
Bank Interest	\$100.00	\$5,390.00	\$0.00
Rent	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00

**2024 Gross Salaries**

Chip Conquest	\$2,300
Jeff Morin	\$13,131
Mary Schilke	\$17,422
Jean Welsh	\$2,300
Mike Thomas	\$2,300
Jason Winchester	\$9,641

**Delinquent Taxes Owed**

As of  
1/31/2025

2015	\$3,024
2016	\$7,207
2017	\$4,883
2018	\$10,404
2019	\$17,985
2020	\$16,489
2021	\$13,647
2022	\$19,174
2023	\$9,154
2024	<u>\$22,397</u>

Names can be seen by  
Appointment \$124,364

# General Fund Budget

General Fund	2024 Budget	2024 Expenditures	2025 Budget
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## Gen. Fund

Payroll	\$20,000	\$22,322	\$27,000
FICA expense	\$7,000	\$1,793	\$3,240
Child Care Credit	\$0	\$128	\$300
Education	\$250	\$28	\$250
Mileage Reimbursement	\$100	\$0	\$100
Supplies/postage	\$2,000	\$2,034	\$700
Office Equipment	\$500	\$56	\$500
Telephone	\$2,000	\$1,560	\$2,000
Repairs/Maint	\$6,500	\$15,034	\$8,000
Utilities	\$6,000	\$3,690	\$5,000
Street lights	\$15,000	\$12,786	\$15,000
Rubbish	\$900	\$609	\$900
Software	\$4,000	\$2,497	\$3,000
Election Expenses	\$400	\$220	\$250
*Appropriations	\$21,850	\$22,350	\$27,450
Dues	\$1,500	\$1,130	\$1,500
Insurance	\$10,000	\$7,445	\$10,000
Legal	\$3,000	\$0	
Advertising	\$500	\$82	\$500
Misc.	\$1,000	\$1,566	\$500
<b>Total Gen Fund</b>	<b>\$104,000</b>	<b>\$82,438</b>	<b>\$106,190</b>

## Highway

Supplies	\$500	\$1,012	\$1,000
Salt	\$15,000	\$7,860	\$15,000
Fees	\$2,000	\$500	\$1,000
Paving & Repair	\$100,000	\$62,966	\$100,000
Contracted services	\$114,000	\$117,713	\$130,000
<b>Total Highway</b>	<b>\$231,500</b>	<b>\$206,175</b>	<b>\$247,000</b>

<b>Total GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$335,500</b>	<b>\$288,613</b>	<b>\$353,190</b>
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*Library	\$26,000
4th of July	\$500
Berry field	\$750
WRAP	\$200

# Water & Sewer Budget

	2024 Budget	2024 Expenditures	2025 Budget
<b>Water Dept.</b>			
Payroll	\$30,000	\$27,172	\$30,000
Payroll Tax	\$5,500	\$1,915	\$5,500
Education	\$500	\$258	\$500
Subcontracted Operator	\$10,000	\$1,500	\$10,000
Supplies	\$4,500	\$7,408	\$5,000
Repair/Maintenance	\$15,000	\$7,575	\$15,000
Road repair	\$2,000	\$1,600	\$2,000
Water Testing	\$3,000	\$1,732	\$2,000
Mileage	\$1,000	\$1,044	\$1,000
Propane	\$3,000	\$1,931	\$2,500
Electric	\$7,000	\$4,720	\$6,500
Fees	\$4,500	\$2,720	\$4,500
Bond USDA/Vt	\$15,000	\$14,070	\$14,071
Advertising	\$200	\$37	\$200
Postage	\$0	\$0	\$800
Software	\$500	\$2,282	\$2,000
Water Budget Total	\$101,700	\$75,965	\$101,571
<b>Sewer</b>			
Legal Fees	\$800	\$165	\$0
Supplies	\$2,500	\$3,194	\$4,000
Telephone	\$600	\$640	\$650
Repairs	\$20,000	\$60,679	\$25,000
Utilities	\$1,500	\$3,053	\$2,500
Sewer to Woodsville	\$170,000	\$127,329	\$100,000
*Pay deferred Fees to Woodsville	\$0	\$0	\$120,000
			\$0
Sewer Budget Total	\$196,600	\$195,060	\$252,150
Total Water & Sewer	\$297,100	\$271,025	\$353,721

\*Current Deferred Fees to Woodsville      Approx. \$170,000

## VILLAGE OF WELLS RIVER WATER & WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT

The water department has been working on compliance issues with the State of Vermont Water Division. Several items were noted as problems and have been corrected since the last report.

We have obtained a grant to assist with this and the engineers are working on it now. We have been working on a solution for the low water pressure on Bible Hill at 3 homes. While this is an issue, we have several other issues that seem to be of higher priority. #1. The location of a new well site away from the Village Center. As there was a fuel spill at the Baldwin Block requiring us not to produce water for 8 days, we feel that this is the most important item we have. We have been doing multiple tests for VOC's which tests for (Volatile Organic Compounds) (fuel oil being one) and all tests are good. We are now on a quarterly testing schedule until at least the end of 2025.

We are still required to maintain a higher level of chlorine at the filters to keep them working the way they were designed. We have lowered the chlorine concentration some, and we are trying to maintain a 1.0 mg/l out in the system.

The new reservoir was inspected in 2023 and it was vacuum cleaned and will be good for the next 5 years. M & K Divers did the work and provided us with a video of the actual work being done.

The hydrant across from Wells River Chevy was replaced due to it failing while doing fall flushing. While we had a spare hydrant, we found that when the old hydrant was installed, they poured concrete over about 12 feet of the water line. To replace it with the new hydrant we had to cut out the old line encased in the concrete and replace it. We also installed a new water shutoff for the Vigent property as when asked to shut it off for the winter it also shut off Bruce Stevens house and the trailer lot across from his house.

With the new water meters, we have had several people say they were being billed for more water than they used. After checking their meter with our system, we were able to show them where there was a higher-than-normal water flow on certain days. A leaky toilet can flow up to 250 gallons per day. Keep that in mind when you get your bill and see your usage is higher than normal.

### WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT

We have found that the ageing infrastructure of the 40 plus year old system is failing in some locations. We have located and repaired several infiltration issues. We found two issues at 10 Main Street with the sewer line and have repaired them. The manhole behind 27 Railroad Street had several issues and was dug and repaired. A manhole in the field off Elm Street was found to have ground water leaking into it and was repaired also. In front of Jock Oil, we found several issues with that manhole, it was dug and repaired. Most of the issues seem to be the way that the piping was installed back in the 80's. The Village has contracted with Dubois & King to assist with locating and repairing the system. Our last computation figured out to be between 6 and 8 gallons a minute getting into our system. While you may think that it would be easy to find a leak of that size, looking into manholes and trying to measure flow from 12 to 16 feet above the ground is not an easy task. The most obvious locations for leakage are on the East side of our system. Most of the manholes east of Main Street are at or below the water table. A plan has been devised, and we will continue to work on this issue.

Three items still being worked on are the replacements for each of the following.

1 – Sewer pump, 1 – Water well pump 1 - spare chemical pump for both chlorine and ortho phosphate.

Sincerely

Jeffrey Morin

Part Time Operator

Town of Newbury Fire Department  
Report of the  
Wells River Station  
2024

As of December 31, 2024, the members of the Wells River Station have responded to 78 calls totaling over 614 hours for the year. We responded to several trees, and wires down due to storms, CO alarms, mutual aid calls, alarm activations, EMS assists, and many auto accidents. Most of our accident calls were on I-91. Seems that I-91 is becoming one of our most frequent locations for accidents and is possibly due to the tire ruts which collect water, then the vehicles hydroplane and spin out. As mentioned in last year's report, electric vehicles are becoming more abundant and are on our roads daily. These vehicles, if on fire, pose a much greater risk to the environment and the firefighters from the issues with the battery. Remember all battery powered equipment may have this type of battery and could fail without notice. It is almost impossible to extinguish the battery if on fire. We can apply large amounts of water to try and cool the battery in hopes it may limit the thermal runaway. Items you use daily like your cell phone, laptop computer or tablet have this same type of battery. Studies have shown that the impact on our fire gear is exponentially dangerous, as cleaning the gear after a fire is almost impossible.

Currently we have 13 members on our roster. We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday at 7 pm and have training on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at 6 pm. If you know of someone who would like to give back to their community, they can contact any fire department member to obtain an application. Being a firefighter is a very rewarding way to give back to your community.

As always please mark your property with your 911 road number. Sometimes it is very difficult for us to find your home without the number visible on the roadway. If you have a fire alarm system that dials out in the event of a fire emergency, please make sure it is going to a reputable alarm company.

Smoke / CO Alarms are certainly a must today as the materials we have in our homes and the materials our homes are built from will burn much quicker, hotter, and with deadly smoke. Today **3 to 5 minutes** to escape a house fire is the average, 30 years ago it was as high as 15 minutes. The reason for the decrease in time is due to changes in furniture manufacturing and home design trends. The types of furniture and other contents in today's homes include more plastics and petroleum-based products, which burn faster than traditional materials.

Thank you to all the community members for your continued support of the fire department.

Our yearly Super Raffle is scheduled for February 22, 2025. To all our ticket holders there will be more details coming to you soon.

Respectfully Submitted  
Chief Jeffrey Morin  
802-757-2706

Town of Newbury Fire Department  
Report of the  
Wells River Station  
2024

**CHECK YOUR SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS  
MONTHLY AND CHANGE THE BATTERIES TWICE A YEAR  
CHECK THE EXPIRATION DATE ON THE BACK OF THE SMOKE  
OR CARBON MONOXIDE UNIT. IF IT IS 7 – 10 YEARS OLD YOU  
MAY NEED TO REPLACE THE ALARM  
YOUR 911 NUMBER NEEDS TO BE VISIBLE AT THE ROAD  
FOR RESPONDING EMS, FIRE OR POLICE**





Baldwin Memorial Library  
33 Main Street N - PO Box 337  
Wells River, VT 05081  
(802) 757-2693

**Baldwin Memorial Library offers a welcoming and engaging environment that serves our community by providing equitable access to enriching and educational activities and resources.**

**Board of Trustees:**

Karen Kreis, Chip Conquest, Chris Buhner, Kim Goody, Sandy Parker & Alicia King

**65**  
New Patrons

**76**  
New  
Facebook  
Followers

**1155**  
Website  
Visits

**120**  
Weekly  
Visits

**15**  
Weekly  
Computer  
Users

2024 was a busy year for Baldwin Memorial Library!

We have seen a significant increase to both our in person and online patronage. We are happy to serve the needs of our patrons wherever they are. For some people that means visiting our website and social media pages, downloading e-books and audiobooks and staying up-to-date through our emails. For others it means visiting the library to check out books, play with toys, work on projects or get assistance with anything from research to job applications.

## GRANTS & SUPPORT

A **\$15,000** grant from **The Association of Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL)** provided funding for new energy efficient LED lights, 3 new computers for public use, window inserts in the library, new windows on the second and third floors of the building, a small fridge to increase our food distribution efforts, clothing racks and hangers for our clothing exchanges as well as a picnic table and 4 raised bed gardens for the green space behind the library.

A **\$500** grant from **Preservation Trust of Vermont** went toward an architectural evaluation of the library building to help us understand the needs of our aging building. The data in the evaluation will be used in our strategic and capital planning.

**\$300** from **Vermont Department of Libraries** went toward creating Adventure Bags that can be borrowed from the library.

**\$600** from **302 Cares** went toward programming including the creation of Community Murals that will be installed along Burnham Lane.

Plus, 2 separate scholarships from **American Library Association & Public Library Association** and **ARSL** with an estimated value of about **\$2,800** enabled me to attend 2 conferences and participate in extensive continuing education opportunities.

## OUTREACH

In 2024 we attended the West Newbury Parade, BMU Open House, Ryegate WinterFest and Newbury's Truck-or-Treat promoting the library and offering outreach services.

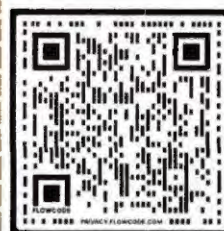
We also co-hosted the Wells River Summer Picnic and the Polar Express Community Dinner Party.

## THANK YOU!

... to all the volunteers whose hard work and dedication help to make all of this possible. And, thank you to our community members for your continued support of our library.

Respectfully,

Melissa Beaulieu  
Librarian



Scan code to find us  
on Facebook!

**WRAP**  
**WELLS RIVER ACTION PROGRAM**  
 Post Office Box 538  
 Wells River, Vermont 05081

President – Lyndia Melchin  
 Vice President – Kelsey Root-Winchester  
 Secretary – Lauren Nelson  
 Treasurer – Lauren Nelson  
[wrapwr@gmail.com](mailto:wrapwr@gmail.com)

Greetings!. In the year 2024, we have stayed true to our mission, which is “The mission of WRAP is to enhance the quality of life in Wells River Village and its immediately surrounding villages and towns by promoting affordable and accessible housing, supporting and developing business and economic development, preserving the rural and historic character and ambiance of Wells River Village and establishing avenues of cooperation with other organizations and governmental agencies”. WRAP is now on: [facebook.com/WRAPVT](https://facebook.com/WRAPVT)

**Housing** – WRAP continues to work with the 29 Wells River Historic Housing apartments (formerly the WRAP Apartments) now owned by Evernorth (formerly Housing Vermont). Under a partnership agreement, WRAP continues its role as a link between Evernorth, EP Property Management Corp, and the Wells River community.

**Annual Meeting** – The 2024 Annual meeting was held on February 19th, 2024 in person at the Wells River Congregational Church. The guest speaker was Joshua Smith the new owner of Yankee Kingdom Radio WYKR. It was catered by Tuttle's Family Diner.

**WRAP Up** - Volume 18, Issue 1 of the WRAP Up was published in May. The November issue was not published. The newsletters were hand-delivered to the apartments and businesses in Wells River and were mailed to Wells River property owners through the generosity of Wells River Savings Bank. The WRAP Up provides ongoing information about WRAP's programs as well as Wells River community and business news. It couldn't be published without all the volunteer writers, photographers, and the production and distribution crew.

**Flower Barrels and Holiday Lights** - During the spring, summer and fall, bright flowers graced the village with a variety of colors. There are all new barrels along Main Street. Holiday trees and lights brightened the village during the winter season. All flowers, barrels and trees were purchased locally.

**Rowe Community Garden** - The thirteenth season of the garden was successful. This year five gardeners tended seven plots at the Rowe Garden and with generous donations of manure and fencing the gardeners were able to supply three different food shelves – the Virginia Onorato Emergency Food Shelf at the Congregational Church, Little Rivers Health Care and the Baldwin Memorial Library, with a variety of fresh veggies. Collections for Share the Harvest at the Baldwin Memorial Library filled the rolling cooler (donated by Newbury United) nearly every week from June to October. There will FREE garden plots available in April 2025 Contact Janis Moore at 802 376 6044.

**Welcome Center** – We had a total of 1,493 visitors sign in during a shorten season due to unforeseen circumstances. Visitors were from as far away as 4 provinces of Canada (farthest British Columbia), England, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, New Zealand, Netherlands, Israel, Argentina, Thailand, Cayman Islands, Spain, Sweden, France, Egypt, Australia, Brazil, Korea, and India. From the good old USA we had visitors from all states except Delaware, Hawaii, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Oklahoma. Visitors also use the picnic area, bathroom, and phone/internet connections frequently. We are thankful for Wells River Chevrolet for allowing us to use internet. If you would like to be a volunteer greeter this year, email WRAP at [wrapwr@gmail.com](mailto:wrapwr@gmail.com)

**Village Clean Up Day**- was with Vermont Green Up day. On May 4<sup>th</sup> volunteers from Wells River and Ryegate cleaned up Main Street, Schaeffer Hill and the Welcome center. We swept, hosed, and trimmed up all along the downtown.

**Community Picnic** About 50 people gathered for the tenth Annual Community Picnic and Ice Cream Social on June 29<sup>th</sup>, to dedicate the new recently installed playground equipment at the Berry Field. WRAP is thankful to all the volunteers who helped us get the playground equipment and all who donated money for the equipment. In addition to the dedication Michael J. Caduto provided an interactive and engaging story, music and game program for attendees. The Baldwin Library gave away books, in a free drawing over 20 people won T-shirts and there was food from Tuttle's Diner and Hatchbox. It was a fun day.

**So Long Summer – Hello Fall Festival** –The 12th annual festival was held August 31<sup>st</sup>. There was an Antique Tractor Ride and Show sponsored by Wells River Chevrolet and an EV Gadget Display by John Nininger. The weather was wonderful and sunny until the rain came, this was the biggest year yet with over 80 vendors and in store specials. The weather was wonderful and sunny, this was the biggest year yet with 69 vendors. Both sides of Main Street plus Railroad Street were lined with a wide variety of food, retail, and crafts vendors as well as the Library book sale and community



and non-profit booths providing information. This was the 13th year for the Giant Zucchini Contest as the Contest was held during 2020. There were 12 entrants were vying to win this year, it didn't come close to the 28 in 2020.

**302 Cares** -The 302 Cares Coalition, a subcommittee of WRAP, is a group of individuals and organizations who agree to work together for the common goal of reducing substance use, misuse among youth and adults. They have held a number of programs for the community, Drug Take-back days, Mail-Back prescription drug containers, providing information during BMU Parent Orientation, participation in the So Long Summer Hello Fall festival, coordinated with Wells River's Baldwin Library to provide educational materials and a family dinner night at BMU. Currently, several members of 302 Cares meet monthly with a prevention coalition at BMU and one in Haverhill with the purpose of sharing information and exploring ways to work together. We welcome new members and would like to hear from you if you would like to be included on our email distribution list. Meetings are typically held on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 2:45 p.m. – 3:45 p.m at BMU and via zoom. For further information, or to be placed on the email distribution list, contact coalition coordinator Kelsey Root-Winchester at [302cares@gmail.com](mailto:302cares@gmail.com) or visit on facebook/302cares. Check out their new website [302cares.org](http://302cares.org)

**Appreciation** – WRAP was saddened with the passing of long time member of Don Waterman in May. He is missed. And Thank You to the Baldwin Memorial Library, the Wells River Congregational Church and the Wells River Wellness Hall for providing space for WRAP to meet; WYKR, Bridge-Weekly/Sho-Case , Journal Opinion, and Trendy Times for their on going coverage of our events and local businesses for sponsoring all of the advertising publicity for the So Long Summer-Hello Fall Festival.

Submitted by  
Lyndia Melchin, President

Income	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Budget 2024	Actual 2024	Budget 2025	Reconciliation WRAP	
Dues, Donations, Souvenirs	950	759.00	950	1,158.00	950	Checking 12/31/23	4254.07
Welcome Center Donations	50	323.51	75	663.00	75	Deposits - 2024	6940.00
Town of Newbury	400	400.00	400	400.00	400		
Village of Wells River	200	200.00	200	200.00	200	Disbursements 2024	7571.80
So Long Summer - Donations	50	0.00	0	25.00	0	Balance 12/31/24	3622.27
Playground Equipment Project	4000	2,880.00	0	0.00	0		
WRAP/11VT Agreement	2040	2,204.00	2204	2,327.00	2204	24-Month CD #0301	24174.34
So Long Summer-Vendors	300	342.00	400	395.00	400	2024 Earnings	1017.38
So Long Summer-Bake Sale	400	323.80	300	256.00	300	Balance 12/31/24	25191.72
So Long Summer Ad Donations	1300	1,025.00	1000	925.00	1000		
Community Picnic & WRAP Up	50	0.00	25	0.00	25	12-Month CD #0951	5112.63
Retained Earnings (in checking)	6170	3,778.07	3779	3,662.00	4000	2024 Earnings	195.47
Retained Earnings (in checking)WC		356.27	356	82.00	356	Balance 12/31/2024	5308.10
Holiday Decorations/Flowers	50	0.00	50	1,095.00	50		
50/50 Raffle		287.00	0	0.00	0		
Welcome Center Bake Sale		237.50	250	124.00	250	Reconciliation Welcome Center	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>15960</b>	<b>13,116.15</b>	<b>9989</b>	<b>11,312.00</b>	<b>10210</b>	Checking 12/31/23	356.27
						Deposits 2024	1073.32
						Total Available	1429.59
<b>Expense</b>	<b>Budget 2023</b>	<b>Actual 2023</b>	<b>Budget 2024</b>	<b>Actual 2024</b>	<b>Budget 2025</b>	Disbursements 2024	1347.11
Publicity/Annual Meeting	500	652.53	650	770.00	850	Balance 12/31/24	82.48
WRAP Up	500	423.50	650	511.00	845		
Welcome Center	1000	407.07	1500	476.00	2500	Savings 12/31/23	
Investment in CD	5000	0.00	0	0.00	0	Closed in 2024	
Flowers/Trees/Lights/Barrels	1000	3,250.00	1500	2,538.00	1500	Balance of \$100.10 transferred	
Celase Chamber of Commerce	60	0.00	60	65.00	65	to WC Checking	
Rowe Community Garden	100	0.00	100	0.00	100		
So Long Summer -Hello Fall	1500	1,520.21	1500	948.00	1500	12-Month CD #0939	8130.77
Community Picnic	300	388.20	400	346.00	400	Earnings 2024	442.08
Community Ads & Donations	300	266.23	300	385.00	500	Balance 12/31/24	3,472.85
Unanticipated Expenses	200	139.22	200	586.00	500		
Office/Postage/Miscellaneous	200	0.00	150	0.00	150		
Consulting/Legal Fees/Insurance	1100	1,093.85	1100	1,429.00	1100		
302 Cares	200	0.00	200	0.00	200		
Playground Equipment Project	4000	4,000.00	0	0.00	0		
Holiday party		100.00	0	128.00	0		
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>15960</b>	<b>12,240.81</b>	<b>8310</b>	<b>8,182.00</b>	<b>10210</b>		

## **302 Cares: Building a Healthier Community Together**

As we celebrate our 9th year, 302 Cares—a substance misuse coalition and subcommittee of the Wells River Action Program (WRAP)—continues its mission to foster a healthier, substance-free community. Based in Wells River, Vermont, our coalition works tirelessly to engage, educate, and inspire residents to reduce substance misuse and promote wellness.

### **Who We Are**

302 Cares is a community-driven initiative committed to addressing substance misuse through education, prevention, and support. We meet monthly on the fourth Tuesday from 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. at Blue Mountain Union School (BMU), and everyone is welcome to join us.

### **Our Growing Impact**

Over the past year, we've strengthened our collaborations with Blue Mountain Union School and Newbury Elementary School and have expanded our efforts to Waits River Valley School. Through these partnerships, we provide crucial resources on substance prevention, mentoring, and vaping education.

### **Our Work in Action**

Since its founding, 302 Cares has spearheaded and participated in numerous community-focused initiatives, including:

- **Drug Take-Back Days** to safely dispose of unused medications.
- **Mail-Back Prescription Drug Containers** in partnership with the Vermont Department of Health.
- Informational sessions during BMU Parent Orientation.
- **Family Dinner Nights** to promote healthy conversations and connections.
- **Mental Health First Aid Classes** to empower community members with life-saving skills.
- Educational collaborations with Wells River's Baldwin Library and Groton Library.

### **Recent Initiatives**

This past year, our coalition engaged in:

- **Youth Listening Sessions** with middle and high school students to better understand their needs and concerns.
- **A Community Survey** to tailor our programs to local priorities.
- **National Prescription Take-Back Day** on October 26th and ongoing promotion of medication mail-back envelopes.
- **Red Ribbon Week** (October 23–31), emphasizing the theme "Choose Your Path. Make SAFE Choices."

**Join Us**

302 Cares is always looking for passionate individuals to join our efforts. Together, we can create a stronger, healthier community. Contact us at [302cares@gmail.com](mailto:302cares@gmail.com) or connect with us on Facebook at [facebook.com/302Cares](https://facebook.com/302Cares). Explore our new website at [302cares.org](http://302cares.org).

Let's work together to make a difference!

Let Me Tell You About Wells River.  
by Bob Murphy  
March 2024

My growing-up years were spent mainly in Barre and Wells River, Vt. We moved from Barre (population about 11,000) to Wells River (population about 500) in the summer of 1952, shortly after my Dad had left employment with the Montpelier and Wells River Railroad, and started working for the Boston and Maine Railroad, principally out of Woodsville, N.H., right across the river from Wells River. It was a sort of homecoming for Dad, as Woodsville was where he had been born in 1915.

“Wow!”, you might say, as you consider the size difference between the two communities. However, let me tell you that, as small as Wells River was, it was a bustling community with a lot of businesses and served as a shopping magnet of sorts for folks from other villages in the area. Woodsville was a larger village, but not as much of a draw for shoppers as Wells River was. Why, you might ask, would folks flock to Wells River, such a tiny little village, to do their shopping? A trip through Wells River nowadays reveals a sleepy little village with not much to offer. However, in 1952 the situation was much different.

Here is a rundown of what Wells River had to offer in 1952. There were three grocery stores,<sup>1</sup> a hardware store,<sup>2</sup> two automobile garages/filling stations,<sup>3</sup> an automobile dealer,<sup>4</sup> a clothing store,<sup>5</sup> a restaurant,<sup>6</sup> a pharmacy with a lunch counter,<sup>7</sup> a variety store,<sup>8</sup> a hotel,<sup>9</sup> a stationery store/printing shop,<sup>10</sup> a shoe store,<sup>11</sup> two barbers, a post office, two banks,<sup>12</sup> two doctor's offices,<sup>13</sup> an oil dealer,<sup>14</sup> a library, a grade school, a high school<sup>15</sup> and two churches.<sup>16</sup> Pretty impressive for such a small community! I lived in Wells River from 1952 to 1957, when I graduated high school and moved on to college. Since that time, the village has changed immensely. Most of the businesses I listed have ceased to exist. The hotel was torn down, and about the only survivors are the post office (new location), the banks, the library and the Congregational Church. The restaurant was a survivor until recently, when it also closed.

So what happened to make Wells River such a different place today? One thing, and one thing only, was responsible for the dramatic change, and that was the enactment of a sales tax in 1969 in the state of Vermont. New Hampshire didn't have one (and still doesn't), and that legislative act began a slow but inexorable process of ending the commercial success of every Connecticut River border town in Vermont. Some towns were able to continue to thrive in other ways, but Wells River was not one of them.

- 1 Hinman's Market, Clark's Store and First National Store.
- 2 Hartley's Hardware Store,
- 3 Cromwell and Veyea's, and Mahnker's garages.
- 4 H.O. Taylor's Chevrolet Dealership.
- 5 Clark's Store (which also sold groceries).
- 6 The Happy Hour.
- 7 Thomas's Drug Store.
- 8 Vigent's Five and Ten Cent Store.
- 9 Hale's Tavern.
- 10 Sherwin's Print Shop.
- 11 Burnham's Shoe Store.
- 12 Wells River Savings Bank and National Bank of Newbury.
- 13 Dr. Harry Rowe and Dr. John Hooker.
- 14 Jock's Oil Delivery.
- 15 Both the grade and high schools were in the same building.
- 16 St. Eugene's Catholic Church and the Wells River Congregational Church.

Most of the businesses which existed in Wells River in the 1950s and 60s have disappeared, and other cultural changes have also diminished the former prominence of this once thriving place. Malls and a move toward national chain stores have hollowed out not only places like Wells River, but many larger communities. School consolidation has moved education from small towns to (in Wells River's case) a much larger Blue Mountain Union School, located far from the residential areas from which its students come. Many of these changes have been welcomed by folks who saw advantages in lower costs of goods, and improved access to goods and services. Arguments can be made for and against these cultural changes, but my belief is that we have lost a lot as a result of them.

I've often said that I've lived a charmed life. Insofar as my experience growing up in Wells River goes, I rest my case. It was a time when most businesses were owned by local folks, not national conglomerates, a time when customer service meant a lot more than it does today, and a time when neighbors dealt with neighbors in all aspects of life. Wells River was a wonderful community, in my estimation. It was a good time to be growing up and I feel blessed by having had that opportunity.



Village of Wells River  
P.O. Box 737  
Wells River, Vermont 05081  
802-757-3401

## **2024 Village of Wells River Annual Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting was called to order by Chip Conquest @ 7pm**

**Election of president of Village meeting – Brian Emerson was nominated by Fay Homan, Jeff morin Seconded, Clerk Cast 1 ballot. All in Favor**

**Recited pledge of Allegiance**

**Brian Emerson asked to forgo the reading of the entire warning, and all were in favor. ( See Warning Attached for Concise language)**

**Article 1 –Three Village Auditors for a 1-year term - Mary Corey and Lyndia Melchin were nominated for Village Auditors for 1 year. All voted in favor. A third Auditor will need to be nominated by the trustees later.**

**1 BMU School Board Member – No nominations were given; The board will have to nominate one later.**

**One trustee for a 3-year term – Jean Welch was nominated by Jeff Morin John Mahnker seconded all in favor.**

**1 Village Clerk for a 1-year term – Mary Schilke Nominated by Richard Roderick John Mahnker seconded All in favor.**

**1 Village treasurer for a 1-year term - Mary Schilke Nominated by Richard Roderick Jeff Morin seconded All in favor**

**1 Village Tax Collector for a 1-year term - Mary Schilke Nominated by Richard Roderick John Mahnker seconded All in favor.**

Brian Emerson discussed that 1 person doing all three jobs, checks and balances are in place to ensure all is monitored. Mary Schilke discussed the warrant procedure where all expenditures were signed off on by the trustees before any payments are made.

**2 Baldwin Library trustees for a 3-year term – Nominated were Chip Conquest and Chris Bruhner, Fay Homan made motion Jeff morin Seconded all in favor.**

**Article 2 - To Hear and Dispose of Village Reports**



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Brian went through each Page of the report and these discussions ensued.

1. Lorenzo Cyr questioned the recent Lead Line Survey and the procedure to get assistance, he questioned how and when 2 water lines were put on his property, Jeff morin explained that all this happened many years ago before his time and he could not really answer this question. Mary Schilke said she would assist Lorenzo as best she could after the meeting closed to address his questions.
2. Richard Roderick brought up there was no Charter Report in the book. Due to health issues with 2 of the board members things got waylaid. He stated that the revised charter had been sent to a lawyer for review, once received there would be 2 public meetings held then a vote and finally it would get sent to the state for approval. Plans are to revive the board and proceed onwards.
3. Page 6 Delinquent Tax Report – Richard Roderick wanted to know what was being done re delinquent taxes. Mary Schilke stated a lawyer had been contacted and plans were to do a tax sale asap.
4. Re Library Report Chip Conquest wanted to state how pleased the board was with Melissa Beaulieu working as librarian. She had hard shoes to fill and has done a fabulous Job.

A motion was made to approve all Pages as written: Frank Tegethoff moved and John Mahnker seconded all in favor.

**Article 3: Authorize to borrow in anticipation of taxes:** Jeff Morin moved, Kelsey Root-Winchester seconded all in favor

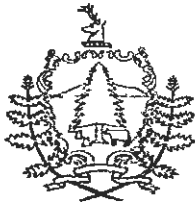
**Article 4 Raising of the Tax dollars to be paid in 2 installments:** John Mahnker moved Jeff Morin Seconded All in favor

**Article 5 Appropriation of \$342.100 for general fund Operating Budget –** Kelsey Root-Winchester moved Richard Roderick Seconded it. All in favor

#### **Announcements:**

John Mahnker wanted to let everyone know that He and Mev were celebrating their 69<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary at the meeting tonight. They were congratulated.

Mike Thomas introduced himself as a new member and stated that it was a hard job with many layers. He understood that many times people can get frustrated at times over matters but they should come to the board and seek assistance. Violence or threatening talk would not be tolerated.



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Special mention was made to thank Sandy Boyce for all her hard work and dedication to running the Welcome Center.

Kudos and Congratulations were given to Brian Emerson for being named #1 tech School Director in the State . Scott Blood was also named #1 principal in the State.

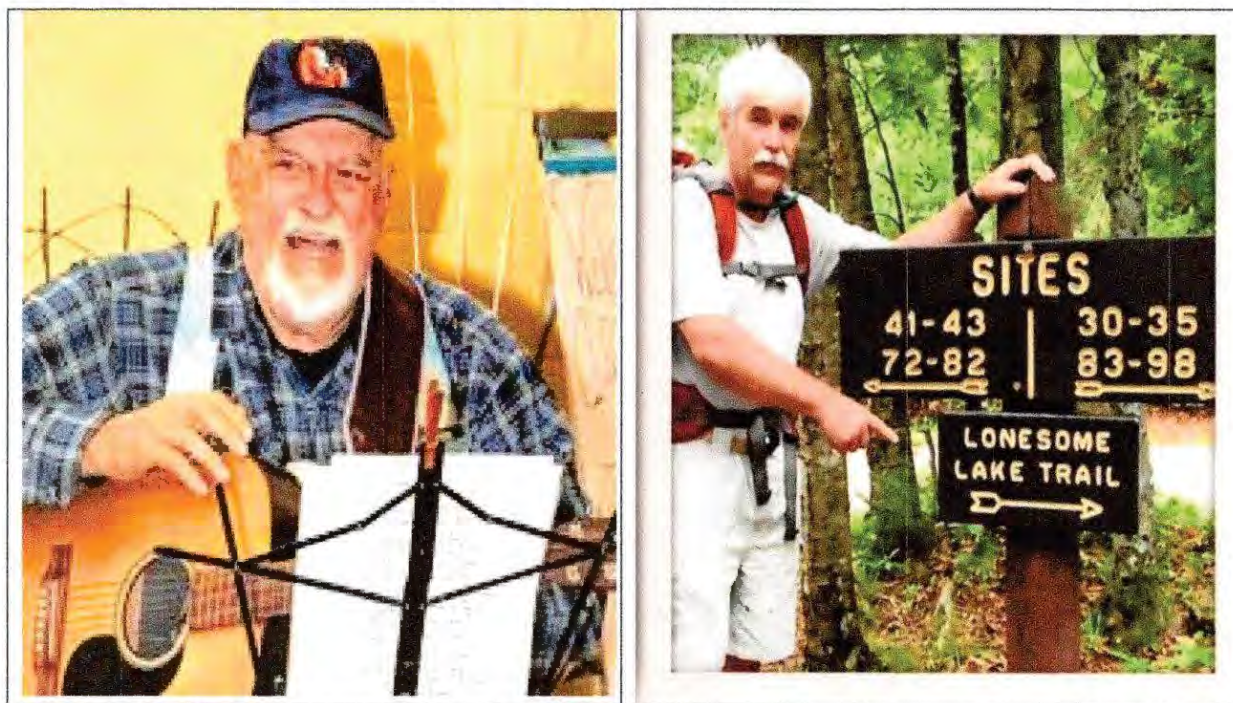
Meeting Adjourned 7:45 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Mary Schilke  
Wells River Village Clerk.







IN MEMORY OF PAST TRUSTEES

RUSSELL SULHAM

&

DON WATERMAN

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE