



## Office of the Town Manager

7900 Williston Road  
Williston VT 05495  
802-876-1168

January 23, 2025

Representative Alice Emmons  
Chair, House Committee on Corrections & Institutions  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Senator Wendy Harrison  
Chair, Senate Committee on Institutions  
Vermont State House  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Madam Chair Emmons and Madam Chair Harrison:

I write on behalf of the Town of Williston Selectboard to express thanks to the General Assembly for the inclusion of language in last session's capital bill that provided the Town with an opportunity to submit an intent report regarding the sale of the former State Police Barracks. Specifically, the language states:

*Sec. 16. SALE OF FORMER WILLISTON STATE POLICE BARRACKS; INTENT; REPORT It is the intent of the General Assembly that the Town of Williston shall report to the Senate Committee on Institutions and the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions in January 2025 regarding: (1) whether the town desires to purchase the property; and (2) if so: (A) the feasibility of the Town purchasing the property, including any requested conditions on the sale of the property; and (B) the potential future uses of the property envisioned by the Town.*

Please let this letter serve as Williston's report to the General Assembly.

The Williston Selectboard discussed the possible purchase of the former State Police Barracks property over the past several months. The two primary uses explored were a site for a Community Center, and expanding affordable housing options.

It was determined that 7-10 acres is the ideal area for a future Community Center as scoped by the project Steering Committee in 2023. The former barracks site is about 3 acres in size, making it undersized for the current vision. The Town also explored whether there was an opportunity to partner to redevelop the site to bring added affordable housing options to the community. A partner did not emerge for this possible option. The Town is not in a position to purchase the property for housing development without having a partnership structure established. The Selectboard expressed a desire for the site to become housing in the future as the State contemplates the property sale.

During a future property sale, the Town is interested in an easement or right of way for a planned grid street that would be located at the southern section of the barracks parcel. Depending on the redevelopment of the site, an initial street connection may be required to serve the property. Should the General Assembly wish to consider granting an easement or right of way to the Town of Williston for a future public street the Town would be appreciative.



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As you are aware, the barracks property has been utilized to house families that are experiencing homelessness since early November of 2024 to provide shelter during the winter months. I have been able to visit the shelter on multiple occasions and want to pass on that the staff working there are doing an exceptional job. The community of Williston has welcomed the families here, and I have fielded several requests from community members and groups asking if they can assist the families in any way. It is a challenging time with housing in Vermont, and I appreciate the hard work by everyone to help these families in need.

I welcome the opportunity to testify before both of your committees this session should you wish to discuss this letter further. On behalf of the Williston Selectboard, thank you again for the opportunity over the past seven months for the Town to consider potential uses for the site in response to the request last session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erik Wells".

Erik Wells, Town Manager

Williston, VT

CC: Ted Kenney, Chair, Williston Selectboard

Representative Erin Brady, Williston

Representative Angela Arsenault, Williston

Senator Ginny Lyons, Chittenden Southeast

Phil Petty, Committee Assistant, House Committee on Corrections & Institutions

Linda Leehman, Committee Assistant, Senate Committee on Institutions