

**TOWN OF WESTMINSTER  
SELECT BOARD MEETING  
January 13, 2016**

Members Present Select Board: Paul Banik (Vice Chair); Toby Young, Nancy Dalzell;  
Sheldon Beebe (Chair) arrived at 6:38 p.m.

Absent Members: Craig Allen, Clerk

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager / Planning & Zoning Administrator), Karen  
Astley (Recording Clerk); eight members of the public as signed in.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Paul Banik called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.
2. **ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** None.
3. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:** Paul Banik made a motion to accept the minutes from December 21, 2015 as written. Nancy Dalzell seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Toby Young made a motion to accept the January 6, 2016 minutes from the Special Select Board Meeting as written. Sheldon Beebe seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**4. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Westminster West Town Hall:** Per the request of the Select Board, Peggy O'Toole was present with a contingency from the Friends of the Westminster West Town Hall. Peggy O'Toole was concerned about a few comments that were made at the last Select Board meeting. The group was surprised that the building was padlocked and discussion about selling the building was brought up without consulting with the group. Peggy O'Toole gave an overview of the Friends of the Westminster West Town Hall which was created in 2002. Peggy stated there is a board and there are bylaws that govern the committee. Back in 1989 Art Ranney requested that the town appropriate monies for the maintenance of the building. It was voted on and passed that \$500.00 per year would be appropriated with the understanding the Friends of Westminster West Town Hall would request the money. If the money was not requested it was left in the general fund. Peggy stated the maintenance work completed on the building. There is no plumbing in the building but it is being used for public functions. Heating is an old wood stove and there is evidence that it has been used recently. Nicholas Keil and Peggy O'Toole are the only ones with keys to the building. Nick stated he would pull the stove or disconnect it to prohibit use.

**North Westminster Town Grange Building:** John Jones, Tom Hodsden and Arnie Knowlton were present to open discussion on the North Westminster Town Hall. There is no committee for this building any longer. Arnie Knowlton was mowing, shoveling and replaced broken windows when he was able. John Jones stated the roof is leaking, furnace and water heater work and there is a good toilet. Building will require ADA accessibility. The planks on the front landing should be replaced before someone goes through the landing. Building has been in limbo since 2009. John stated District 5 would utilize the building but he doesn't want to see the town put \$100,000.00 into it. There are numerous keys floating around in town to the building. There are town files in boxes that need to come to the Town Hall. John Jones accepted to be in charge of a committee for the NW building.

Comments from the floor were, as a community, if there is a purpose and/or common goal to keep the buildings for public use people would need more information on the cost to get the buildings up to code. Will the costs exceed what they are worth to keep? Obviously both buildings will need to be brought up to Fire & Safety code before there is a liability based on the use at this time. Tom Hodsden felt that before a decision was to be made about selling the buildings people needed further information in order to feasible determine whether it was a worthy investment. Even if the town decided to sell the buildings they may require money to fix prior to selling.

Paul Banik read one paragraph from a letter dated 1/6/2016 from VLCT PACIF (Town's Insurance Company) Wade Masure stating that both buildings be inspected by VT Fire & Safety and the recommendation to use them not continue until a full report is prepared. Russ Hodgkins will contact the State of Vermont Fire & Safety and request inspections on both buildings. No articles will be on the town warning relative to either building. Paul Banik closed the discussion at 7:21 pm.

## **5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussions/Action):**

**Barrett Property:** Russ Hodgkins handed out three documents relative to the proposed purchase of the Barrett property adjacent to the Westminster Town Hall. Russ met with the Historical Society and they agreed if the property was big enough they would move their museum over to the Barrett house if the article passed at town meeting.

Concern was mentioned that if the town purchased this property it would be a loss on the tax base/revenue. There are many questions that will need to be answered prior to town meeting if this property is on the warning. What is it currently assessed at? What is the condition of the property, has there been a structural inspection done? Structural inspection should include roof, furnace, foundation etc. Without further information it will be hard to sell this article at town meeting. Russ Hodgkins will contact the State of Vermont Fire & Safety to have this property inspected if Peter Barrett grants permission to do so.

**Articles for Town Warning:** Article 5 (Gazette request for increase) will need to be explained further. Article 6 (Purchase of Grader). This Article needs to have payment amounts in the article. Article 8 the bottom line will change at town meeting based on what is approved or not approved on the Town Warning.

**Post Office Parking Lot Expansion:** Russ Hodgkins handed out an updated sketch of the Post Office proposed parking lot extension showing 18 parking spaces. The Select Board will need to decide what should be planted to screen abutters. The parking lot would be Shurpak.

## **6. NEW BUSINESS:**

**Cemetery Deed: Sheldon Beebe made a motion to the accept the purchase of one town cemetery lot as described in Quit Claim Deed to Daniel Toomey. Toby seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

**Post Office Lease Agreement Renewal:** Paul Banik stated he would like the Board to table this item for another time. There is still one year left on lease so there is time to discuss renewal after town meeting is done. Tabled until April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **7. MANAGER'S REPORT:**

**Drones:** Russ Hodgkins handed out a correspondence relative to unmanned aircraft registration requirement. All drones are to be registered with the FAA. The website can be used to see who owns drones in the area.

**Senate & House Solar Siting Task Force (Net Metering):** Russ Hodgkins requested permission to testify at the State Senate & House regarding solar array siting in municipalities given the Public Service Board grants permits without consideration of Zoning Bylaws. Board granted Russ Hodgkins authority to attend and testify.

**Hartley Hill:** Every three years +/- residents of Hartley Hill come to the town with a request to take over the road. The town needs access but Mr. Bonds will not let the town maintain beyond his property and does not want the town to take over the road. Russ Hodgkins to take action.

**Better Back Roads Grant Opportunity:** Russ Hodgkins informed the Select Board that there is a mandate in place (Act 64) which requires towns to get permits and annual inspections to comply with the stormwater runoff into waterways. This requires road drainage systems being brought up to basic maintenance standards and reducing erosion on local roads. The permit cost is \$400.00 and the annual cost will be \$2,000.00. The state is allowing towns to get their roads in compliance prior to absorbing permit costs.

**8. BOARD’S AND COMMISSION: NONE**

**9. OTHER BUSINESS:** Recycling Committee was formed four years ago and shows up in the Gazette as a regular scheduled meeting. Committee is not active. **Sheldon Beebe made a motion to dissolve the Recycling Committee. Toby Young seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** January 27, 2016.

**11. ADJOURNMENT: Paul Banik made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Nancy Dalzell seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

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Signature of Clerk

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Date

Prepared by: Karen Astley, Recording Clerk