

**Town of Westminster**  
**Select Board Meeting Minutes**

**October 26, 2016**

**Select Board Members Present:** K. Sheldon Beebe-Chair, Craig Allen-Vice Chair, Nancy Dalzell-Clerk, Toby Young and Susan Harlow

**Others Present:** Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager), Millie Barry (recording clerk) Jan Ameen, Fran Renaud, FACTV

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by the Chair of the Board, Shell Beebe at 6:30 p.m.
2. **Adjustments to the Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** Susan Harlow motioned to accept the minutes of the October 12, 2016 meeting. Craig Allen seconded the motion, the motion passed.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action):**

**A. Existing Five Year Capital Investment Plan – progress**

**WWTH – Nancy Dalzell –** Nancy said there were two roof bids for the Town Hall she hoped to have available in two weeks (at the next meeting).

**Post Office – Toby Young –** Nothing new to report. The TM noted the new flag pole was in place with a solar light installed to light the flag.

**Westminster Town Hall – Shell Beebe –** Nothing new to report

**NW Community House – Craig Allen –** Craig Allen met with the TM and Mark Lund at the Community House. He told the Board he felt the building was in incredibly good shape. Mark Lund will remove branches from trees hanging too close to the building and also remove shrubs impacting the foundation. He added the building was square, needing very little work at the present time. The TM mentioned some low window sills and frames are rotted. These will be replaced. Craig mentioned a check valve for the sewer (presently capped) would be required if the building was open and heated so the sewer does not back up.

**Town Garage – Susan Harlow –** Susan met with TM and Mark Lund to discuss expanding the garage. Information included in packet are proposed costs to expand the present building by two bays allowing excavator, loader, grader and trucks to be under cover. Numbers (cost) to raise a door of one bay were not available. Shell Beebe asked if the present wood furnace would heat the expanded garage, noting radiant heat could be included in expansion plans. Susan questioned the ability of the present driveway and yard to accommodate expansion and equipment? The TM believes the present wood furnace was designed to heat a larger space and the yard/driveway was a question they were exploring.

- B. Listers Discussion – update:** TM – A recent meeting included NEMRC representatives Al and Chris Miele. Also, listers, David Mullholland, Jackie Atwood, Ali Bigwood, Karen Astley, TM, Shell Beebe and Nancy Dalzell. Discussion included what the zoning office and town clerk's office needed to be corrected. As Zoning Administrator, the zoning office has some real issues with active and inactive parcels. The Town would like to re-instate information that was changed when NEMRC took over. With NEMRC's help they will run a comparison of the Grand List 2014/2015 compared to 2015/2016 to check for differences. In addition, more training is required for Westminster's listers. As trainings are often held in the north of the State. Chris Miele will train our listers on NEMRC software using the Town files. It was noted the resignation of Mr. Sterling had not been accepted.

October 26, 2016

- At this time in the meeting the TM told the board new information from the Town's representative (Windham County) dealing with taxation and solar. The tax income for Kurn Hattin's (KH) existing solar array will be \$887.00 versus the hoped for \$2,400.00 estimate. Using the States calculation to make solar affordable, KH pays on 70% of the appraised value. With depreciation factored in each year at a rate of 13 -16 percent, the calculation is \$887.00 for 150kw. When the 1.8 megawatt system is completed, it will generate less than \$4000.00 in tax revenue. The TM emphasized this was on 16 acres of prime commercial/industrial land.
- C. State Facility Update:** TM – Packet contains letter to terminate the storm water authorization 7012-9015 as the Town has no intention of building on this parcel of land.
  - D. First Quarter Financial Reports (Discussion, if any):** TM – There were no questions/comments on reports. Reports will be included in packet for the next few meetings.
  - E. Solar Proposal Discussion – legal notices (2):** TM – Information in packet from Whitney Blake to the public service board to extend the KH array. The second is petition for the National Guard. They are in the process of getting final permits for their arrays. Shell Beebe asked if the board (as a town) should file a formal protest. TM – Would like authorization from the board to write letters to our legislative representatives on how taxation for solar is handled by the State. The TM stated the tax breaks are more than any other commercial entity is entitled to. Westminster has lost all potential to expand their tax base due to solar arrays and how they are taxed. In addition, the State has approved (in the Town of Westminster) a deer yard, farm land and industrial land to construct arrays after promising this type of land would not be used for this purpose. The TM will write a draft letter for the Board to approve.

An email to the board generated a discussion concerning a waiver request from Peter Thurrell of dimensional requirement of Town's set-backs. This request is to decrease the property line space from 50' to 10' on one side closest to the neighboring array (Parcel #1) owned by NextSun Energy. **Nancy Dalzell motioned to not accept the waiver request. Craig Allen seconded, the motion passed.**

**6. New Business (Discussion/Action):**

- A. Windham Solid Waste Management District – Budget pricing – Jan Ameen** – Packet contains information on the Windham Solid Waste budget regarding collection and processing of recyclable materials. In the last few years recycling commodities have decreased in value. Their expenses of trucking/sorting recyclables have exceeded the income generated. In addition, to continue operation, old trucks will need to be replaced and repairs required to an aging facility built in 1995. Ms. Ameen shared with the Board there was the possibility of income of \$100,000.00 per year for a 25 year land lease in Brattleboro. Approval/permits for a 5 megawatt solar array will be determined in the next fiscal year. As a representative to the district, she has two votes about continuing operation with increased costs (noted in the packet) for another year or to discontinue services. If the representatives for each Town vote to discontinue pick-up of recycling (remove canisters), all towns involved (19) with 17 pick-up sites would discontinue services. Her purpose is to determine if Westminster would choose to discontinue having recycling canisters at the Westminster Town Garage or continue for another year. The Board voted 3 to 2 to continue services in Westminster. In the case other towns vote to discontinue services, affecting the service in all towns, Westminster residents are able to use the Rockingham facility and have the benefit of curbside pick-up. Jan noted there were three towns in the district, Vernon, Brattleboro and Westminster having curbside pick-up. In addition, Westminster would still pay assessment fees if the Board decides to have the boxes or canisters removed at the Town garage. The TM noted when he was investigating

October 26, 2016

usage of the canisters at the Town Garage, about 10% of Westminster population used the bins. Most often people using were from Grafton, Athens, Saxtons River or NH.

- B. **Appointment – Community Improvement Program (Nathan Stoddard)** – Craig Allen motioned to appoint Nathan Stoddard to Community Improvement Program. Toby Young seconded the motion, the motion passed. Fran Renaud told the board she would consider appointment to the group if they are a ‘working’ group. Shell Beebe requested that Russ talk to the members about their continued interest in being part of the Town Community Improvement Program.
- C. **Real Estate Option (Executive Session)** – Craig Allen made the motion to move to executive session for a real estate matter where premature public knowledge would be a disadvantage to the Town of Westminster. Craig added to invite the TM. Toby Young seconded the motion, the motion passed.

**7. Manger’s Report:**

- 1) Town Forest Update – Eight contractors walked the town forest property. Bids are due on 10/27/16. The bids will be opened 11/7/2016 at 2 p.m. in the town hall.
- 2) Pavement is completed and lines were done 10/26/16.
- 3) Road Crew received their new truck.
- 4) The Center School’s Halloween Parade is Monday, October 31 at 1 p.m. The parade begins at the school continuing down School Street to the post office, returning to the school. The parade is a fun event if any of the Board are available to attend.
- 5) Manager’s vacation – The TM will take one half day on Thursday, 10/27 and Friday, October 28 through Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup> to be away on vacation.
- 6) Select Board packets for November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting will be sent on Monday, November 7<sup>th</sup>.
- 7) Town Report Dedication – Will take nominations anytime the Board has someone to submit.

**8. Boards and Commissions** – Nothing

**9. Other Business:** TM - Ali could use all of the Boards assistance at the upcoming election. Please notify her with your time availability.

Susan Harlow mentioned having a post in the Westminster Gazette so people know they can contact the TM or TC for after-hours availability at the Town Hall. The TM noted this would be posted in the upcoming edition. Susan requested the notice be posted in all editions of Gazette.

**10. Date of Next Meeting – November 9, 2016**

**The meeting moved to executive session at 8:17 p.m.**

Upon coming out of Executive Session at 8:37 PM, no further action was taken.

Susan Harlow made a motion to adjourn. Nancy Dalzell seconded the motion and the **motion passed**.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

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Signature of Clerk

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Date

Minutes prepared by Millie Barry, Recording Clerk