

**TOWN OF WESTMINSTER  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
DECEMBER 14, 2016**

Members Present: K. Sheldon Beebe (Chair); Craig Allen (Vice Chair); Nancy Dalzell (Clerk); Toby Young and Susan Harlow

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager / ZA), Karen Astley (Recording Clerk), Peter Harrison, Fran Renaud.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**2. ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** Russ Hodgkins requested two adjustments to the agenda. The first was by moving Boards & Commissions Agenda Item 8A; Campbell Fund & Public Funds Committee to Communications & Public Comments as Peter Harrison was present. The second one was adding a 5<sup>th</sup> Errors & Omissions. The Chair accepted the changes and the meeting resumed.

**3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: November 23, 2016 minutes: Craig Allen made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Susan Harlow seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

**4. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENT:** Russ Hodgkins gave the Selectboard a written request for funding from Senior Solutions (\$1,000) and Big Heavy World (\$250). Russ explained these two agencies will have to petition to the Town Clerk with at least 5% signed registered voters from Westminster to place the article on the town warning. The Selectboard asked what services Senior Solutions provided and Russ stated they provide similar services as Westminster Cares. Big Heavy World is based in the Burlington area and serves the music community. There was not much discussion. The Selectboard did acknowledge and take under advisement the requests.

**8A. Campbell Fund & Public Funds Committee – Investment Policy:** Peter Harrison spoke to the Selectboard about investing money through this committee. Presently money is held in CD's which do not pay a high interest (1.18; five-year CD). Funds are invested at Savings Bank of Walpole, TD Bank, Peoples and Mascoma. Peter Harrison suggested to the Selectboard that a "investment policy" may be in the best interest for the town and committees that invest money. Peter Harrison stated the committee had spoken to a representative at Edward Jones. Edward Jones will not provide services without an investment policy from the town because money is being invested in higher risk categories. The Selectboard was handed a sample template. Pete Harrison had spoken to Cynthia Stoddard, Town of Putney with regard to investment policies. She noted that Putney does not have an investment policy at this time either. Peter was able to get some samples from Vermont Leagues of Cities and Towns.

Susan Harlow stated that an investment should apply to any town fund. Nancy Dalzell requested to see reports on these accounts. Russ Hodgkins directed her to the audit report that has all the accounts listed with the amount of money in each. Sheldon Beebe did let Peter Harrison know that they would look into a policy.

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

**A. Existing Five Year Capital Improvement:**

\* **WWTH** – Nancy Dalzell let the Board know that she had met with Peggy O'Toole, John Ewald, Mike, Nick and Russ Hodgkins. Consensus was, Russ Hodgkins will look into another Structural Engineer once the Vermont Preservation Trust has gotten back to him. Russ was waiting for their response before approaching Stevens & Associates.

\* **Post Office** – Toby Young asked Russ Hodgkins if there was anything new. Russ Hodgkins will follow up with Cole Streeter regarding replacement of a window. No new developments on Post Office.

\* **Town Hall** – Russ Hodgkins asked Toby Young for clarification about the article for the Gazette regarding public opinion on renovations for the Town Hall. Toby suggested creating a timeline of events leading up to the hiring of the architect would be beneficial for the Town and the public. She would also like to have the plans laid out in the Town Hall for public view. Toby Young let the Board know there was a meeting with Nancy Dalzell, Russ Hodgkins, Karen Astley and Toby regarding the rear door egress. Toby Young wants to be proactive and contact Maureen McCarthy-Young. She did mail her a letter but had no response. Russ Hodgkins stated even if we are granted permission for egress Zoning Bylaws do not allow construction in the right-of-way.

\* **North Westminster Community House** – Craig Allen updated the Selectboard on the Nwth. He is in contact with Tom Hodsden and the North Westminster community and they are interested in activities and other groups occupying the community house such as the Boys and Girls Club and/or Fire District #5. Tom is willing to work with Craig if there is real interest in utilizing the building. Susan Harlow asked if a committee should be created. Craig Allen feels we are headed in the right direction. There is no estimate as of yet to replace the rotted windows.

\* **Town Garage** – Susan Harlow asked questions of Craig with regard to the equipment as to size and why today the equipment does not fit in the town garage. Craig stated that most equipment is purchased and sized to fit but because the new equipment such as a ten wheeler is higher you can eliminate some parts to cut them down to size. Craig also stated trucks are not only higher but longer. Currently the town highway crew has to jockey trucks into position in order to get them in the garage. As far as cutting the top of the bay opening at the town garage Susan feels a qualified engineer should look at it.

**B. FY18 Expenditure Budget – Draft 3:** Russ Hodgkins reviewed the expenditure budget with the Selectboard. He also requested the Board review Draft 3 of the Budget for Fiscal Year 2018 in depth. Susan Harlow asked why the Rainy Day Fund was not on the report. Russ Hodgkins stated all Capital Funds are in the audit report and would not be in the expenditure report. Sheldon Beebe asked if there were any significant changes from the last draft. Russ stated he had added the Grader Promissory Note of \$35,000.00. With this addition the budget has an increase of 4.5%. Without the grader the budget would increase by 2.75%. Russ also stated Windham Solid Waste Management District has not finalized their numbers and this is the only figure we are waiting on. Once this is confirmed the budget can be voted on. Russ handed out an email from Jan Ameen showing there is an additional cost to close the MRF Program down and that all municipalities would absorb a fee to pay for the facility closing. In October the Selectboard were shown a budget of \$28,296.54 but with the new development of the facility closing this figure would increase another \$8,395.69. Russ will follow up with Jan and request she attend a Selectboard meeting to clarify the additional costs.

**C. FY18 Revenue Budget – Draft 2:** Russ Hodgkins reviewed the Revenue Budget with the Selectboard. Again he asked that they review it in depth. Russ stated that these revenue numbers are historically safe numbers. Increase or one-time revenue numbers consist of Town Forest Timber Sales; State of Vermont Public Safety Building – In lieu of Taxes; Zoning permits that will increase tax value and the Sheriff's Department increase in revenue. Bottom line is an \$85,000 addition to the revenue for FY18. A question was raised: "What is State of Vermont Hold Harmless"? Russ Hodgkins explained it is funds that the State pays municipalities in lieu of taxes. This pertains to parcels in Current Use. Nancy Dalzell asked what "Reimuse Fuel FD#3" meant. Russ will correct the typo. Discussion ensued further whether we were reimbursed from the Fire Department for all of the fuel used for their vehicles from the town garage. Russ Hodgkins stated they do pay for their fuel.

Russ Hodgkins handed the Board a Fiscal Year comparison from 2013-2018. He explained although expenditures are higher there is other revenue to offset the increase.

Toby Young asked whether or not the School District decided if they would print their own reports and if so how would this affect Town Meeting. Russ Hodgkins confirmed the School District has opted to type and print their own report. Russ let the Selectboard know that legal counsel said that the town could insert the School District articles into the warning but the School District is responsible for notifying and warning

the meeting and warnings. Toby Young is hoping that if the School District takes this task on that the reports will be more legible.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS:

**A. FairPoint Petition for Poles:** FairPoint requested approval from the Selectboard in writing to install three new poles on Morse Brook Road and place two new poles on Hartley Hill Road South. Russ Hodgkins explained these sites were staked out and in the town's R-O-W. He also mentioned that the cutting to clear the sites has already occurred. Russ further stated this benefits both the Town and FairPoint. **Craig Allen made a motion to approve the Chair to sign contracts for the installation of the poles on Morse Book Road and Hartley Hill Road South. Nancy Dalzell seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carries.**

**B. Errors & Omissions from Lister's Office:** Each Errors & Omissions was discussed individually and voted on separately. Parcel 7039000 was a matter of combining two values for 2016 "as billed" as contiguous parcels. **Craig Allen made a motion to accept the Errors and Omissions for parcel number 007039000. Nancy Dalzell seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carries.**

Parcel 014038120; combining two values for 2016 "as billed" as contiguous parcels. **Craig Allen made a motion to grant the Errors and Omissions for parcel number 014038120. Nancy Dalzell seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carries.**

Parcel 007510P00; creation of parcel for transmission line inventory, added to 2016 "as billed". **Craig Allen made a motion to grant the Errors and Omissions for parcel number 007510P00. Susan Harlow seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carries.**

Parcel 007500P00; creation of parcel for transmission line inventory, added to 2016 "as billed". **Craig Allen made a motion to grant the Errors and Omissions for parcel number 007500P00. Nancy Dalzell seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carries.**

The Town Manger explained the letter from Larry Slason regarding taxation of solar. The solar arrays have already paid the education tax and the Town is obligated to pay back the fee to the two facilities that paid the complete tax bill. The Selectboard with a vote of 4 to 1 requested that the Town Manager contact the facilities and ask why they paid the fee and if they would be willing to contribute the fee for this year only. Nancy Dalzell noted that this transaction would need to be in writing. Sheldon Beebe commented that he would like to have David Deen come explain why these utilities are not being taxed to their full capacity.

The Selectboard requested Russ Hodgkins in the future have more data to substantiate Errors and Omissions. Sometimes it is not clear why the Selectboard are voting on them and how the values affect the Grand List. Russ will follow up with the Lister's Office and have further information for the next meeting.

**C. Draft Town Articles for Town Meeting:** Russ Hodgkins went through the draft of the town articles. Craig Allen entertained discussion on Article 5 pertaining to SeVEDs requesting \$9,534. Craig would like to get on the School Board Agenda and ask why the School District is not supporting this request through their budget and why it is in the Town's budget. If this program benefits students Craig feels the money should be funded through the school budget. Russ Hodgkins will contact the school board and request to be on the agenda prior to January 11, 2017, next Selectboard meeting. Article 9, Russ Hodgkins stated this is a double knife sword at Town Meeting. Sometimes we put in the amounts and we struggle at Town Meeting to come up with the correct figure. We don't know what the approved budget is until articles are voted on.

## **D. Dedication of Town Report (Executive Session):**

**E. Citizen of the Year (Executive Session): Susan Harlow made a motion at 8:08 p.m. to go into executive session to discuss Dedication of Town Report and Citizen of the Year. Sheldon Beebe stated this would happen after Other Business. Craig seconded the motion and invited the Town Manager to join them in executive session. All in favor, motion carries.**

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

- a) **Public Hearing Zoning Bylaws:** Russ Hodgkins stated there will be a Public Hearing prior to the regular Selectboard's meeting, January 25, 2017, on the Zoning Bylaw approval. Russ requested the Selectboard to review the document. Sheldon Beebe asking if a half hour was enough time. Russ Hodgkins stated if they needed to schedule another Public Hearing they would.
- c) Russ Hodgkins handed out the complete audit for FY 2015-2016 prepared by **Sullivan Powers**. He asked the Selectboard to review the audits in their entirety.
- d) Russ Hodgkins gave the Selectboard an overview of the **Windham County Sheriffs STARS Program** along with a report showing how well our officer is doing. Russ Hodgkins explained it does take 3-5 months for revenue income to come to the Town. Craig Allen asked if the Town has to pay for our officer to be in court? Russ stated no. Part of the increase in the Sheriff line item budget is to cover court associated costs.
- e) **Route 123 Construction** will commence April 1, 2017 and run through August 2017. Cold River Bridge will do the bridge work. Russ Hodgkins attended a meeting in Walpole because there has not been any communication. State Police were in attendance but not VAOT. There will be one lane of traffic with a 3 to 4-minute traffic light to move vehicles through the construction zone. Bridge work consists of resurfacing and remodeling. Concerns from Burtco were heard along with how emergency vehicles will be passing through the zone as Walpole and Westminster assist one another. Concerns are with trucks on Route 123 and Route 12. Traffic backups, alternative routes and emergencies are concerns from both sides of the bridge construction zones.
- f) **Windham Regional Commission Pilot Program:** Windham Regional Commission has created a new program as part of Act 174. They will choose three towns to revise their Town Plan with regard to enhancing their energy element as outlined in Act 174. Russ handed the Selectboard a Solicitation Letter explaining the program. Letters of Interest are due by January 11, 2017. Russ Hodgkins informed the Board that Stephen Dotson is involved as the Town's Representative and he would attend the December 28, 2016 SB meeting to elaborate on this opportunity. Russ Hodgkins will send the Solicitation Letter to the Planning Commission.
- g) Russ Hodgkins handed out a request letter from SeVEDS for the appropriation of \$9,534.00.

**8. BOARD'S AND COMMISSION:** Campbell Fund & Public Funds Committee: Investment Policy – Peter Harrison was moved earlier in the meeting to Agenda Item 4; Communications & Public Comment.

## **9. OTHER BUSINESS:**

Fran Renaud was the only resident from the public in attendance after Peter Harrison had left. She had several questions based on the minutes of the last meeting. Community Improvement Program was discussed based on activity and members. There hasn't been much action and Fran was not sure where it is at. Fletcher Proctor is still interested in serving on the Committee according to Russ Hodgkins as he spoke to him directly. Kendall Gifford has not been active. Peter Stamm and Nate Stoddard currently serve on the committee. Fran Renaud was not sure where the CIP funds stand as Doreen would give her reports.

Fran Renaud questioned why the highway department would plow and sand a private road off of Orchard Hill Road/Airport Road. She had traveled up there and noticed but did not witness the town truck actually plow or sand the private road but thought it was a coincident when she traveled back that the private road had been plowed and sanded. Russ Hodgkins assured Fran that probably is not the case but would speak with Mark Lund.

Fran Renaud asked for a recap of the meeting with the Historical Society and the development of Peter Barrett’s house. Toby Young explained that a donor had come forward with \$40,000 - \$50,000 to assist the Historical Society with the purchase of the Barrett House. Fran asked whether Peter would donate the house, the Selectboard said no.

Craig Allen noticed in the Gazette openings for the Conservation Commission. He asked whether or not conservation and energy are different and perhaps the two could be combined in order to get more interest for forming a viable committee.

Susan Harlow thanked Russ for putting in the Gazette extended hours for the Town Manager and Town Clerk when needed.

Not hearing any other business, the Selectboard went into Executive Session at 8:36 pm.

Upon coming out of Executive Session at 9:06 P.M., Nancy Dalzell bought up the subject of the Structural Engineer report and estimate that the Town Manager had received this past week. She expressed her displeasure of the Engineer stating that he would need to charge an additional \$ 4500 to \$5500 to create a plan and update the structural notes for the WWTH because the rules from the State had changed in 2015. She further explained that this information should have been in the first report which we paid for because the work was done in 2016 and as for the plan, this seemed expensive. The Board all agreed and was glad to hear that the committee is seeking another source of advice on the engineering.

**10. Date of Next Meeting** – December 28, 2016; Toby Young will not be attending.

**11. ADJOURNMENT: Craig Allen made a motion to adjourn at 9:18 p.m. Susan Harlow seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

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Signature of Clerk

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Date

Prepared by: Karen Astley, Recording Clerk