

Town of Westminster

Selectboard Meeting

July 13, 2016

Selectboard Members Present: K. Sheldon Beebe (Chair), Craig Allen (Vice Chair), Nancy Dalzell (Clerk) and Toby Young

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager), Mark Lund (Road Foreman), Alison Bigwood (Town Clerk), David Smith, Margaret O'Toole, John Ewald, Kevin J. Hughes, Nicholas Keil, Michael Wells, Donald Slie, David Mulholland, Mathew Farkas, Wade Massure (VLCT), Steve Dumont (Fire and Safety), David Dupuis, Janice Wojcek and FACT TV

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by the Chair, Sheldon Beebe
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** Craig Allen made the motion to accept the minutes of June 22 as printed, Nancy Dalzell seconded. The motion passed. Toby Young made a motion to accept the minutes of July 6 (Special Meeting), Craig Allen seconded. The motion passed.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:**
 - *Allocation (\$250.00) The Gathering Place* – Richard Chapin told the Board that The Gathering Place was started in 1989 and is a day center for adults open Monday through Friday. The center has seen significant growth since its beginning and has expanded its services to have Nurses and LPN's on staff at different times and as needed. The staff of 49 stay very busy with half of the staff working on home care. The programs offered throughout the normal day consist of music, exercise and crafts. The Gathering Place serves all of Windham County and is very happy to serve Westminster.
 - *Allocations (\$3700.00) Bellows Falls Area Senior Center* – Teagen Kosut explained to the Board that they are located at 18 Tuttle Street in Bellows Falls and has been in existence for 25 years. Their program consists of activities, meals, health checks for Seniors as well as the occasional tax return help, fraud care seminars to keep Seniors aware of the dangers out in the public. The Senior Center offers meals on wheels to Rockingham and Walpole residents. In their facility they average 50 people per day for the activities and meals. Teagen suggested approximately 18% of their daily people are from Westminster and stated the appreciation for the Towns support to their organization.
 - *Allocation (2500.00) Westminster Recreation Committee*– Alissa Allbee Daignault and David Dupuis were at the meeting representing the Committee. Alissa stated that at their committee meeting last week, they decided not to be allocated by the Town anymore. The monies were used for insurance purposes and they will taking care of this themselves. The Board thanked the Committee for their service to the Town.
 - *Allocation (\$1000.00) Our Place* – Lisa Pitcher presented to the Board a description of the services given to the public through Our Place Drop In Center. Our Place is located on the Island in Bellows Falls and is open Monday through Friday for breakfast and lunches. They are staffed by 8 people (3-full time & 5-part time) and supply additional services for the public from financing to housing. They have recently started a food shelf service with fresh produce from contributing sources such as Harlow Farm. They supply approximately 40 homes with groceries per month. Lisa thanked the Town for their continued support and welcomed any public interested in visiting the facility to come on in.

Greater Falls Connections – Laura Schairbaum came before the Board and introduced her organization. The GFC has been in existence for approximately 10 years and works with youth on tough subjects like drug and alcohol abuse. They teach the kids about good choices in life and how bad choices effect their future. Just recently the “Boys and Girls Club” moved out of Bellows Falls and they are (GFC) trying to create a substitute for this service calling it “Friends for Change” for youth and created by youth. Kids are a large part of this organizations social mission and building awareness of drug abuse is first and foremost their mission. They are also involved with Hospitals and Doctors about the reduction of drugs being given out versus alternative methods which will keep the harmful drugs off the street. Conversation and knowledge is going to be the key to a child’s success in their life.

Donald Slie – Don came in and asked why his last visit was stricken off the minutes. He acquired the minutes from the library and he was not on it. He questioned again the alleged inappropriate gesture given to him by the SB Chair. He continued with the lack of effort by the Town on stopping his neighbor from using his outside boiler. He stated that the letter sent by the SB had false information in it and that no one had done any testing on his house site for toxins. When given a chance to respond, the Chair stated again that he was on Slie road last fall but never gestured to him in any inappropriate manner and was there for private business not to check up on him. He went on to clarify the letter sent to Mr. Slie was from the whole Selectboard. The information that Mr. Slie was presenting was not in the letter sent. The TM explained the process that he had done for Mr. Slie through the State of Vermont and the Town had exhausted all the resources available to help.

5. Unfinished Business (Discussion Action):

A. Westminster West Town Hall Discussion: The SB Chair introduced Steven Dumont from the State of Vermont’s Fire & Safety Division to speak on the structural engineered report for the Westminster West Town Hall. Steve addressed his concerns about the report in that the information on the lateral stability for wind loads was incomplete. Further discussions with the Engineer should take place because at this point he could not make a determination for the need of repair. He spoke to the facts on his last report dated 1/28/2016. All of these items will need to be addressed before he would OK the building to be used again. Michael Wells asked about creating a plan and using the building in the meantime? Steve responded that the building should be closed until all of the Structural repair was done. Nick Keil asked if the Town’s insurance closed the building to use. Sheldon Beebe responded yes. Dave Mulholland stated that the roof was deemed OK by a professional that he hired. Dave asked about the occupancy limits of the building? Steve Dumont responded he was not sure. John Ewald asked about the removal of the single walled stove pipe, if it was replaced with a double wall pipe could the stove be left in service? Steve D. said there were other issues with the stove that would make it not suitable to be left for service. John Ewald went on and asked when can the building be opened? Steve D. explained that the floor sagging and the wind lateral strength would need clarification from the structural engineer and all of the corns met. Michael Wells asked for clarification that if all of the concerns were addressed that Fire and Safety would grant the certificate of occupancy. Steve D. said yes. The Chair then introduced Wade Masure from the Town’s Insurance carrier VLCT – PACIF. Wade M. stated in his opening comments that the structural report has nine very important recommendations that all should be done and at the end of the day the certificate of occupancy should not be granted until all of the concerns are met. Wade M. also went into details of the report that mentioned that the structural engineer did not uncover all of the possible deficiencies of the building. These could be major concerns or they may be nothing. It was asked why all the problems were not found and the Manager responded that the

Engineer did not want to do damage to the stage flooring or the sagging area flooring until such time that the repair could be done. Dave Smith said that a Clerk of the Works will need to be hired and pricing will need to be received. He went on to ask why this process is taking so long? Do the SB want to spend money on this repair or not? Sheldon Beebe responded that pricing is needed to make that decision. John Ewald stated that volunteer labor could be used and they could start anytime. Sheldon Beebe stated that this was going to be a problem. Professional people are going to be needed and bids will need to be gotten. The question was turned over to Wade M. who concurred with the Board's opinion. Professional contractors will need to be doing this work if the Town is going to continue to own this building and be insured by PACIF. Nick Keil stated that in his opinion, the process of pricing to repair is going as it should. "You can't rush this process". Peggy O'Toole asked if she could start looking for grants and alternate funding? Toby Young gave her permission to start looking for funding. Craig Allen thought that the cart was getting in front of the horse. He was under the impression that the voters in March would get the final say in whether to keep the building or get rid of it. John Ewald asked about volunteer labor and what work could be done? Sheldon Beebe stated that the liability is an issue and asked Wade M. for his thoughts. Wade M. said that this will place the liability strictly on the town and he would not recommend it. Michael Wells asked the Board if he could start getting prices together for the repairs mentioned and come up with estimates. The Board agreed to this with the stipulation of insurance must be present on all of the proposed subcontractors. Wade M. offered to review the contractor's insurance policies to ensure the Town is covered.

6. New Business (Discussion/Action):

- A. **Signs for Town by Will Parmelee** – TM told the Board that the first draft of a sign was in their packet. Mr. Parmelee is offering to create, at cost, Town signs to welcome visitors. Toby Young pointed out that the word Westminster was spelled wrong. Craig Allen wanted the sign to reference the fact of being Township No. 1 in Vermont. The TM is to give these suggestions to Will for a revised sketch.
- B. **Invoice Received from Fire District # 5:** TM received an invoice from the December sewerage backup. The Board after discussion agreed to pay \$450 of the bill for the work getting into the existing Manholes. Craig Allen made the motion and Nancy Dalzell seconded. The motion passed.
- C. **(2) Contractual Matters:** Craig Allen made a motion to go into Executive Session later in the meeting for two contractual matters where premature public knowledge would place the Town at a substantial disadvantage and would invite the Town Manager to join us. The motion was seconded by Toby Young and the motion passed.
- D. **Resignations & Appointments:**

Nancy Dalzell made a motion to accept the resignations of John Medeiros from the Planning Commission and Pauline Wilson from the Activities Commission. Toby Young seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Nancy Dalzell made a motion to appoint Kevin Hughes to replace John M. on the Planning Commission to the longest term available. Craig Allen seconded and the motion passed.

Nancy Dalzell made a motion to appoint Jim Calcherra to the CRVC Wantastiquet Region River Subcommittee vacated by Peter Barrett. Craig Allen seconded and the motion passed.
- E. **Illegal Dumping – Cameras?:** The TM explained that the Town is experiencing illegal dumping at the Town Garage recycling facility. He asked the Board if they wanted the cameras placed again at this site? Nancy Dalzell made a motion to place the cameras back at

the recycling site and asked for signage stating so at the site. Craig Allen seconded and the motion passed.

7. Manager's Report:

- 1) **Paving: TM** – reported that the Kissell Hill tarring project is complete and this Friday the 15th of July the bids for the FY 17 season are due.
- 2) **Ham Radio Days:** The TM attended the Field Day and found out that the Town of Westminster has a complete ham radio kit and it will be given to the Town Manager for emergency management purposes. The value of the kit is approximately \$1200 to \$1400.
- 3) **Trash/Recycling Averages for the last year:**
Trash averaged 34.04 tons per month vs. 77 tons of trash before program
Recycling averaged 18.14 tons per month vs. 12 tons +/- before the program
- 4) **Year End Surplus:** TM explained that the year-end surplus was distributed as per the SB wishes. The exact amount will be disclosed upon the final inspection of the year-end closeout.
- 5) **Cemetery Plantings:** TM asked who has the last say in what gets planted permanently in our cemeteries. The Town has a request for large arborvitaes to be planted by a tomb in the old cemetery. The Board agreed to let the Cemetery Commissioner use his own judgement with these items.
- 6) **State Facility:** TM disclosed that the 4' fence at the new facility is being replaced with an 8' fence as requested by the DRB.

8. Boards and Commissions: Alison Bigwood reminded the Selectboard for the need of a Special meeting to adopt the tax rate. The Board decided to hold this meeting on Thursday July 21, 2016 at 12:00 (noon).

9. Other Business:

- A. **Rented Excavator:** Mark Lund explained the need for the rented excavator for an additional month. TM said that at the August 10th meeting, we will be talking about what to do next with this excavator (purchase or let go).
- B. **Mowing:** TM and Road Foreman explained several situations about mowing this year on the sides of the Town Roads. The conversation was just a heads up of conflicts that will be happening or that have already happened. The Board concluded safety is the first priority.
- C. **Salaries:** Janice Wojcek expressed confusion about the minutes and process that happened at the last meeting in regards to employee salaries. The voters at Town Meeting voted for the Clerk to receive \$48,000 and the minutes showed it being lowered to \$46,000. Craig Allen explained that the budget figures are not to exceed numbers for the voters to vote on and this does not necessarily mean that every penny will go to that person or item. Janice W. disagreed on the Clerks salary because she is elected. The voters agreed to that number and when she asked VLCT for information they said voters vote all of the line items as presented. She went on to ask why the Clerk lost the \$2,000. Craig A. replied that the salaries for all of the employees are amended at the SB meeting before July 1st. Janice wants this procedure challenged. She wants clarification from legal counsel or VLCT to the correct procedure of this method. Dave Smith declared that the Board has no accountability to the public. Everything is decided upon in Executive Session. Kevin Hughes asked why the Clerk was not given the complete raise. Craig explained again that the amount in the budget was an amount not to exceed and the Board thought the 10% raise that was requested was too much. This was in no way degrading her work. Nancy Dalzell stated what was said at Town Meeting when some people questioned this exact line item and the same explanation was given then

also. David Mulholland asked if this was a consensual agreed amount or was it decided by just the Selectboard? The Board made this judgement call.

10. Date of next meeting: July 21st for the tax rate adoption and August 10th for their next regular scheduled meeting.

The meeting moved to executive session at 8:58 p.m. The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:27 PM. No further action was taken.

11. Adjournment: Nancy Dalzell made a motion to adjourn @ 9:29 PM. Toby Young seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

Signature of Clerk

Date

Minutes prepared by Russell Hodgkins - TM

Minutes after Exec. Sess. were created by Russell Hodgkins