

**TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
SELECT BOARD MEETING
August 24, 2016**

Select Board Present: Craig Allen (Vice Chair); Toby Young; and Susan Harlow

Absent Members: Sheldon Beebe (Chair); and Nancy Dalzell (Clerk)

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager / Planning & Zoning Administrator), Karen Astley (Recording Clerk); FACTV; Ruth Grandy, Alice Caggiano, Kathleen Lisai, Jessie Haas, Bob and Pat Haas, Kevin Hughes, Matthew Furlong, Janice Wojcik, Alex Stradling, Karen Larson, Fran Renaud, Barb Greenough, Obe Lisai, Cole Streeter, Peggy O'Toole and numerous residents from the public which were not signed in.

1. CALL TO ORDER: Craig Allen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA: Russ Hodgkins asked for a moment of silence for Justin Beebe prior to business being conducted.

Line item 5 and 6 were reversed in order to have people conduct their business and to be able to leave directly after without staying through the entire meeting.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: Craig Allen asked if there were any additions or changes to the minutes. **Toby Young made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Susan Harlow seconded the motion. Motion passed.**

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS: Christian Blake was not present but had sent an email relative to status of the sewer line grant for the feasibility of a sewer line along Route 5 in the commercial district. Craig Allen did not read the email but it is on file.

The Select Board heard from two appropriated agencies:

HCRS (Health Care & Rehabilitation Services) was represented by Kate Lamphere. Kate is the Emergency Services Representative. HCRS several programs available which connect people to emergency, adult outpatient, children, youth and family, developmental and residential services through multiple offices in Windham/Windsor County. HCRS can connect the community to the necessary resources. The goal for HCRS is to keep residents in the community and improve their quality of life. The Town appropriates \$3,210.00 to this agency. There is an umbrella of funding from other sources. HCRS is grateful for the appropriations received.

Sean Burke and Chris Hackett represented Youth Sports – Babe Ruth (\$500.00 appropriated funds). This group supports local Westminster youth. Unfortunately as Sean stated there has not been a team for the last two years as the numbers of interested (age) players were not high enough to support fielding a team. Youth Sports currently has \$1200.00 in their account and hope to see a team in the future. John also stated the cost of umpires has gone up and teams pay umpires approximately \$1200.00 per season. Youth Sports will sponsor local Westminster youth if they play for Bellows Falls. Other funding comes from donations and when there is a team, in player fees.

5. NEW BUSINESS (Discussions/Action):

FACTV: Alex Stradling, Executive Director, gave an overview of FACTV along with the changes they have been through in the last year. They have gone through some growing pains and have since rectified the inconsistencies. Mr. Stradling did make a statement that his organization could serve our community with regard to recording Select Board meetings and the Town Meeting in March.

Errors & Omissions: The Select Board heard two Errors and Omissions from the Listers office. Parcel 10008.005 did not carry over to Grand List for tax bill generation. Increase in the Grand List of 297,200.00. **Craig Allen made a motion to accept the E&O. Toby Young so moved. Susan Harlow seconded. Motion passed.**

Parcel 003057.100 Veteran exemption of \$40,000.00 from \$123,500.00 to \$83,500.00. **Craig Allen entertained a motion to pass the E&O. Susan Harlow so moved. Toby Young seconded. Motion passed.**

Emergency Management: Evacuation plan/School Board Meeting: Russ Hodgkins updated the Board with development from the School Board meeting with regard to the Brattleboro Middle School/High School Evacuation Plan. Brattleboro would like to entertain, if given an opportunity, for reunification in case of an event such as an active shooter, train derailment etc.. If students had to be evacuated they could go to Bellows Falls Union High School? The need for reunification is just to monitor that students get back with their parents. Russ explained to the Board that the Bellows Falls Union High School is setup to do this as there already is a plan in place because of the Reception Center and Vermont Yankee. There are approximately 120 personnel qualified to handle something such as reunification if it is needed. Chris Kibbee did not embrace the idea during a meeting between Brattleboro Emergency personnel, school personnel and the Town of Westminster.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS (Discussions/Action):

Westminster West Town Hall: Russ let the Select Board know he has two fire extinguishers in the office for the WWTH. Select Board asked if Peggy O'Toole had secured prices for the work to be done as requested by the Fire inspector. The committee presented one bid from an electrician. Peggy stated she needed more time to get bids for other work but made a request for the board to make a motion so the work could get started. Craig Allen asked that Peggy give the bid to Russ. Russ will come back to the board with information on the contractor. Peggy also stated that Governor Shumlin's work crew was available to do work on the handrails for the egress. Peggy will get a copy of this for the record.

State Facility Update: Bucky Adams was awarded the contract to finish the remaining work at the Public Safety Facility. Russ Hodgkins attended a preconstruction meeting on Tuesday, August 23rd. The work will commence next week.

Craig Allen mentioned he attended the open house at the State Police Public Safety Facility. He also stated that the meeting room is available to the town for meetings. Janice Wojcik coincided the meeting room would be available for Select Board meetings as presented in the newspaper.

Town Hall Renovation (Historical Society): Toby Young wanted to step back and understand the events that have led up to where the renovations and the Historical Society are at currently. Several Historical Society members were present to voice their concerns about a possible meeting space being developed upstairs in the Town Hall.

Craig Allen recessed the meeting at 7:43 p.m. to take a tour of the upstairs. The group went back into meeting hall at 7:57 p.m. Alice Caggiano gave the tour and expressed her concerns especially with the stage area and storage/working limitations which would be compounded further by losing floor space for meetings.

Toby Young made it clear that the Select Board will have meetings at the Town Hall because of the office and the convenience for the need to gather more information, make copies or access computers. Select Board has 24 meetings a year and they are not willing to go outside of the Town Hall for meetings, although there are other alternatives such as Westminster Institute, Fire Station, and State Police Safety Facility. She also reiterated that the Historical Society is not being evicted. The Select Board has seen plans from the Architect but has not approved anything. Russ Hodgkins presented two hand sketches of the upstairs and marked the area upstairs where a possible meeting space could be and a man lift. Toby Young also mentioned that the staircases in the front foyer would remain.

Museum is open one afternoon during the summer months. Historical Society has concerns about having meetings within the museum space that is open. Their concerns are something may come up missing, and/or something may get broken. Items in the museum are valuable in history and cannot be replaced. Space will be reduced and the Historical Society will have to store some of the larger items that are on

display. Financially the Historical Society will have a hard time staying open if they have to relocate. There are no bathrooms, air conditioning or heat upstairs at this present time.

Toby Young recommended that everyone work together to brainstorm and develop sketches that will work for both entities. Any changes will mandate ADA compliance. Craig Allen stated no decisions have been made for renovation of the first floor or altering accommodations for second floor. Interest is for long term viability of the building. Peggy O’Toole questioned whether there is grant funding. Paul Bruin may be able to assist with grant funding as he has experience with projects such as this.

EXISTING FIVE YEAR PLAN – CHART: Little discussion on this item. Five Year Plan is not complete or in any order of priority. Trying to get conversations going again in order to allocate money for what is needed each year. The Five Year Plan is above and beyond maintenance. Craig Allen recommended that each board member take responsibility of a town owned facility and create a committee or plan what is needed. Craig Allen suggested that this item be on the next meeting agenda to continue discussion.

EXCAVATOR PURCHASE VS LEASE (RATE): Russ Hodgkins gave the Select Board three banks with current interest rates for a possible five year loan for the purchase of the leased excavator. All agreed Merchants Bank has the better rate. Russ reminded the Board that they needed to weigh their options of buying versus borrowing. Toby Young wanted to wait until there was a full board to make a motion on this agenda item. Item was tabled until the next regular scheduled meeting.

POST OFFICE: Toby Young wanted an overview of the storage issue. Russ Hodgkins explained that the Town Offices have to retain information for a long period of time, at least seven years. The Town has a mini storage that is emptied out when retention time has expired. Mini storage has no climate control. Storage can be made at the Post Office and/or the fire station which could resolve the issue of storage at the Town Hall. Kevin Hughes asked if the offices and state were digitizing. Russ stated not at this time.

7. MANAGER’S REPORT: Russ Hodgkins let the Select Board know that Will Parmelee is making seven signs not six. The seventh sign will be on Route 123 coming into Westminster.

Justin Beebe Memorial: Russ again mentioned that there would be 1500-2500 people at the memorial from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm. Parking would be available at the School, Hadley Field, St. Johnsbury and overflow at BDR.

8. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Kevin Hughes volunteered for the open seat on the Development Review Board. Fran Renaud didn’t think anyone could hold a position on the Planning Commission and DRB at the same time. Russ Hodgkins will look into this.

9. OTHER BUSINESS: Janice Wojcik stated that her last name was incorrectly spelled in the minutes. She would like this corrected for future reference.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: September 14, 2016.

11. ADJOURNMENT: Toby Young made a motion to adjourn at 8:26 p.m. Susan seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Signature of Clerk

Date

Prepared by: Karen Astley, Recording Clerk