

## Town of Westminster

### Selectboard Meeting

August 10, 2016

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

**Others Present:** Russell Hodgkins (Town Manger), Mark Lund (Road Foreman) Millie Barry (Recording Clerk), David Smith, Margaret O'Toole, John Ewald, Kevin Hughes, Janice Wojcek, Fran Renaud, 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:** Toby Young motioned, Craig Allen seconded to accept the minutes of July 13, 2016 as printed. The motion passed. Craig Allen motioned, Nancy Dalzell seconded to accept the minutes of July 21, 2016 as printed. The motion passed.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** John Ewald questioned the minutes of July 21, 2016 stating he believed the Homestead Tax was negative or reduction of .10 cents. The Town Manager (TM) confirmed.
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action)**
  - A. **Westminster West Town Hall Discussion (if any):** Peggy O'Toole let board know the estimates for work were slowly coming in. She asked the Board to approve the purchase of two fire extinguishers the insurance company for the Town requested. The Board Chair stated in a conversation with Don Precourt, Mr. Precourt hoped the State of VT Electrical inspector would come to let the committee know specific work that needed to be done. Peggy O'Toole said a certified electrician has looked at the work required. Toby Young motioned to spend \$134.00 for two 5lb. fire extinguishers for the Westminster West (WW) Town Hall, Susan Harlow seconded, the motion passed. It was also noted the Schaal report stated, "the building should not be occupied during the occurrence of high winds".
  - B. **Signs for the Town – Will Parmelee:** TM – Packet contains the new version of the sign. Russ displayed a color print of the new "Welcome to Westminster" sign. The signs are 36"x24". Susan Harlow motioned, Craig Allen seconded to spend \$2,100.00 on new signs. The TM mentioned Will Parmelee's was donating most of his labor costs. John Ewald recommended the signs be installed by a means so that bolts and nuts cannot be easily disassembled. Mark Lund confirmed the signs would not easily be stolen. The signs will be installed entering north and south on Route 5, north and south on Westminster West Road and East and West on Route 121.
  - C. **State Facility Update:** TM – A pre-construction meeting was held to address the remaining drainage work on the Town's land. Bids have been received and the work will commence immediately due to the upcoming rainy season. The bids are not final or public at this time. Adams Trucking was the lowest bid at \$38,700.00. Water continues to run onto Town property. The pond has been filled to above capacity and a plug was opened to drain some water off (slowly) to make it safe.
  - D. **Wage Decision for FY 16-17:** Information included in packet from legal counsel. Shell Beebe stated information from Legal Counsel and VLCT that the Selectboard (SB) was within their legal right to re-visit the wage issue at a later date because the matter was discussed on the

floor at Town Meeting. This was discussed before everyone attending Town Meeting before the final budget was passed. Janice Wojcek questioned the discussion during Town Meeting as the copy of minutes she obtained shows nothing about re-visiting wages at a later date. She asked if the SB had a conversation with Ali? The TM stated the 'abstract meeting minutes' of the Town Meeting were those needed to show the discussion about re-visiting wages at a later date. Ms. Wojcek questioned if there was a video of Town Meeting or tape recording and asked how the minutes were taken? She read from information obtained from the VT League of Cities and Towns. In part, *"statue gives the voters at Town Meeting the ability to compensate Town Officers at the annual meeting. Though not explicit, the SB has limited discretion to shift dollars between line items. Further, Town Clerks shall receive such salaries as the Town may vote to be paid by their respective Town each year. Town means the voters (not the SB). This is presented to the voters as a line item in the SB proposed budget or a special article of the Town Warning. The SB is obligated to pay the TC the specific money approved by the voters."* Toby believes the intent was to have an upper limit and the increase seemed out of range in terms of considering compensation for all employees. Ms. Wojcek questioned the raise given last year? TM confirmed \$3000.00. Craig Allen stated the SB is ultimately responsible for raises approved and, in hindsight, the SB should have had a conversation with Ali. Ms. Wojcek stated this item had come to her attention as she believes the SB was acting irresponsibly on quite a number of things in the last few months. This may be a learning curve for the SB but it is an injury on someone else. Ms. Wojcek asked about the quality of the TC's work, was her work a problem? Toby Young confirmed her work was great! Toby stated as this was a new job, the SB began slowly increasing compensation as there were things she was still learning and working on. In addition, Ali's raises had exceeded that of the former Town Clerk. Ms. Wojcek asked the Board when they planned to discuss Ali's wage with her. Now the discussion was public, without speaking to Ali before this time, was an affront. Ms. Wojcek asked the Board to be transparent as a Board of Selectmen. To treat the voters with respect and honor us as members of the community. Further, everyone should be working together in a small town, able to depend on each other, come together and help each other. In addition, she believes many people in Town are not happy with how town/community members are being treated by the SB. Kevin Hughes further questioned the Board regarding a video or sound recording of the Town Meeting? The TM confirmed TC took minutes, continually taking notes during the meeting. She also used a tape recording device. The minutes are signed by the moderator, the TC, David Smith questioned the salary of the Town Treasurer opposed to the Zoning Secretary compensation. The TM stated the prior TC created the amount of the Town Treasurer salary for her own personal reasons and nothing had been done to address this. Shell Beebe stated Doreen Woodward's lower salary as Treasurer was due to receiving benefits as a TC. Craig Allen stated Town Meetings had been videotaped in the past. Due to FACT TV lack of volunteer support, they no longer videotaped these meetings.

- E. **Town Hall Renovation Discussion:** TM – Report from Lyssa Papazian, Historic Preservation Consultant is included in packet. Lyssa recommends the elevator go in the building taking out one of the staircases. Russ stated at this point no decisions have been made about moving forward. He understands that some Board members feel it important to meet in the current meeting space. Members of the Board disputed this as they believe it is not

workable to meet at the Institute or Fire Station but are agreeable to meeting on the second floor, if the space were available. Russ spoke about the server (server technology) failing three to four times a month. This equipment saves all data, archives documents electronically and is backed up each night. New equipment would need to be wired in an IT space. The TM stated the probability the server could fail permanently. Shell Beebe said the server should be a different priority than building renovation and re-construction. If the unit has to be replaced with a different unit this should be taken care of separately. The server is a higher priority than decisions regarding the renovation. His suggestion was to research pricing to upgrade this equipment. Discussed by the board were multiple changes in the building that were not historic. The stairs are of historic value. Craig Allen asked about the process to move forward with a goal in mind. TM stated that without Papazian's approval, historic grant preservation dollars might not be available. John Ewald asked if there was another building the Historical Society (HS) could use? TM confirmed there had been a conversation with HS and they did agree to move. Shell Beebe said to do what is best for the Town and building. Many things (except the stairs) had been changed in the building. The SB requested the HS be invited to the next SB meeting to explore solutions and to move forward pricing a new server.

- F. **Existing Five Year Plan:** TM asked the SB to weigh in on strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to put together a five year plan for future capital improvements. Examples of items on a five year plan are constructing a basement under the PO for storage, WW Town Hall renovation, renovating the Westminster Town Hall, the Town Garage and North Westminster Community House. Further discussion included David Mulholland's possible interest in the North Westminster Community House, taxpayer decision to sell a Town building and if these old buildings were for sale. Craig Allen suggested each board member might want to take a project, do the research and be the 'expert' on their specific project.
  - G. **Crosswalk Grant:** Pursuing a grant/the State of VT approving a sidewalk on the Route five were tabled indefinitely.
  - H. **Excavator Purchase vs. Lease:** TM – included in packet is information on leasing vs. purchase of John Deere 75G Excavator. Discussion included the amount of use the leased excavator was used in a month, Mark Lund said almost every day in the summer months. The cost of maintenance (Town is responsible for breakdown of leased excavator), financing or buying outright. Purchase, based on 10 year ownership was \$125,000.00 total out of pocket and at the end of 10 years there would be residual value for trade. Lease, for six months of the year over 10 years was \$195,000.00 total out of pocket with no residual value accumulated.
6. **New Business (Discussion/Action):** The PO leasing company requested replacing planks on handicap ramp, repair of a 'spongy' floor in back of the building as well as a new flag pole. TM suggested moving the flag pole currently at the town hall to the post office and purchasing a new flag pole for the town hall. The new pole would include inside cords for security, would be lighted and have the ability for the flag to fly at half-mast. Craig Allen motioned to authorize the TM to move town hall flag pole to post office and erect a new flag pole at town hall, not to exceed a price of \$3000.00. The road crew to install both poles. Nancy Dalzell seconded, the motion passed.

**7. Manager's Report:**

1. Springfield Paving was the low bidder, per ton in place for FY 2017 paving at approximately \$10/ton cheaper than last year.
2. Ham radio kit should be arriving shortly for EM equipment.
3. Fire District #5 – Tom Hodsden thanked the SB for the \$450.00 and the raising of manholes in North Westminster. The Town supplied 2 men for traffic control August 10 for camera work.
4. Cameras installed at recycling area with a sign.
5. Tim Morton, State of VT Forester has started setting up and marketing the harvest of the Town forest. This will be done before winter and information was passed to Conservation Commission.

**8. Boards and Commissions:** TM – Phil Savoy has submitted a letter requesting to step down from his current position on the development review board. Susan Harlow moved, Nancy Dalzell seconded to accept Phil Savoy's resignation from the development review board. The motion passed. The position will be advertised (with other openings) in the Westminster Gazette.

**9. Other Business:**

**10. Date of Next Meeting: August 24, 2016**

**11. Adjournment: Toby Young motioned, Craig Allen seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.**