

Meeting of the Westminster Selectboard

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

VT State Police Barrack, Westminster, VT

Members Present: K. Sheldon Beebe (Chair), Craig Allen (Vice Chair), Susan Harlow (Clerk) and Kevin Hughes – Toby Young was absent

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager/Zoning Administrator), Bobbi Kilburn, Kristin Brooks, Sean Long, Millie Barry (recording clerk) and FACTV

1. **Call to Order:** K. Sheldon Beebe, chairperson of the board, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. This meeting was held at the Westminster, VT State Police Barracks due to ongoing construction at the Westminster Town Hall.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** Susan Harlow motioned to accept the minutes, Craig Allen seconded the motion, the motion passed. Susan Harlow noted the spelling error of Astley (not Ashley) under new business item E. Another spelling error, “coming” (not comping) in detail of executive session. Ms. Harlow questioned the meaning of, ‘legal counsel advising surplus monies must be requested for a non-emergency need’ under unfinished business item D. Mr. Hodgkins explained additional monies for the Town Hall renovation would have to be requested from taxpayers.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** Sean Long requested clarification of motion to close East Putney Brook Road to motorized vehicles, warned to the public for 30 days. Mr. Beebe explained the Town of Putney wants to close the road on their end. Both towns have to agree to close the road. In addition, Putney did not want to put money into a bridge to maintain for motorized vehicle use. Mr. Long is an advocate for keeping the road open to motorized vehicles. Mr. Beebe said if Putney withdraws their request to close the road on their end, Westminster will take a second look as well. Mr. Hodgkins said the process to close a road was long and involved. There has been no formal vote to close the road but a preliminary yes to consider the process. There will be public hearings for public input. Mr. Long added he believed there were benefits to keeping the road open and it provided access to a number of trails.
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action):**
 - A. Quarterly Budget Discussion (if needed) – Included in the packet was general ledger current year status report. The Town Manager (TM) said this discussion was tabled from the last meeting.
Susan Harlow questioned \$64,000.00 in delinquent property taxes collected leaving \$198,000.00 (approximately) outstanding. The TM confirmed these approximate numbers. Mr. Beebe questioned where the interest savings showed from changing to Mascoma Bank from TD Bank.
 - B. New Dog Ordinance – signatures: The official copy is included in the board packet. The TM said in 60 days the ordinance would be final.

C. Town Meeting (Discussion/Prep):

- SeVEDS petition update – information included in the Board’s packet, update/clarification from legal counsel. The TM noted this is a moot point as the article has been signed by the Board. The TM noted the Town Clerk (Ali Bigwood) did the process correctly, gave proper notification etc.
- Assign speakers to each article for Town meeting – Each of 15 articles were assigned to specific Board members to present at Town meeting. The TM noted the approved appropriations FY20 budget totaled \$49,795.00 – information in Board packet. Those appropriations pending approval total \$27,114.00. The total approved and pending appropriations equal \$76,909.00 or just under four percent of Town budget.
- Create information (graphs, charts, etc.) – The Board decided to include graphs/pie chart at Town meeting for public information.
- Town Hall – Phase III Funding – The Manager let the Board know at Town Meeting Town Hall Funding may want to be discussed under the last article, “to transact other proper business to be brought before the Town of Westminster”. The TM said the Board will not have final figures to finish the Town Hall project by March 2nd (Town Meeting) as this part of the project has not gone out to bid. There will be estimates available.

D. Town of Putney Request – Clarification – this item discussed/explained under “communications and public comments”.

6. New Business (Discussion/Action)

A. Executive Session – 2 personnel matters – Craig Allen motioned to move to executive session to discuss two personnel matters. +Kevin Hughes seconded, the motion carried. This executive session will be after ‘other business’.

B. Handout – Formal audits/letters – Kevin Hughes suggested adopting a recommendation in the audit of Sullivan, Powers & Co., P.C. He clarified the FDIC are required to insure monies at 1.35 percent of all deposits/funds. The banks do not have the insurance to cover a deposit unless the deposit is in the form of a short term US treasury bill. Kevin Hughes moved to recommend the Treasurer of the Town of Westminster require financial holding companies that hold cash for the citizens of Town of Westminster require our financial institutions and custodians hold short term treasury bills of the United States Government out 30-90 days. Craig Allen seconded, the motion carried.

Susan Harlow questioned the deficiencies listed in the Sullivan, Powers & Co. letter. The TM let the Board know the main deficiency, transactions/journal entries erroneously entered were corrected. In the Town Manger’s response to Sullivan, Powers regarding the problems noted in the audit, it was explained the Town was in the process of changing Treasurers, there was now a full time Treasurer, a Financial Officer and NEMRC over seeing all transactions noted in the deficiency.

7. Manager’s Report:

1. Town Hall Renovation – phase II update – The bathroom has been sheet-rocked, taped, mudded, wired and plumbed. The bathroom floor will be hardwood, tongue and groove to match the elevation of the existing floors and will be fluid entering the hallway and into offices. This floor is not part of the scope of the work. The front door replacement will be as soon as weather permits.

2. 6th Annual Selectboard appreciation gathering – Saturday, January 26, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.
3. Windham County Sheriff update – Included in the packet is a detail of coverage provided by the Department. It was noted the Town was down about 200 hours of service to date per the contract. The Town has received \$11,800.00 of about \$30,000.00 in traffic fines/tickets. The Court is retaining about 60% of total tickets issued.

8. Boards and Commissions: None

9. Other Business: Susan Harlow requested listing the dog/rabies clinic on the website under events and in the website calendar.

In another matter, Craig Allen spoke about his personal survey of towns (similar size as Westminster) police protection/coverage. He believes it is important to maintain police protection in the Town. Kevin Hughes suggested an exploratory committee to research the possibility of our own police service. The TM noted Putney had researched funding their own service finding costs prohibitive due to vehicle cost, insurance, etc. Mr. Allen suggested the possibility of sharing coverage with the Town of Putney.

10. Date of Next Meeting – February 13, 2019

The Board moved to executive session at 8:00 p.m. At 8:15 PM, the Selectboard came out of Executive Session and signed a “Resolution” requested by VLCT-PACIF, Inc. in the matter of Jonathan Shaughnessy.

11. Adjournment: Susan Harlow made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 PM. Kevin Hughes seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned.

Clerk

Date