

## Meeting of the Westminster Selectboard

Wednesday, February 13, 2019

VT State Police Barracks, Westminster, VT

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

**Others Present:** Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager/Zoning Administrator), David Major, Fletcher Proctor, David Dupuis, Rita Langle, Millie Barry (recorder) and FACTV

1. **Call to Order:** K. Sheldon Beebe, chairperson of the board, called the meeting to order at 6:30 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:** Craig Allen moved to accept the minutes of January 23, 2019 as printed. Susan Harlow seconded, the motion carried
4. **Communications and Public Comments:**

**David Major** – Act 46 clarification and updates (school district) – Mr. Major appeared before the Board saying on 6/1/2018 the VT Agency of Education decided/recommended not to merge Westminster. The Board of Education (a 12 member board appointed by past governors and Governor Scott) was asked by the legislature to review the recommendations. The Board of Education held a set of hearings around the State taking testimony from individual Towns (10 minutes each) rejecting, on November 1, 2018 the recommendations of the Agency of Education, forcing the Town to merge with Athens and Grafton. Mr. Major added the towns of Athens, Grafton and Westminster had the same school structure. Rockingham has its own Middle School and was excluded from the forced merger. Mr. Major provided information on the multi district lawsuit and an expert opinion from Attorney Larry Slason. Mr. Slason is experienced with Act 46 as he worked with the Town of Vernon allowing Vernon to pull out of WSE Supervisory District. The Westminster School Board decided, against the advice of Agency of Education, and on the advice of Attorney Larry Slason, to warn a budget for Town Meeting and Town Meeting Articles. Mr. Major noted the new superintendent (Christopher Pratt WNESU) as of 7/1/2019 had been supportive of WNESU faculty, staff, board members, parents and administrators. On February 15, 2019 there is a hearing on the lawsuit. Susan Harlow noted the Board and individuals should contact their senators with concerns and/or to talk about Act 46 and the forced merger.
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/action):**
  - A. Town Meeting Prep – Fletcher Proctor - The Board, Town Manager (TM) and Attorney Fletcher Proctor (moderator) discussed at length the order of presenting articles to the voters at town meeting on March 3. Also discussed and included in the packet was the running tally of articles and the amount each article added to the

\$2,025,130.00 total budget for general expenses, repair of highways for the fiscal year beginning 7/1/2019 ending 6/30/2020.

- B. Town Meeting Articles – The Board and TM discussed the specifics/facts of articles, and the individuals presenting the articles. Susan Harlow noted the Sheriff Department budget, decrease in hours, increase in cost should be addressed so voters were aware of changes.
  - C. Town Hall – Phase III information – **The TM noted this item should read Phase II, not Phase III.** Details included in the packet. The Manager said total in capital improvement fund as of 7/1/2018 was \$179,826.00. After current work is completed \$35,126.00 would remain in the improvement fund. This included contract work by Brennan Carpentry, the bathroom floor (not included in Brennan contract), Countryside Alarms to repair of the fire alarm, estimates from Arnold and Scangus for heating of about \$33,000.00 for the first floor and \$16,000.00 heat estimate for heating on the second floor. The Manager is hoping to have estimates from a contractor for the work to finish the Town Hall renovation by Town Meeting.
- 6. New Business: (Discussion/action):**
- A. Rockingham/Westminster Transfer Station - \$35.00 starting July 1, 2019. – Included in the Board packet were communications to the Bellows Falls Village Corporation dated 8/27/1993 and to the Rockingham Selectboard/Bellows Falls Village Corp dated 6/15/2017. These letters detail the agreement for the Rockingham/Westminster Transfer Station between the two towns. Mr. Hodgkins noted Wendy Harrison, Municipal Manager was scheduled to attend the Westminster Selectboard meeting tonight (2/13/2019) to talk about the new fee. (Ms. Harrison was not present). Mr. Hodgkins’s understanding is that Westminster will be asked by Town of Rockingham/Village of Bellows Falls to collect \$35.00 per automobile sticker for Westminster users of the transfer station. The Board discussed the new fee, why residents use the transfer station, using the Brattleboro transfer station and current charges at the station for disposing of articles such as construction materials, household trash, etc.
  - B. Sign Certificate of Mileage – State of Vermont – Craig Allen moved to accept the Certificate of Highway Mileage for 2019/2020. Susan Harlow seconded, the motion carried.
  - C. Sign Road and Bridge Standards – State of Vermont – This is a State mandate to accept the sign, road and bridge standards. The TM noted the Town had been following the standards for many years, doing the equivalent to the Act 64 requirement. Craig Allen moved to accept the State of Vermont Road and Bridge Standards for the Town of Westminster fiscal year 2019/2020. Toby Young seconded, the motion carried.
  - D. Executive Session – contractual matter: Craig Allen moved to go into executive session (inviting the TM) to discuss a contractual matter. Susan Harlow seconded, the motion carried.
  - E. Liquor License (1): Craig Allen moved to accept a liquor license renewal for Circle K in Westminster Station. Susan Harlow seconded, the motion carried.

**7. Manger's Report:**

- A. Town Hall Renovation – Phase II update –
  - The bathroom has been sheet-rocked, taped, mudded, wired, plumbed, floor installed, ceiling installed and painted. The bathroom floor is hardwood tongue and groove, the bathroom will be completed (sink and toilet installed) this week.
  - The front door replacement will be as soon as weather permits.
- B. WCS (Windham County Sheriff) Update – Included in the packet was an update of tickets, warnings, arrests etc. as of 2/01/2019. Under the contractual obligations 2,000 hours of service are required, received to date are 1,084 hours. Per the current contract hours should be 1,216.
- C. Lease – Vibratory roller (again) – The Town is looking for a deal on used roller unit or joint purchase of a roller with another town. The roller saves the Town money and labor as road grading is required every two months during spring/summer/fall months as opposed to every other week. This year the roller will be leased as this is within the highway budget.
- D. Mandich Lawsuit – The Manager stated he believes he will be asked to attend a court hearing to represent the Town on the lawsuit. The property (Westminster Meats) has been purchased and is currently being cleaned. It will be a meat processing plant.

**8. Board and Commissions – None**

**9. Other Business:** Susan Harlow noted she and the Town Manager would attend a legislature/local government day 2/14/2019. The Manager noted a meeting was scheduled during the day with the Town's representatives/legislators. The Manager noted the new Town website, design, etc. was not going well. A meeting will be scheduled soon to address problems and concerns.

**10. Date of next meeting:** February 27, 2019

**The Board moved to executive session at 8:11 p.m.** Upon coming out of Executive Session at 8:38 p.m., the Board asked the Town Manager to thank Mark Lund for his help these past few months but will not be renewing his contract which expires on February 28, 2019.

**11. Adjournment:** Craig Allen made a motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. and Sheldon Beebe seconded. The motion passed.

---

**Clerk**

---

**Date**