

## MEETING OF THE WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD

Wednesday, March 13, 2019

Vermont 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), Millie Barry (Recording Clerk) and FACTV

1. **Call to Order:** Russell Hodgkins, Town Manager called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. This meeting was held at the Westminster, VT state police barracks building due to ongoing construction at the Westminster Town Hall.
2. **Re-organize the Board:** Mr. Hodgkins asked for nominations for Chairperson of the Board for the upcoming year. Susan Harlow nominated K. Sheldon Beebe, Kevin Hughes seconded, the motion carried. Mr. Beebe, now re-elected Chair of the Selectboard asked for nominations for Vice Chair of the Board. Toby Young nominated Susan Harlow, Kevin Hughes seconded, the motion carried. Mr. Beebe called for nominations for Clerk of the Board, Susan Harlow nominated Kevin Hughes. Toby Young seconded, the motion carried for Kevin Hughes to serve as Clerk of the Selectboard.
3. **Adjustments to Agenda:** The Town Manager (TM) requested to add under new business, 6.G Mandich Lawsuit. The Chair so noted the addition.
4. **Acceptance of Minutes: February 27, 2019.** Craig Allen made a motion to accept the minutes as printed. Susan Harlow seconded the motion and it passed 5-0.
5. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
6. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action):**
  - A. **Budget and Town Meeting Discussion:** Mr. Hodgkins relayed to the Board that he had received many, many compliments from citizens on the well-orchestrated Town Meeting. Board members also received praise for their article presentation and thoughtful views on each article. Also, the town report received many positive comments. The Board as a whole commended Mr. Hodgkin and Kelley Thayer (administrative assistant) for their work and research making the meeting (and power point presentation) run smoothly without problems and or issues. Susan Harlow inquired about recycling the town report. The TM reported the report could be recycled, especially by removing (cutting) the plastic binder.
  - B. **Act 46 Clarification and Updates (School District):** Included in the packet was a warning for the special meeting of the new school district, Windham Northeast Union Elementary School District. Also, a copy of a press release dated 3/13/2019 titled, "State orders school districts to convene". The warned meeting of the new district will be held on April 10, 2019. Susan Harlow moved for the Selectboard to meet on Tuesday, April 9, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. for their first April meeting. Toby Young seconded the motion, the motion carried. The TM will warn the April 9 and April 10 meetings. The Board discussed their position being united as a Board unanimously against the Act 46 merger and formation of the new district. The TM will seek legal advice regarding the Board's role at the warned special meeting of the new school district.

- C. Town Hall – Phase III Funding: Included in the packet was current town hall information and funding. The Manager noted after discussion with Mr. Beebe, there was not a good reason to replace the current heating system for the downstairs. The system is working and functioning well. Due to the upgrade in the upstairs heating/air conditioning, the downstairs system will operate more efficiently. Mr. Hodgkins and Board talked about town meeting discussion and moving forward with spending this year’s surplus on the renovation of the town hall. Craig Allen noted the Board did not ask for authority from town’s people, more declared the process of moving forward with renovation. Mr. Beebe noted once the front doors were done, the last phase could be bid to figure if the remaining funds of \$68,000.00 plus/minus would cover costs of finishing floors, walls, re-piping duct work for heat and new bathroom heat.

**7. New Business (Discussion/Action):**

- A. Unsafe/Abandoned Building Ordinance tabled from November – Included in the packet was a first draft. The Manager noted he was providing information to the Board regarding unsafe buildings. Mr. Beebe requested this item be added to the agenda of the second meeting in April.
- B. Procurement/Purchasing Policy – Included in the packet was information on the current purchasing policy last updated in August 2012. The TM noted inflation had gone up three to five percent each year. The Board Chair requested this item be listed on the agenda for the second meeting in April.
- C. VLCT Deductible: Craig Allen moved to go to executive session to discuss this item related to a personnel matter. Kevin seconded, the motion carried. Toby Young noted information about public documents, negotiating the issue and paying bills was public knowledge. The motion passed, four members in favor, one opposed.
- D. Discussion on Internet Availability – Survey – The Manager noted discussion at town meeting regarding a requested survey on internet availability. He said the survey would be costly for the Town to mail, print and provide return postage. Also, the Selectboard has sent a letter to the legislators and there is current discussion in Montpelier about internet access statewide. Mr. Hodgkins recommended waiting to see progress made during the current legislative session then possibly sending another letter to the Towns representatives. The Selectboard agreed.
- E. First Draft of Yearly Appointments of Record. The officers, new appointments and years of service were included in the packet as of March 2019. The document will be continue to be updated. The Board agreed to hold Selectboard meetings on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. unless noticed differently.
- F. Liquor License (1) Allen Brothers – Susan Harlow motioned to renew the liquor license at Allen Brothers on Route 5 in Westminster. Kevin Hughes seconded the motion, the motion carried. Mr. Allen abstained from the vote.
- G. Mandich Lawsuit- Email included in packet from Bragdon, Baron & Kossayda, P.C. law firm. The TM told the Board there was \$18,800.00 in back taxes owed on the Mandich property to the Town of Walpole. The TM will seek legal advice on advisability of paying taxes to protect the attachment of this property as opposed to letting the property go to tax sale. The estimated sale value of the property is about \$800,000.00. The Town of Westminster is

first lien holder, when or if the home is sold. This money would come from the State grant received from Mr. Mandich original loan.

**8. Manager's Report:**

- 1). Bridge Discussion – VTRANS Update – Included in packet was information on Windham Regional Committee capital program ranking for FY 20. The document lists the bridge on Route 121 (bridge 5) with engineering scheduled for FY 19, construction beginning in 2022. It is estimated the bridge closure will be 3-4 months once construction begins.
- 2). FY 18 – New Homes (7) – Included in the packet permit approvals for 2018 for new home/camp construction projects.
- 3). TM going to court – Mandich - March 28, 2019. The Manager will accompany personnel from the law firm of Bragdon, Baron & Kossayda, P.C. to provide testimony.
- 4). Animal Control Ordinance: This ordinance became valid/final March 11, 2019.
- 5) Selectboard Institute – Information included in packet on dates and registration.

**9. Boards and Commissions:** Nothing to report – Needed are two planning commission members.

**10. Other Business:** Mr. Beebe noted the review of the Town Manager and to have a contract signed.

**11. Date of Next Meeting:** March 27, 2019

The Board moved to executive session at 7:33 p.m. Upon coming out of Executive Session at 7:42 PM, the Chair declared no further action would be taken this evening.

**12. Adjournment:** Toby Young made a motion to adjourn and Susan Harlow seconded. The motion passed at 7:48 P.M.

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Clerk

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Date