

MEETING OF THE WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD

Wednesday, April 25, 2018, Westminster Town Hall

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), Alison Bigwood (Town Clerk) Patty Mark (Assistant Town Clerk) Jackie Atwood (Lister/newly elected Town Treasurer), Mark Lund, David Smith, Wayne Vernon Estey, Millie Barry (Recording Clerk) and FACTV

1. **Call to Order:** The Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by the chair of the board K. Sheldon Beebe.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** The Manager noted a correction in the minutes of April 11, 2018. Patty Mark, Assistant Town Clerk is leaving each day 3:00 p.m. opposed to 3:30 p.m. as written. Craig Allen moved to accept the minutes as written noting the correction. Kevin Hughes seconded the motion, the motion carried.
4. **Communication and Public Comments:** Wayne Vernon Estey, Democratic Candidate for Vermont State Senate for Windham County, introduced himself to the Board and spoke briefly about his beliefs relating to representing the Town of Westminster.
Mark Lund questioned the Board about hiring new a Road Foreman. Mr. Beebe said there were no solid decisions. It was a possibility, if a new Road Foreman was not hired in 60 days, an option is the Town Manager, as the Road Commissioner could be the Road Foreman on an interim basis until a qualified person is hired to fill the position. To date, there were no applicants meeting the job requirements. Mr. Hodgkins said the open position would be re-advertised.
Mr. Lund also questioned the Board about the 5 year plan pertaining to the town garage. Susan Harlow noted some monies had been put aside for the garage and several other projects like the Town Hall and North Westminster Community House had been a priority. Mr. Lund said his concerns were the need for more room in the present garage and taking out the in-ground fuel tanks.
Kevin Hughes read a thank you letter from HCRS for \$3,210.00 appropriation voted on at town meeting.
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action):**
 - A. Abandoned Mobile Home – Davidson Hill Update: The Manager told the Board he contacted the owner’s brother who in turn will make a contact to other family members involved in the property.
 - B. New Dog Ordinance: A public hearing to discuss the newly written ordinance will be held at 6:00 p.m. May 23, 2018 before the regular Selectboard meeting.
 - C. Fund Reserve Policy – Discussion: The Manager told the Board corrections had been made to the policy as requested. Susan Harlow noted Burlington, VT uses the term “unassigned balance” and questioned if the fund reserve policy should be offered to the Towns people by a public hearing. The Chair noted the public hearing possibility.

D. Third Quarter Financials – Discussion:

Patty Mark told the Board 347 dogs had been registered as of April 25, 2018.

Susan Harlow asked about monies from Westminster Meats. Mr. Hodgkins said the matter had been referred to legal counsel.

In Other Unfinished and Unscheduled Business - Jackie Atwood questioned the Board regarding the hours and pay for herself and the Assistant Treasurer to get the job done. Just with minimum hours she is currently spending doing Treasurer duties and the many hours Ali Bigwood is spending each week at \$22.00 per week, there will be a deficit before June 30. She is also unclear about the Treasurer budget for the upcoming year. A lengthy discussion followed regarding the estimated number of hours that would be needed for the next year beginning in July, the amount budgeted for the next year and specific duties of the Treasurer? Ms. Bigwood told the Board Doreen Woodward was paid almost \$13,000.000 per year as the Town Finance Officer and \$5,000.00 as Treasurer. Craig Allen asked Ms. Atwood for details in writing before June 30 regarding training, hours for the Treasurer, and hours for an Assistant as it relates to next year's budget.

In another matter: Sheldon Beebe asked what the status of the Farnsworth purchase was. The Town Manager told the Board an attorney had contacted him about the purchase of land by Roger Farnsworth. In addition, the gate to this property was presently locked.

6. New Business (Discussion/Action):

- A. Allocate Money from Emergency Management Fund – Fire Dept. Mr. Hodgkins let the Board know the Fire Department has not come back with a final proposal. He noted there was \$19,080.63 in the Emergency Management Fund. It would be appropriate for emergency management gear to be taken from this account.
- B. Tax Sale Property – Due 5-22-2018: The Manager reminded the Board that the Town purchased the Zdunek property on the advice of legal counsel after it became available from bankruptcy court. The 19.1 acre property was purchased for \$18,786.13. The Town will be eligible, going back to 2009 to recoup legal fees and expenditures of \$22,000.00 to \$23,000.00. This property can be redeemed until May 18, 2018.
- C. Glebe Lands – Legal Counsel Advise: Information in the packet – Mr. Hodgkins said it doesn't appear that there are Glebe or leased lands left in Westminster. Legal counsel recommends though, an article should be put before the taxpayers at Town meeting just in case a parcel is found to be unclaimed. The Town should be interested in accumulating any leased lands as they become available.
- D. Personnel Matter (Executive Session): Susan Harlow motioned to move to executive session to discuss a personnel matter inviting the Town Manager. Craig Allen seconded the motion, the motion passed. This executive session will take place after other business on the agenda.

7. Town Manager's Report:

- 1. Traffic Safety Audit Results – handout. Included in the packet are the results of the audit. If the Board/Town is interested in changing the speed limit at the Allen Brother/I-91 section of the road, this requires a letter requesting a survey be done to the Vermont Traffic Committee via Amy Gamble. The Board was interested and the Manager will write the request.

2. High Risks Road Grant – Signs on Westminster West Road: This work was slated for April 9 to June 29, 2018. The work has not yet begun.
 3. Animal Bite Survey Results: Handout is included in packet on animal bite reporting in Vermont.
 4. Public Hearing: The animal control ordinance is slated for May 23, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. before the regular Selectboard meeting.
 5. Windham Solid Waste Management District – The presentation by Bob Spencer and Kristen Benoit is confirmed during the June 13, 2018 Selectboard meeting.
 6. Green-Up Day is Saturday, May 5, 2018. There will be bags available at the school on Saturday and green-up bags are available at the Town Hall.
 7. New Hire – David Russell from Westminster is a new road crew employee.
 8. Tractor Hours – As requested, the meter on the tractor reads 4,041. This is the tractor and mower the Town plans to trade/replace.
- 8. Boards and Commissions:** Mr. Hodgkins relayed to the Board the openings were advertised in the *Gazette*. There has been some interest in Board positions.
- 9. Other Business:** Mr. Hodgkins noted the Fire Department has requested to borrow three long (wooden) benches to use for their meetings. The Selectboard approved the Town Crew moving the benches to the Fire Department for their use.
- At the request of the Town Manager, Craig Allen moved to allow the Delinquent Tax Collector to write off/forgive at his/her discretion, up to \$10.00 in interest fees for delinquent taxes. Susan Harlow seconded the motion, the motion passed. This interest fee forgiveness is at the time a delinquent tax payment is made and just before 1% is added.
- Mr. Beebe spoke to the Board about a conversation with NEMRC regarding the Listers job issue and NEMRC's contract. The Selectboard will schedule a meeting with the Listers for more discussion. At the present time, the Listers are putting in more hours than the Board had anticipated as NEMRC is pressuring the Listers to take on responsibilities NEMRC has been doing. An option is to go to an hourly position, rather than have a (NEMRC) contract, possibly spending less money. The last payments to NEMRC, for the current year will be held until there is an accounting of hours versus dollars spent. There will be a meeting between NEMRC, the Listers, the Town Manager and two Board members to discuss duties and responsibilities.
- Craig Allen asked if there was a welcome packet from the Town for new residents moving into Westminster. This packet would give people information about the Town and being involved in Boards/Commissions/activities. Mr. Hodgkins will ask the Activities Committee to put a packet together for this purpose.
- Susan Harlow asked about the home page of the Town website. The Manager relayed the front page is limited, does not have a lot of room/space for additional information. There is room beyond the front page when clicking on a specific subject. Plans for a new site will be coming soon.
- 10. Date of Next Meeting:** May 9, 2018

The meeting moved to executive session at 7:56 p.m. Upon coming out of Executive Session at 8:11 p.m., no further business was conducted.

11. Adjournment: Susan Harlow made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 pm. Craig Allen seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.

Clerk

Date

Minutes prepared by Millie Barry 4/26/2018