

Meeting of the Westminster Selectboard

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

Westminster, VT Town Hall

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

Craig Allen was absent

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager/Zoning Administrator), Millie Barry (Recording Clerk), David Dupuis, David Allbee, Jason Smith, Jan Ameen and FACTV

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:42 p.m. by K. Sheldon Beebe, chair of the Board following the third public hearing on the revised animal control ordinance.
- 2. Adjustments to the Agenda:** The Town Manager (TM) requested to add a second personnel matter under unfinished business to be discussed in executive session. The Chair so noted the addition.
- 3. Acceptance of Minutes:** August 22, 2018 – Susan Harlow moved to accept the minutes of August 22, 2018 as printed. Toby Young seconded the motion, motion carried.
- 4. Communications and Public Comments:** Jan Ameen spoke to the Board agreeing with Robert Wickberg's comments at the August 22, 2018 meeting about speed limit posting in Westminster West. The TM let the Board know the Windham County Sheriff Department did not have survey results for the change of speed on Back Westminster Road. The change on this road was determined from sheriff department observation, patrol, accident reports etc. The State High Risk Grant changed the limits in Westminster West to 35 miles per hour during the recent installation of road signs. The speed limits in the West will be returned to 40 miles per hour and the town will pay for the new signs as the old ones were stolen.

In other communication and public comments – The TM has tried to contact Gary Derosia about speaking to the Board regarding the Rockingham/Westminster recycling center. This will be at an upcoming meeting.

Bruce Parker asked for clarification on the private road signs posted on Hartley Hill. Mr. Parker noted the Town Road Crew does maintain Hartley Hill. Mr. Beebe confirmed the Road Crew maintains the private sector of Hartley Hill to access the back side of the road. The private portion is minimally maintained, one blade width wide (to get grader and town truck through). The TM confirmed there had been multiple complaints in the last two months about Steve Piluski, caretaker of both sides of private area for Mr. Bond, basically telling people to stay off the road. Jason Smith confirmed a similar experience when recently driving on Hartley Hill. The Manager commented Mr. Bond, owner of the property on Hartley Hill, was unable to communicate with the Town. Mr. Beebe said the Town could plow from Saxtons River so not to travel the private portion of the road, if necessary.

The Manager shared with the Board a letter from the VT Land Trust. They are preparing to purchase a portion of the Acquaviva farm on the Westminster West Road for \$125,000.00. This acquisition will conserve this farmland for future years and the rights will be shared with the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board.

Also, FACTV contacted the Town about broad casting live on cable and Ethernet, the Selectboard meetings using the town's current internet router. The TM will discuss with the Town IT person about use of the town internet service. This item will be discussed at the next Selectboard meeting.

5. Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action) –

- A. Signage on Westminster West Road – update: Discussed earlier in the meeting, the speed limit signs that were stolen on the Westminster West Road will be replaced by the Town at our expense and there is no scheduled time for this replacement.
- B. New Dog Ordinance – Discussion and public hearing #3 adoption: The TM noted, he did not believe from comments at the public hearing, the Board was ready to approve the new ordinance. More changes/updates will be made before the final document is approved by the Board and then sent to legal counsel.
- C. Property Sale – Zdunek property update: The TM noted Buffum Realty is interested in listing the property. In addition, the Town received an offer for the 19.1 acres. The amount offered was below the amount of \$24,000.00 (plus/minus) that the Town has invested in expenses and taxes. The property will be listed and neighboring property owners will be notified the property is for sale.
- D. Website Renewal Search Update: Included in the packet is second proposal. This proposal is from eBusiness Technology, LLC for the Town's website redevelopment. Development cost would be \$6,000.00 and \$395 quarterly for hosting the website. The TM said the Town will negotiate the yearly hosting cost. GoDaddy is the Town's present website server and struggles to maintain service. Susan Harlow motioned to contract with eBusiness for the Town website development at a cost not more than \$6,000.00. K. Sheldon Beebe seconded the motion, the motion carried.
- E. Mandich – NH law suit update: Included in the packet was email correspondence from Bragdon, Dowd, Kossayda law practice informing the TM the Sheriff's Department had not been able to serve (the delivery of a legal document that notifies the recipient of the commencement of a legal action or proceeding in which he or she is involved) Mr. Mandich. The deadline to file this document will be extended. The email notes the court's pre-judgment lien on Mr. Mandich's property has been recorded with the registry of deeds. Kevin Hughes questioned if there was any other mechanism to satisfy service with the state of NH and the court. The TM will contact the law firm to inquire.
- F. Executive Session – Toby Young motioned to move to executive session to discuss two personnel matters. Kevin Hughes second the motion, the motion carried. Mr. Beebe said the executive session would take place after other business on the agenda.
- G. Piano and Hearse update: Included in the packet was a picture taken in May 1976 showing the disassembled hearse being moved, by Westminster residents and members of the Fire Department up the stairs of the Town Hall for historical preservation. Other information included, Fred Harlow being responsible, at that time, for the preservation of the hearse. His father, Arthur Harlow was the only driver of the hearse making his last trip around 1935 or 1936. A plaque shows the maker of the hearse to be G.N. French & Son of Bellows Falls.

6. New Business: (Discussion/Action):

A. Errors and Omissions (5):

1. Toby Young moved (pursuant to 32 VSA S 4261), correcting omissions from the grand list to omit from grand list value of parcel #004034000, located at 100 Westminster Terrace, owned by Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS), value of \$119,400.00. Susan Harlow seconded the motion, the motion carried. The TM explained HCRS, by State law, is a non-taxable service but offers the Town a PILOT program.
2. Toby Young moved (pursuant to 32 VSA S 4261) correcting omissions from the grand list to omit parcel 007051T01 from the grand list owned by Donald R. Allen and Marlene L. Allen located at 578 Back Westminster Road, valued at \$34,200.00. Susan Harlow seconded the motion, motion carried. The TM explained the mobile home is on the property that Mr. Allen presently owns. The mobile home was on land that the neighbor owned.
3. Susan Harlow moved (pursuant to 32 VSA S 4261) correcting omissions from the grand list to add \$18,800.00, parcel 003134000, owned by Donald R. Allen and Marlene L Allen located at 1778 Back Westminster Road to the grand list. The removal of a 1960 mobile home, replaced with 2009 mobile home increases the grand list value of this property to \$53,000.00. Toby Young seconded the motion and the motion passed.
4. Susan Harlow moved (pursuant to 32 VSA S 4261) correcting omissions from the grand list to remove parcel 003094050, value \$8,100.00 from grand list. Owner Tharin Picz located at 204 Shady Pines Park. Kevin Hughes seconded motion, motion carried. The TM explained that the mobile home no longer exists in the park and mentioned the next E&O was the same correction.
5. Kevin Hughes moved (pursuant to 32 VSA S 4261) correcting omissions from the grand list, to remove parcel 003094060 from the grand list value \$8,100.00 owned by Christina Allcock located at 2041 Shady Pines Park. Susan Harlow seconded the motion, motion carried.

- B. First Look at FY 20 budget (revisions and explanations):** Included in the packet was a budget worksheet report as of 9/10/2018 showing FY16 Actual, FY17 Actual, FY18 Actual, Approved budget FY19 and Proposed FY20 budget. Also, FY20 Revenue budget worksheet. The Board and TM talked at length about specific items with the TM explaining the final estimates for the worksheet are not available until November 2018. Susan Harlow asked about setting up, in the Excel worksheet, a calculating cell which would show the tax rate as the budget changed. The TM will research how to do this and get it done for the next meeting. Susan Harlow also asked about the possibility of holding a public hearing before Town Meeting for the public to question the proposed expenses and revenue. Susan Harlow asked the TM about the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) compensation survey, do we participate in this and would it be available for the Board to review. He responded yes to both and will give the Board a copy at the next meeting. The TM reported that the Town Clerk had collected \$1,811,615.03 in tax payments with an additional \$72,000.00 collected in delinquent taxes. Mr. Beebe asked about money (pilot – taxes) from the State for the State Police Barracks. Mr. Hodgkins said \$22,816.00 had been received in 2018 thus far, but didn't have a breakdown of specific properties with values.

7. Manager's Report:

- A. Town Hall Renovation: update – work scheduled for late September now
- B. VLCT PACIF (property and casualty & workers compensation coverage for municipal entities) reported on 9/23/2018 by Wade Masure, Westminster's workman's compensation rate is .86, the lowest in many years. The best rate is .82 for the number of people Westminster employs.
- C. Ben Masure gave his notice for personal reasons and will be seeking employment with James Oil.
- D. The TM met with Alan May from Better Back Roads. Mr. May has assured the Town funding for the Forest Road drainage project for the summer of 2019.
- E. Dodge – 1 ton dump truck has been ordered. The truck arrived 8/27/2018 complete with 'municipal specifications'. Mr. Beebe confirmed approval to sign the purchase agreement.
- F. On 9/21/2018 the TM is taking a vacation day. The clerks are at a conference and the Listers do not have hours on 9/21/2018. Kelley Thayer (administrative assistant) would take a personal day leaving the office closed on this day. The Board agreed to close the office September 21, 2018 and letting the public know by posting the date on the website and a note on the door in advance and on the day of.
- G. Emergency Management – brief discussion: Mr. Beebe is the third person on the list being notified of a Town emergency after Cole Streeter and Russell Hodgkins. Mr. Hodgkins also mentioned immediate notification of the State Police and Windham County Sheriff's Department.

8. Boards and Commissions: Nothing new to report – The TM noted two vacant positions on Planning Board

9. Other Business: None

10. Date of Next Meeting: September 26, 2018

The Selectboard moved to executive session at 7:48 PM. Upon coming out of executive session at 8:13 PM, the Chair requested that the Town Manager draft a letter regarding the budget and hours spent. No further action was declared.

11. Adjournment: Toby Young made a motion to adjourn at 8:17 PM. Susan Harlow seconded and the motion passed.

Clerk

Date