

MEETING OF THE WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

Westminster, VT 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), Jan Ameen, Jeff Epstein (Reporter, *Eagle Times*, *VT Reporter*), Millie Barry (Recording Clerk) and FACTV

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by K. Sheldon Beebe, chair of the Board.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** The Town Manager (TM) requested to change the order of the meeting allowing Alison Bigwood, town clerk to speak after Communications and Public Comments. The chair noted the request and change.
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** September 12, 2018 – Town Clerk, Alison Bigwood noted a change to the minutes of 9/12/18. Under New Business, B., First Look at FY 20 Budget (revisions and explanations): The Clerk collected \$72,000.00 direct debit, not as written in the minutes, delinquent taxes. Susan Harlow motioned to accept the minutes as printed with the correction. Toby Young seconded the motion, the motion carried.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
Under New Business: A. Cemetery Deeds (2) - The Town Clerk noted the sale of two cemetery plot deeds for the Board to approve and the Chair of the Board to sign.
Under New Business: B. Forgive Late Filing Fee - Ms. Bigwood requested the Board waive a Homestead Declaration late filing penalty fee for a resident. The resident filed in a timely fashion but the the State of Vermont recorded an incorrect date causing the fee to show as late.
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action):**
 - A. Signage on Westminster West Road: ordered – The TM told the Board three of the stolen speed limit signs, including posts, had been recovered. The remainder of the missing signs have been ordered. These will be put in before winter. Toby Young noted her grand-daughter had collected signatures from Westminster West village residents requesting the ‘thickly settled’ sign be replaced.
 - B. New Animal Control Ordinance: Susan Harlow and Jan Ameen talked about more corrections to the ordinance. The Board packet included the ordinance and changes since the last public hearing. The changes were noted, will be made and the ordinance sent to legal counsel for input.
 - C. Property Sale – Zdunek Property Update: The TM noted there were two people interested in this property. Buffam Realty will list the property (now advertised in the *Westminster Gazette*) and advised the Manager that the town expense is well below the value of the property in their opinion.
 - D. Website Renewal Update: Included in the packet was a copy of the contract with eBusiness Technology. The Manager mentioned a change to the contract: eBusiness will manage/monitor the website every six months invoicing the town \$120.00 quarterly or \$480.00 yearly. The Town will add data to website after it is initially developed.

- E. Mandich – NH Law Suit Update: Included in the packet was email correspondence from Bragdon, Dowd, Kossayda law firm stating Mr. Mandich continued to evade service. An extension of the service deadline had been approved by the New Hampshire court. The next option will be alternative service, publication in the newspaper etc.
- F. Piano and Hearse Update: The Manager advised he had one estimate from a contractor to shore up the white building in or near the Westminster West cemetery. To pour a new floor, renovate the present building to make it water tight would cost more than to take it down and build a new building. The TM will contact another contractor for advice on the building.
- G. Treasurer’s Position – Update: Included in the packet is a letter of resignation from Jacklyn Atwood, elected Treasurer of the Town effective September 30, 2018. Toby Young moved to accept Ms. Atwood’s resignation, Craig Allen seconded the motion. The motion passed. The TM manager noted the position could be covered, for the present time in house and noted a new person be appointed as soon as possible. The position will be advertised in the *Brattleboro Reformer, The Vermont Journal/Shopper, Eagle Times, Keene Sentinel, Westminster Gazette* and posted on the Town website. The appointed person will serve to the next Town meeting in March and must be a resident of the Town. In addition, the TM will draft a letter thanking Jackie for her service and her offer to train the next person. Susan Harlow questioned the decision of a full treasurer position or financial officer and the effect on the budget. The Board concluded they would address the budget when a person was appointed. The TM said the Board should create a job description, responsibilities, scope of work for the position.

6. New Business (Discussion/Action):

- A. Cemetery Deeds (2) – Susan Harlow motioned the Board to accept the request to purchase a cemetery plot by Evelyn Kingsbury for \$450.00 giving the Chair permission to sign the deed. Toby Young seconded the motion. The motion carried. Susan Harlow motioned the Board to accept the request to purchase a cemetery plot by Julia McKeen for \$310.00 giving the Chair permission to sign the deed. Craig Allen seconded the motion, the motion carried.
- B. Forgive Late Filing Fee: Craig Allen motioned to waive the Homestead Declaration late filing fee penalty for parcel #011160.100 due to State of Vermont error in recording the date of filing. Kevin Hughes seconded the motion, the motion carried
- C. Quarterly Financials: Included in the packet – the TM noted all expenditures were complete thus far. The Board and Manager discussed the cost of sand and salt. Mr. Hodgkins said the Town received a bid from a company recently obtaining the salt contract for the State of VT. Sand will be supplied from an Acworth, NH contractor at a cost less than the previous source. Susan Harlow questioned 114% of office supply expense after three months. The TM will research why the percentage/costs are high. The quarterly report will be discussed at the next meeting.
- D. FY 20 Budget (Revenue and Expense): Information included in the packet. In answer to Susan Harlow’s question, the Manager explained the tax rate was figured by taking the amount of taxable revenue and dividing by amount of grand list. At this time, without all of the expenses, the estimated tax rate would be 0.6302 versus 0.6063. The Manager also explained to re-coop the money previously paid to NEMRC, where NEMRC did not provide adequate hours, the Assessor, IT person and reconciliation person would remain at the same level as the previous year.

- E. Road Crew Update: The Manager stated the Road Crew would be fully staffed by the week of October 15, 2018 as two gentlemen have been hired. Administratively, Chuck Lawrence is training for the Foreman position. Mark Lund will continue as part-time Foreman and will help as a storm watch person.
- F. Executive Session – personnel matter: Craig Allen motioned to go into executive session inviting the TM to discuss a personnel matter. Kevin Hughes seconded the motion, the motion carried. The chair noted the executive session would be after other business on the agenda.

7. Manager’s Report:

- 1/. Town Hall Renovation – Construction work will begin September 27 or 28 starting in the Selectboard meeting space.
- 2/. Gary DeRosia will attend the October 10, 2018 Board meeting speaking about the Rockingham transfer station.
- 3/. Greater Falls Connection – Laurie Schairbaum will attend the October 24, 2018 meeting.
- 4/. SeVEDS will also attend the October 24, 2018 Selectboard meeting to talk about their program and appropriation.
- 5/. Fire District #5 will present their case to the Village of Bellows Falls on Tuesday, October 9, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the space below the movie theater. The Manager requested one Board member attend this meeting (to represent the Town) along with the TM.
- 6/. Dodge – 1 ton dump truck will pass in trade September 27th. The new truck will go immediately to Fairfield Motors for the snowplow and sander.

8. Boards and Commissions: The Manager noted there were no changes. Two members still needed for the Planning Commission.

9. Other Business: Susan Harlow asked about progress obtaining the judicial bureau funds allotted to the Town for revenue due to traffic tickets. The Manager said there was no word about recovering the funds. This amount is about 22-25% of the total amount of tickets generated.

In another matter, John Griffiths is the new Sheriff Department Deputy for the Town.

10. Date of Next Meeting – October 10, 2018: K. Sheldon Beebe told the Board that he would not be at the next meeting.

The Board moved to executive session at 7:31 p.m. Upon coming out of Executive Session at 7:46 PM, the Chair declared that no further business would take place at this time.

11. Adjournment: Susan Harlow made a motion to adjourn at 7:52 PM. Toby Young seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Clerk

Date