

MEETING OF THE WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD

Wednesday, June 26, 2019

Westminster, VT Town Hall

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

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager/Zoning Administrator), Paul Harlow (Town Treasurer), Joe Ruggiero, 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 Selectboard
- 2. Adjustments to Agenda:** The Town Manager (TM) requested to add under Communications and Public Comments, after Joe Ruggiero, Paul Harlow-Treasurer's Report. The Chair noted the addition.
- 3. Acceptance of Minutes:** Susan Harlow motioned to accept the minutes of June 12, 2019 as printed, Craig Allen seconded, the motion carried. The Selectboard Chair abstained from vote.
- 4. Communications and Public Comments:**

Joe Ruggiero - Information included in packet: State of VT "Important Recycling Update dated August 13, 2018". Joe Ruggiero, owner, operator of Ruggiero Trash Removal appeared before - the Board stating there had been a significant increase in cost to dispose of recyclable materials. He stated when his contract first began he took recyclables at no cost because he was receiving \$25.00 per ton. Two or three years into the contract the cost to dispose increased to between \$35.00- \$50.00. In the last sixteen months, the cost to dispose of recyclable material has risen to \$106.00. The contract with the Town includes \$50.00 a ton, as Mr. Ruggiero didn't realize recyclables would be undesirable without China in the market. The TM noted the trash output in Town had stabilized but there was an increase in the Towns recycling. Mr. Ruggiero asked if the Selectboard would consider sharing the increase in cost per ton to dispose of recyclable material. The Board Chair requested time to discuss this item further before making a decision on the request. Susan Harlow questioned how the tariffs were affecting recycling market. Mr. Ruggiero stated his belief China has slowed down taking recyclable material as the United States has imposed tariffs on material coming back into the United States. Susan Harlow stated, 'we are required by law to recycle in this State'. Kevin Hughes motioned to go into executive session to discuss recycled waste contract reevaluation and reset. Craig Allen seconded, the motion carried. The TM confirmed the list of recyclable items has not changed and will be posted on the Town website. The executive session will take place after Other Business on agenda.

Paul Harlow, Treasurer Report – Included in the packet is his Financial Management Questionnaire – Towns and Cities signed by Mr. Harlow. Mr. Harlow stated the January 2019 audit report had suggestions for the Town including internal controls, knowing what everyone's job is in the Town office and to be sure two people in the office can do the same job. The audit also suggested a fraud risk assessment, a fraud policy, and investment/banking policy. Also a suggested was a cash receipt policy. Mr. Harlow mentioned there were six funds in a certificate of deposit, this was a form of investing. Kevin Hughes, lead the discussion talking about the FDIC and their ability to cover the 7.6 trillion dollars in deposit in the country. He stated short term US treasury bills were the best way to protect invested funds. Mr. Harlow stated Mascoma Bank was

paying the Town interest on average daily (monthly) balance of about \$1,500.00 a month. The interest rate varied from 1 to 1.5%. Craig Allen motioned to accept the Financial Management report for 2019/2020 by Paul Harlow and authorize the Board Chair to sign the report. Susan Harlow seconded, the motion carried. Mr. Harlow ended his report stating if there are highway funds left over at the end of the year these funds must be spent on the roads/highway in the next year.

5. Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action)

- A. East Putney Brook Road – Closure – Included in packet is email dated May 2, 2019 from Karen Astley, Putney TM to Mr. Hodgkins about closing the Putney side of East Putney Brook Rd. due to an accident on the bridge. The Manager stated Putney had blocked to vehicle traffic on the Putney end and Putney is requesting Westminster close the road to vehicle traffic. The Board discussed placing jersey barriers at the edge of the bridge or at the end of the road on Westminster side. Craig Allen motioned to place jersey barriers on the Westminster town line of East Putney Brook Road and to warn a public hearing on the bridge closure. Kevin Hughes seconded, the motion carried.
- B. Bridge #5 – over the Saxtons River – discussion for repair/replacement –Information included in packet. The TM confirmed the Board was in agreement regarding the alternative #2A plan - deck replacement at a cost to the Town of \$53,106.00. The TM stated these funds were available in the Town bridge fund. The State of VT will widen the deck. Mr. Beebe stated his belief this project was a waste of the Town’s money but this approved option was what the State was prepared to do.
- C. Purchasing Policy – sign final version (adoption) – Final version included in Board packet. The TM stated the policy had been approved by the Board, now needed the Boards signatures. Action was taken.
- D. Delinquent Tax Sale – update – Included in the Board packet – TM stated there were five properties up for delinquent tax sale. The only property not having a bid was Blake located near BFUHS and the Polish cemetery. There are three additional properties legal counsel recommends be sold at a tax sale. This sale would be in September or October due to broken contracts and or false information submitted to the Town.
- E. Mandich Lawsuit – update – The TM said there was no news about the lawsuit. Paul Harlow questioned if the \$70,000.00 held by the Town was paid by Mandich toward repayment of loan? The TM confirmed the money is being used to pay legal fees and ADA (American with Disabilities Act) requirements for the Town Hall renovation.
- F. Manager’s Evaluation – executive session – This item tabled to July 9, 2019 meeting.
- G. Windham County Sheriff’s contract – signature – The updated revision included in the packet. Craig Allen moved to approve the Windham County Sheriff Contract for Town of Westminster for 2019/2020 and authorize the Board Chair to sign. Susan Harlow seconded, the motion carried 3-1. K. Sheldon Beebe voted against approval of the contract.
- H. Budget Report – end of year
 - Surplus distribution – discussion – The TM stated there would be approximately \$360,500.00 surplus at end of year due to grants and non-expenditures. The TM reviewed Matthew Brennan’s new contract detailing the items deleted in the renovation project for a proposed cost of \$235,625.00. Mr. Hodgkins requested approval of the Brennan contract at cost of \$225,000.00. This end amount after

adding costs for IT, furniture then subtracting \$61,700.00 left over in the renovation fund. Kevin Hughes moved to initiate hiring Matthew Brennan, contractor to commence further renovation on the Town Hall, not to exceed the identifiable amount on the bid of \$235,000.00, Craig Allen seconded the motion. The Board Chair requested tabling discussion/approval of the Brennan contract to the July 9, 2019 meeting after listing the item on the actual agenda. Kevin Hughes withdrew his motion, Craig Allen withdrew his second of Mr. Hughes motion.

- Reserve Fund Balance Policy – The TM stated, with the remaining dollars, after Town meeting discussion, the Board is directed to start placing monies in the emergency capital fund as possible. The Board discussed the difference between Reserve Fund and Emergency Management Fund. Emergency Management funds are used for support staff, generators, public safety, training etc. in the case of emergency. In another matter, Mr. Beebe talked about purchasing additional winter sand as costs were increasing and actual sand would be at a premium. Mr. Beebe added his belief the Town should stockpile sand now to save taxpayer money. The Manager stated the Town had committed to buying additional sand.
Susan Harlow questioned the interest earnings listed on Westminster General Ledger report. Mr. Harlow discussed interest earlier in the meeting, the TM mentioned his belief that interest may not be distributed to the proper funds yet.
- Vibratory Roller – The TM stated commitment from the Town of Putney and Grafton to jointly purchase a roller had fallen through. The Town of Rockingham is interested in partnering in this purchase but does not want to include a third party. The Rockingham Board will further discuss the purchase at their July 2 meeting. \$42,500.00 would Westminster's share of the purchase.

6. New Business (discussion/action) –

- A. Treasurer's Report – Paul Harlow – discussed earlier in meeting
- B. Errors and Omissions (2) – Susan Harlow motioned to accept Errors and Omissions for parcel 004148BLD Town of Rockingham, address 7446 US Route 5. Current list value of \$38,300.00 to add yard compactors, vehicle scale, material shelter buildings and storage building. Parcel value increase to \$38,300.00. Craig Allen seconded, the motion carried 3-1, Kevin Hughes abstained from vote. Susan Harlow motioned to accept the Errors and Omissions on parcel 004148000, owner Bellows Falls Village Corporation, located at 7446 US Route 5. Current Grand List value \$33,000.00, value site for current commercial use parcel value to increase \$19,400.00. Craig Allen seconded, the motion passed 3-1, Kevin Hughes abstained from vote.

7. Manager's Report 6-26-2019

- 1) Bridges – Goldies and East Putney Brook Bridges have been scraped and are ready for new coating. Painting will be completed when there is less rain.
- 2) Board of Civil Authority Members are needed for July 15, 2019 6:00 p.m. Union School Elementary School District Meeting. Help is required to check people in, count ballots if there is hand vote, etc. This is the first union district meeting to discuss the budget.
- 3) Storage trailer – behind the post office. Mr. G's, owner, David Gorham has donated a trailer for the Town to use for four to six months to store construction material and store files taken from the mini storage unit now rented by the Town.

- 4) July 5th – The Town office will be closed. Mr. Hodgkins will empty the mini-storage unit at Burtco, either purging documents or storing in trailer to stop the rental charges, on this day.
- 5) Grout Avenue – The TM requested the Board contemplate restructuring Grout Avenue from Route 5 to just past the Fire Station. The road needs to be cut and reshaped to alleviate water in front of Fire Station. The TM recommends hiring a professional engineer to protect the Town. The TM shared with the Board a proposal from Savoy Engineering donating a portion of his service to engineer the project. Mr. Hodgkin's believes the Town is limiting their options using smaller companies without hiring out an engineer. No decisions were made.

8. Boards and Commissions: Nothing new to report

9. Other Business: None

10. Date of Next Meeting – **July 9, 2019 TUESDAY – This will be the only meeting in July**

The Board moved to executive session at 8:18 p.m. Upon coming out of Executive Session at 8:35 PM, the Chair declared no further action was needed.

11. Adjournment: Craig Allen made a motion to adjourn at 8:37 PM with Susan Harlow seconding. The motion passed.

Clerk

Date