

MEETING OF THE WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD

Wednesday, August 28 2019

Westminster, VT Town Hall

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

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager/Zoning Administrator), Jan Ameen and Millie Barry (Recording Clerk)

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 6:33 p.m. by K. Sheldon Beebe, Chair of the Board
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** Town Manager (TM) requested to add under New Business, 6, E - Errors and Omissions (2) and F, Tax Rate (new) the chair noted the adjustments.
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** Susan Harlow motioned to accept the minutes of the meeting of August 14, 2019 as printed, Toby Young seconded, motion passed.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:**
 - *Town Clerk - Alison Bigwood - Ms. Bigwood was not present at the meeting
 - In another matter, Jan Ameen told the Board her experience with the new website was when 'Googling' Westminster, VT Town Hall the old website comes up. She believes the old website has not been taken down. The TM will follow-up with the installers.
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action):**
 - A. Treasurer's Follow-up - model policies - this item will be tabled to the next meeting
 - B. East Putney Brook Road Closure - update - The TM told the Board, the Town of Putney wants to put a fence up to block the bridge. The State of VT is saying if a fence is put up it would have to be unlocked. Vermont Agency of Transportation is saying they want the bridge to be taken down. The TM will keep the Board updated.
 - C. Mandich Lawsuit - update - The court date was postponed. The court has decided the case will be settled without a court hearing.
 - D. Manager's Evaluation - Executive Session - This item moved to the next meeting
 - E. Possible Purchase of Vibratory Roller - Municipal Contract (draft) - Included in the Board packet was the agreement including corrections/additions made by both Rockingham and Westminster Selectboards. At Kevin Hughes suggestion, the cost of the roller will be included because the purchase is split between the two Towns. Ms. Ameen questioned what happened if a major repair was to occur and suggested adding 30 days' notice be given if the agreement was to be canceled. The Manager noted Rockingham had approved the agreement. Craig Allen moved to approve the agreement of the vibratory roller with changes added in section 7, adding 60 days' notice and cost of roller in section 1. Kevin Hughes seconded, the motion carried.
 - F. Land Donation to Town - update - The TM let the Board know the land on Valley Brook Drive (discussed at the last meeting) had been granted to the next door neighbor.
 - G. Audit Report (draft) input - Audit included in the packet - Susan Harlow questioned the wording in the report regarding deficiencies. Ms. Harlow asked if information was missing as 'weaknesses' were not included in the report. The Manager will follow-up. The Board also discussed allocating surplus funds, as available, to the emergency fund to be used only in case of emergency.

6. New Business - (Discussion/Action):

- A. **Golden Cross** - After discussion by the Board at the last meeting, the TM told the Board he had spoken with Cole Streeter (Fire Chief) regarding coverage by Golden Cross Ambulance Service. In limited instances Westminster Fire Department members (only when needed in an emergency situation) drive Golden Cross Ambulances. A Fire Department member driving an ambulance is included in the contract with the Service and can be compensated if requested by the Fire Chief. Also noted, Mr. Streeter is happy with Golden Cross services.
- B. **Assisted Living (Housing) Westminster** - Included in the packet was the Five Year Plan. The Manager relayed one weakness in the plan was lack of senior housing. Some of the older taxpayers in Town have expressed to the TM their concerns regarding rising taxes and meeting every day expenses. Mr. Hodgkins, after a conversation with Donna Dawson, Westminster Cares Director, suggested a committee be put together to research senior housing in Westminster. From his business experience, and other knowledge Kevin Hughes spoke about small, reduced cost housing units constructed in a Town, individually owned, specifically designed for the older population. Mr. Hughes noted land to build in Westminster was available and the Town location was perfect. The Board overwhelmingly agreed a committee to research housing for the aging population in Westminster was a good idea. There will be an article in the *Westminster Gazette* about this item.
- C. **Windham Solid Waste Management District - update** - The TM told the Board at year end the District had \$79.91 surplus. Also, composting program was strong and the solar project was producing revenue. The solar field will probably be sold to a larger company in the coming months.
- D. **Recycling - Westminster's Future** - Mr. Beebe spoke about his concern of the cost of disposing recyclables. At this time, this is more than disposing of regular trash. The Board had a lengthy discussion about the rising costs of recycling and the future of recyclable products. Jan Ameen noted there were notable changes regarding disposal of these products. An example being Twelve Dragons paper mill relocating to the United States from China as well as glass plants opening up. The changes are slow. She believes the cost of disposing recyclables will continue to rise for the next two or three years until there is more domestic capacity and economic pressure.
- E. **Errors and Omissions (2)** - Craig Allen motioned to approve parcel 010005000, owner Donald Precourt located at 4004 Westminster West Rd. Property value from \$75,600.00 to \$39,300.00. Susan Harlow seconded, motion passed. Reason for decrease is dwelling was gutted and in poor condition with water and septic systems compromised. Craig Allen motioned to approve parcel 011200000 owner Charles Anderson, location, 719 Sweetwood Hill. Property value from \$165,600.00 to \$54,900.00. Kevin Hughes seconded, motion carried. Reason for request was dwelling burned in 2018.
- F. **Tax Rate (new)** - Information included in packet - Susan Harlow motioned to set the tax rate at \$2.3962 Homestead and \$2.2718 Non-Resident which would supersede the interim tax rate approved in July. Toby Young seconded, the motion carried. The new rates are below the \$2.4411 Homestead, \$2.2858 Non Resident FY 20 interim tax rate approved 7/9/2019. The Manager noted a new tax bill would be mailed to tax payers for the second installment payment with the deductions noted. The TM also noted his belief the school department should be responsible for the additional cost of printing and mailing the new tax bill.

7. Manager's Report:

- 1.) Listers will attend meeting 9-11-2019 as requested by the Board.
- 2.) The TM and the Administrative Assistant will attend an Emergency Management District course Friday, September 6. Mr. Hodgkins will also attend Saturday, September 7 meeting.
- 3.) Bench donation by Phyllis Anderson - Mrs. Anderson has donated a bench for the front of the Town Hall.
- 4.) Site Visit - Henwood Hill Rd. The Board will meet September 11 at 5:30 p.m. (prior to regular meeting) to view the site.
- 5.) Site Visit on Kurn Hattin Road (cemetery) This visit will take place at 6:00 p.m. before the September 25th Board meeting

8. Boards and Commissions: Nothing to report

9. Other Business: Susan Harlow questioned posting of the Selectboard agenda on the new website and the ability to 'click' on it to open. Ms. Harlow also stated her belief more information be available on the website. The TM assured the Board that further work needs to be done and he will see to it just as soon as possible.

10. Date of Next Meeting - September 11, 2019 at 5:30 PM on Henwood Hill Road and regular meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall.

11. Adjournment: Susan Harlow motioned to adjourn at 8:07 p.m., Craig Allen seconded, the meeting adjourned.

Clerk

Date