

Meeting of the Westminster Selectboard

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

Westminster Fire Station

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

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins (Town Manager/Zoning Administrator), Chuck Lawrence, Road Foreman, Paul Banik, Greg Holton, Nate Stoddard, Cynthia Stoddard, Millie Barry (Recording Clerk) and FACTV

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Susan Harlow, chairperson of the board at 6:30 p.m. This meeting was held in an open empty bay at the Westminster Fire Station with the overhead door open due to the Covid 19 meeting restrictions.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** May 13, 2020 - Craig Allen motioned to accept the minutes as printed, K. Sheldon Beebe seconded the motion. Susan Harlow questioned under 6. A. Daigel Road Drainage, the owner of the property on the side of the road. The TM (Town Manger) clarified Tammy Kissell owns both sides, Gelfan's own a part of one side of the road up to where the Kissell Farm land begins.
The board members voted to accept the minutes as printed.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** Cynthia Stoddard questioned why there was not an electronic option to connect to and attend the meeting. She believed not having the electronic option limits public participation and wonders if the board does not want public participation in some conversations. She continued that every other town was holding meetings electronically and felt the board's decision to hold the meeting at the fire station (without electronic attendance possible) was totally irresponsible. She stated that by following the governor's guidelines as of Wednesday, 5/27/20, 10 people were allowed at a group gathering. She asked who the person was saying it was okay for the board to hold an actual, in person meeting with more than 10 people present. Nate Stoddard stated he felt the board was restricting residents from being involved in the meeting. Craig Allen said he believed the board felt they were doing the right thing. The board decided there would be a Zoom (electronic) option to future meetings even if the meeting was held in person.
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action) -**
 - A. Construction of Henwood Hill - discussion - Information included in packet - The TM stated Marc Pickering (VTrans) was invited and declined to attend the meeting. Craig Allen stated he believed guard rails should be installed for the road to be safe. A lengthy discussion ensued about costs, the article wording as passed at town meeting authorizing town money for repair work in the present year, the exact scope of work, applying for grants for the project and engineering opinions. Also, the timeliness of repair to the section of road and use of the road when work is done on the 121 bridge in North Westminster. - Craig Allen motioned to authorized the Manager to get an engineering cost bid and prices for guard rails, mirrors and rental (per month) of stop lights for use at the corner. Toby Young seconded the motion, the motion passed. The Manager will also provide Ms. Stoddard

information from Windham Regional Planning Commission (Grants and Aids Program) regarding applying for and obtaining money and timing of completing the project.

- B. Special Town Meeting - discussion - **The special town meeting will be held Saturday, June 6, 2020 outside in back of the Westminster Institute.** Information included in packet. This meeting will be held rain or shine. The Manager said residents should bring their own chairs to the meeting. There will be a portable potty including hand sanitation and other hygiene items available. Grid lines will be installed marking 6-7' to ensure social distancing. The Manager said there was not a limit to the number of people given for attendance at an outside meeting. A meeting outside was permissible for a town vote as long as social distancing was practiced and facilities were provided as needed.

6. New Business (Discussion/Action) -

- A. Sand Supply for next winter - discussion - Mr. Lawrence said the Town had an adequate supply (5,000 yards) of sand for the coming winter.
- B. Executive Session - Contractual Matter - Matter will be discussed at a future meeting
- C. Resignation Letter- Lister - Information in packet - Mr. Beebe motioned to accept Doug Oftedahl's resignation from his position as lister. Toby Young seconded, the motion carried. The board requested the Manager send a letter of appreciation to Mr. Oftedahl. The position will be advertised.

7. Town Manager's Report 5-27-2020

- 1. Property on Pine Banks - The property did not sell. The Manager asked the board if they were in favor of a raffle and will research the legality of a raffle in order to sell the property. On the advice of legal counsel, no action will be taken until June 1, 2020.
- 2. Trash Stickers - Stickers are one half done with the help of Nancy Dalzell and will be mailed mid to late June. As some information put into the grand list has been made incorrectly, corrections were required as the stickers are readied for mailing.
- 3. Windham County Sheriff is continuing conversations about having a full time animal control officer. The animal control officer would cover multiple towns. The issues and obstacles are different ordinances and different needs in each town.
- 4. Green Up Day - Saturday, May 30th. Susan Harlow will be at the Westminster Center School from 7 to 10 a.m.
- 5. Tax Grievances will be held Friday, June 5, 2020. Anyone wishing to set up an appointment must call the Town Hall and set a meeting date. There were about 40 changes mailed, to date there have been 3 appeals.

**In another matter, Mr. Lawrence asked if possible to have a conversation with the Windham County Sheriff to patrol the roads when they are posted for weight. Mr. Lawrence said this could involve several towns sharing the cost of purchasing a scale. The amount of fines generated would cover costs to enforce over weight vehicles.

- 8. **Boards and Commissions** - There is a current opening on the planning commission as well as an open lister position.
- 9. **Other Business** - Craig Allen stated a local property owner on the Back Westminster Road had complimented the road crew members regarding their politeness and quality of clean-up work at the intersection of Route 121 and Back Westminster Road.

Mr. Banik questioned how the next meeting will be held, in person vs. participating electronically.

Cynthia Stoddard noted she was appointed to the recycling committee for the Town of Rockingham. The first meeting has not been held. Members of the board can contact Ms. Stoddard with questions or concerns for her to take to the meeting.

10. Date of Next Meeting - June 10, 2020 - **The next meeting will be held via Zoom (electronic means) and in person at the Westminster Fire Station.**
11. **Adjournment** - Craig Allen motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m. Kevin Hughes seconded. The motion to adjourn carried.

Clerk

Date

Minutes prepared by Millie Barry 5/28/20