

## MEETING OF THE WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD

*Wednesday, 24, 2020*

### Westminster, VT Fire Station Open Bay and Zoom Conferencing

**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), Nancy Dalzell, Russell Lazarek, Yvette Hendler, Alice Caggiano, FACTV (2 people), Millie Barry (Recording Clerk) and Cynthia Stoddard & Nate Stoddard via Zoom conferencing

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 bay of the fire station due to COVID 19 meeting restrictions. Zoom conferencing was available to attend the meeting remotely
2. **Adjustments to the Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** June 10, 2020 - Craig Allen motioned to accept the minutes of June 10, 2020 as printed. Toby Young seconded, the motion carried
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action):**
  - A. Construction of Henwood Hill - discussion - information included in packet - Craig Allen suggested the town did not need an engineering opinion to install guard rails and a mirror on the corner. Mr. Allen continued, he believed it was important to figure out what could be done, this year to improve the corner. The board agreed it was important to take steps to improve the safety of the one way area of road. Craig Allen motioned to authorize the TM (Town Manager) to purchase and install 600' of guard rail, and two 48" convex mirrors with posts, at \$520.00 or total \$1,040.00. The second mirror will be placed on the Henwood Hill Swamp sharp corner. The price of the two mirrors not to exceed \$1,100.00. K. Sheldon Beebe seconded the motion, motion carried. Mr. Lawrence will research options and come back to the board regarding what can be done to improve the sharp corner on north side of the one way section of road (closest to Gageville). The board agreed if one mirror in each location on the road was not sufficient, another mirror could be purchased.
  - B. North Westminster Community House (NWCH) - Craig Allen told the board several people had contacted him with interest about being on a fact finding (not sanctioned by the Board), this would be an advisory committee for the NWCH.
  - C. Savage Gravel Pit - update - Contract for proposed work included in packet - Susan Harlow read the contract. Craig Allen motioned to pursue the work stated in the contract: Owner Hanson Savage - Savage Trucking to allow M&W Soils Engineering accessibility of the property to extract soil samples for Town of Westminster; The permission for access to the site will be no longer than one working day (8 hours); All results of the testing will be the from corings, if any; The owner, (Savage Trucking) will bear no expense of this soil collection activity. K. Sheldon Beebe seconded, the motion carried. The date of the contract will be revised to reflect current date.

D. Year End Budget - Discussion

- Budget Totals - summary estimates - - General ledger sheet included in packet. The TM noted total expenditures of \$228,790.86 did not reflect movement of retreatment (paving funds) of \$125,000.00 out of the bottom line leaving \$103,796.00. The Manager said the surplus (opposed to the loss the document shows) would be about \$85,000.00 for the past year. In addition, there would be no other bills paid this year, revenue is still coming in. The final figures will come from the auditor, audit to take place July 30/31, 2020. He noted interest earning have increased since moving accounts to Mascoma Bank. In answer to Craig Allen's question regarding deficit spending under waste (sanitation), the TM said 3% was budgeted according to the Ruggiero contract. The amount of trash generated by households staying home had increased substantially due to the pandemic (COVID 19). Nate Stoddard questioned the waste contract with Ruggiero - The TM said tonnage was estimated according to history. As the Town's tonnage had increased, the price had increased.
  - In another matter, Mr. Lawrence asked (in future) the surplus in the highway department budget could remain in the highway department budget for the next year. Surplus funds to be used for retreatment (paving) and or bridge improvement.
  - Wage Adoption for FY2021 - Information included in packet - Kevin Hughes read from the social security website re: (COLA) cost of living increase. The 1.6% increase was based upon the social security estimation. Mr. Hughes noted since there was no updated statistic from the social security administration, he recommended the Board wait before setting the Town employee wage increase. Craig Allen questioned if the cost of living increase included the increased costs of insurance. Mr. Hughes believes the increase does not specifically cover the increase in cost of insurance. Generally, the increase takes into consideration the changing rates of fuel oil, gasoline, food etc. TM noted there was a small amount of money set aside for merit raises, specifically for the road crew as members went through the process of training. After further discussion, Craig Allen motioned to set the cost of living increase, beginning July 2020 (FY21), for the Town of Westminster employees at 1.6%. Kevin Hughes seconded, the motion carried.
- E. Windham County Sheriffs Contract - update - corrected items, page 2 and 4 of 7, Roman numeral II, contract included in packet. Susan Harlow noted legal counsel had had been contacted and Mr. Slason suggested the corrected language. Ms. Harlow read from the contract specific changes: **"The Town agrees to pay the Office (Sheriff) for hours of law enforcement services actually provided to the Town during the term of this contract; Any sums paid by the Town to Office (Sheriff) in excess of coverage hours provided shall be reimbursed by the Office (Sheriff) to the Town within thirty (30) days of the end of the contract term or carried over to the next succeeding year's contract, if applicable; The Office (Sheriff) will provide activity reports to the Town through the utilization of the electronic Sheriff Town Activity Reporting System. The Office (Sheriff) shall track hours of service provided to the Town and shall provide the Town with a monthly summary of coverage hours.** Craig Allen motioned to accept the contract for the current fiscal year 2020/2021. Kevin Hughes seconded, the motion carried. K. Sheldon cast an opposing vote.

F. Executive Session - contractual matter - Susan Harlow noted this item would be tabled to the next meeting

**6. New Business (Discussion/Action) -**

A. Website - clarification- The TM noted the website did have DRB (Development Review Board) meeting agendas and minutes. The first upgrade to the website, 'links' have been moved to the first page. The Zoom link for Board meetings will also be posted on the website. Mr. Stradling, (FACTV/Zoom) said there was a problem with the link posted and was not sure what the problem was. He said in the future, the link would be continually posted on Facebook. Susan Harlow thanked Russ Lazarek for his helpful suggestions regarding the website.

B. Mandich Loan Distribution - previous motion discussion - Information included in packet - Alice Caggiano provided additional information. TM said Ms. Caggiano brought to his attention the motion recorded at a previous meeting was not accurate. Craig Allen motioned to correct the original motion to: I move to correct the source of the funds to be applied to the capital improvement funds as 'funds agreed to in closeout agreement #CL-2008-Westminster-Mandich lawsuit' as stated in the original motion". Toby Young seconded, the motion carried. The correction is specifically where the money is coming from, not from the lawsuit but from Mandich payments.

C. Tax Sale Procedure - approval - Included in the packet was information regarding two letters, one sent March 10 (a friendly reminder) and another April 15 extending the payment deadline and/or payment contract due to COVID 19 pandemic. These letters were sent to residents regarding their delinquent property taxes. A third set of letters was sent June 16 explaining the extended deadline due to the pandemic. One letter to those making no effort to pay or contact the Town Hall. The second set of letters for people that have called and have made arrangement to pay or paid a portion of their delinquent account. For those making no effort, a list will be set to legal counsel on June 29. The tax sale will be held mid to late August. October 16, 2020 will be the due date for those people that have contacted the Town Hall and made arrangements. For remaining unpaid taxes, the list will be sent to legal counsel on October 19, 2020, tax sale will be in November. The Board gave approval to move forward as stated in the information. A list of those with delinquent property tax was included in the packet.

**7. Manager's Report:**

1. Bari Shamas, new planning commission member terms expires March 2023
2. The construction in the Town Hall has started again with one man putting up trim to finish two offices.

**8. Board and Commissions: None**

**9. Other Business:** Nancy Dalzell noted in six days (by State law), residents would no longer be able to dispose of food waste in their regular trash. She said some people were able to compost while others, due to lack of land or not wanting to encourage critters would not compost. The Manager said he had talked to Joe Ruggiero. Ruggiero would set up a contract with individual residents to pick up their compost on specific days for a fee by contacting Ruggiero's office. Also, Rockingham/Westminster Transfer station will take food compost for a nominal fee in addition to the \$35.00 annual fee charged by the transfer station. Another option is Windham Solid Waste in Brattleboro. Windham Solid waste charges a yearly fee of \$35.00 and by weight

for disposing of compost. Another option is individual composting and/or possibly passing compost to a neighbor that composts, if all parties agree. Ms. Dalzell noted she was aware of many people contacting Ruggiero regarding composting and his office personnel knew nothing about compost pick-up and or/a contract. The TM noted information had been posted in the Gazette and on the website several times.

**In another matter:** Susan Harlow noted dog licenses were down and asked if a rabies clinic would be held. The Manager said this was a question for the Town Clerk.

**In another matter.** Mr. Beebe questioned if there had been any information from Emergency Management regarding the (McAllister) incident earlier in the year. The TM said he doubted there would be any formal response from Emergency Management. In addition, he believed the matter had been handled internally. Susan Harlow will follow up with Mike Mrowicki, Windham legislative representative.

- 10.** Date of Next Meeting - July 8, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting to be held in an open bay at the Westminster Fire Station with Zoom conferencing available. The link to access will be posted prior to the meeting.
- 11.** Adjournment: Toby Young moved to adjourn at 7:52 p.m. Kevin Hughes seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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Clerk

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Date