

MEETING OF THE WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD

Wednesday, August 26, 2020

Westminster, VT Fire Station (Open Bay) and via Zoom Conferencing

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

Others Present: Russell Hodgkins, Town Manager/Zoning Administrator, Chuck Lawrence, Road Foreman, Russ Lazarek, Todd Eastman, Lucas DeCamp, Martha Mitchell, Philip Hamilton, Timothy Allen, Millie Barry-Recording Clerk, Cynthia; Nate Stoddard (via Zoom) and 2 FACTV personnel

1. **Call to Order:** Susan Harlow, Chair of the Board called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Due to SOV (State of VT) meeting requirements caused by Covid 19 pandemic, the meeting was held in an open bay at the Westminster fire station and by Zoom conferencing.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** TM (Town Manager) requested to add under new business 6 F. - Land offer. Susan Harlow requested, under new business, 6 C to add an executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Executive session to be after other business on agenda.
3. **Acceptance of Minutes: August 12, 2020** - K. Sheldon Beebe motioned to accept the minutes as printed, Craig Allen seconded, motion carried.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action) -**
 - A. *Savage Gravel Pit - Discussion* - Report included in packet - TM stated from data and information included in report, approximately one third of product assumed to be in the location is not there. He asked the Board to discuss the revenue sources and building demolition believing purchase of the site was not to Westminster's advantage. Susan Harlow requested a committee, chaired by K. Sheldon Beebe to preview the worth of the pit.
 - B. *Petition from Kimball Hill Road South* - motorize vehicle restrictions - Class 4 Road and Trail Policy included in packet - Susan Harlow stated at the last meeting the board discussed posting no unauthorized vehicle signs. Martha Mitchell told the board posting unauthorized vehicle signs would be truly awesome as the end she lives on is steep and extremely eroded. K. Sheldon Beebe motioned to post signs indicating "No unauthorized motor vehicle beyond this point" at both ends of Kimball Hill Road (class four road). Toby Young seconded, motion carried.
 - C. *Petition from Windmill Hill Road South and North* - motorize vehicle restrictions - Todd Eastman, resident of Windmill Hill Rd. South asked questions of the board and believes noise and resource damage were problems. Phillip Hamilton and Timothy Allen spoke about disruption caused by motorcycles and maintenance issues of the trail. Susan Harlow read a letter from M. Richards. This letter will be a part of the record. Toby Young motioned to post "no unauthorized motor vehicles beyond this point" at both ends of Windmill Hill Road and "no through traffic" at the North end of the road. Kevin Hughes seconded, motion carried. No through traffic sign will be posted on the south end of Kimball Hill Road.
6. **New Business (Discussion/Action) -**
 - A. *Signatures - petition for allocations* - Information included in packet - Manager read an email from Will Senning, SOV Secretary of State's Office, Director of Elections and Campaign Finance.

Signatures are still required to place items on the ballot for annual meeting as part of state statute.

- B. *Draft of New Personnel Policy* - Update if any - Kevin Hughes stated, from his reviews the current policy was pretty comprehensive. He believes the employee conduct section may be brought up to a more contemporary standard to identify certain standards identifying a hostile work environment. This would include a list of identifications to recognize a hostile work environment and what should or should not be done making sure that conduct does not happen. It would include what to do if or when it does happen.
- C. *Official Resignation of Town Clerk* - Included in packet email communication from legal counsel (Larry Slason) and resignation letter from Alison Bigwood - Susan Harlow stated the option (in letter) was that Ms. Bigwood would assume the title of assistant town clerk and Patty Mark would assume the town clerks position and nothing else would change. Ms. Bigwood and Ms. Mark were not at the meeting so specifics could not be discussed. Per state statute the vacancy of the office of the clerk will be advertised within 10 days from when the position becomes vacant. Susan Harlow stated she wanted it to be very clear what positions they have, how many hours they will be working and their specific duties.
Craig Allen motioned to move to executive session to discuss a personnel matter, confidential pay and benefits. Kevin Hughes seconded. Motion carried. The board will decide the specifics of the advertisement for the clerk vacancy.
- D. *Tax Sale* - Will be held August 27, 2020 at the Westminster Fire Station - Tax sale information included in packet. TM stated six properties; Christian Blake property near BFUHS, John Shadis, 3 properties on end of Old Athens Road, Brandon Hutton on Westminster West Road and Brian McAllister, Father's Restaurant property.
- E. *Covid 19 - Municipal Grant Opportunity* - TM noted, he working with Windham Regional to apply for a Local Government Expense Reimbursement Grant (LGER) for expenses incurred by the town due to COVID-19. Specifics of grant are Act 137 of 2020 provides Coronavirus Relief Funds to various entities in Vermont for necessary expenses incurred due to, or as a result of, the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- F. *Land Offer* - Information included in packet. The Manager noted an offer of \$18,000.00 has been received for 19.1 acres off Pine Bank Road. He reminded the board \$20,000.00 was offered approximately 9 months ago. Taxes owed are about \$24,500.00. TM will contact a new realtor to re-list the property and contact the person making the \$20,000.00 offer about continuing interest.

7. Manager's Report:

1. Henwood Hill - Guard rail install will be week of 8/31/2020
2. Town Hall Closed - September 7, 2020, Labor Day
3. Masks from Vermont's Cloth Face Covering for Everyone program are available at the town hall.
4. School Bus in Town Forest - A privately owned bus has been parked in the town forest. Upon investigation by the Manager there are winter provisions in the bus, animal carcass remains in the area and evidence of wood being dragged out of the forest. The trespasser is a family member of a Westminster resident (neighbor). A letter will be written to remove the bus and all debris from the premises in two weeks.
5. Winter Road Policy - first draft - Information included in packet. Manager said the policy addressed many of the items faced every winter by the road crew. He asked the board to read

the policy and make changes or adopt at the next meeting. Mr. Beebe suggested adding information re: winter/spring posting of roads for overweight vehicles during the mud season. Mr. Lawrence said there were many new people moving into town and this was good information for new residents as well as a reminder for current residents. Mr. Lawrence noted to enforce posting of roads was to share the expense of scales (with other towns) so the Sheriff's Department could weigh vehicles to enforce the posting of the roads.

8. Boards and Commissions: Nothing to report

9. Other Business: Community Loan Fund - tabled to next meeting

Lucas DeCamp - Letter from TM to Mr. DeCamp included in packet - Mr. DeCamp read a letter he received from the TM. He lives on 17 Morse Brook Road in Westminster. He stated he has talked to the TM, to a development review board member as well as a select board member about set back requirements to put an extension on his garage. He understood everyone was busy but had received no answers. He took issue with a letter sent by the Manager about fill dumped on his property by the road crew. He said numerous other residents had received fill and believes he is the only person getting a letter with a request to fill out a permit for fill and pay \$65.00. Mr. DeCamp said he actually did receive free fill but had also done the town a favor by taking the fill, saving the town money in trucking. Craig Allen suggested a written response to Mr. DeCamp. Mr. DeCamp suggested applications be carried by the road foreman, if in fact a permit was required when dumping town fill.

10. Date of Next Meeting: September 9, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

The Board moved to executive session at 8:02 p.m. Upon coming out of Executive Session, K.Sheldon Beebe made a motion to accept Alison Bigwood's resignation as Town Clerk and Assistant Treasurer and mentioned that the Assistant Clerk (Patty Mark) would keep up the duties of Town Clerk until the Board decides the next step as per State law. Kevin Hughes seconded the motion and the motion passed. The Chair announced that the vacancy will be posted immediately, and that the vacancy will be advertised in the papers with an October 1st deadline for all applications.

11. Adjournment: Craig Allen made a motion to adjourn and Toby Young seconded. The motion passed and the meeting ended at 8:35 PM.

Clerk

Date