

## MEETING OF THE WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD

*Wednesday, March 24, 2021*

### Meeting by Zoom Conferencing

**Members Present:** Kevin Hughes (Chair), Craig Allen (Vice Chair), Susan Harlow (Clerk), Toby Young and Jason Perry

**Others Present:** Russell Hodgkins, Town Manager/Zoning Administrator, Alice Caggiano, David Major, Cheryl Charles, Darlene Kelly, Nate Stoddard; Cynthia Stoddard, Charles Hutchinson, Russell Lazarek, Pat Clark, Reilly Clark, Tatiana Schreiber and others

1. **Call to order:** Kevin Hughes, chair of the board called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. This meeting was held with remote attendance due to Covid 19 pandemic and State of Vermont recommendations regarding public meetings. Information to access a future meeting is available through FACTV Facebook page, on the Town of Westminster website or by contacting the Westminster town office.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** March 10, 2021 - Susan Harlow motioned to accept the minutes of March 10, 2021, Craig Allen seconded the motion, motion carried.
4. **Communications and Public Comments;** None
5. **Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action) -**
  - A. Town Meeting Procedure - April Posting and Final Decision - The board agreed the annual Town Meeting will be held outside, Saturday, May 15, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Rain date - May 16, 2021.
  - B. Selectboard Appointments (interim school board) legal opinion - Susan Harlow read from legal council opinion information included in packet at the last meeting. David Major, town meeting moderator, will ask for volunteers on the day of Town Meeting. If more than five people are interested, a paper ballot could be held. Anyone interested in volunteering for the board can express their interest in a two or three year term on the school board up to the time of the vote.  
*In another matter* - Next Steps for town and interim school board - After a lengthy discussion, Toby Young motioned to request legal council communicate with the State of VT Board of Education to request the subject of Westminster's withdrawal from the forced merger be included on State Board of Education meeting agenda for a future meeting with the interim school board and one Selectboard member (as representatives) to present information. Susan Harlow seconded, motion passed.  
During the conversation, Craig Allen noted the Selectboard did not budget monies for costs associated with withdrawing from the forced merger. He asked if costs were being tracked?
  - C. Website Renewal - update - Susan Harlow noted Russ Lazarek has presented to the Communications Committee a new version for the website. Work on the website is on-going. The updated website could be ready to share with others after the committee meeting April 5<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Harlow said they were looking for and to solicit photos of the Town.
  - D. Collaborative Finance Processing Manual (update if any) - Information included in packet - Mr. Hughes stated the next steps would be another meeting with the original group and others interested in the manual.

- E. Adoption of Appointment List - Information included in packet -
- New Emergency Management Selectboard Representative - Mr. Hodgkins noted the position demands class work/certification to help manage a disaster in the event the director is not able to perform the management duties. Kevin Hughes volunteered to be this representative.
  - New Windham Solid Waste Management District Representative - Susan Harlow volunteered to be the alternate member.
  - New Windham Regional Commissioner Representative - Craig Allen volunteered to be the alternate representative.

Craig Allen motioned to adopt the list as presented March 24, 2021 with addition of Susan Harlow as Windham Solid Waste Representative alternate and Craig Allen as Windham Regional Planning Commissioners alternate. Toby Young seconded, motion carried.

- F. Town Land off Davidson Hill - update - Information included in packet - Mr. Hodgkins stated the parcel was ready to sell. Taxes and clean-up costs associated with the parcel total approximately \$7,400.00. It is possible to build on the parcel but there are building restrictions. Susan Harlow motioned to accept a minimum purchase price of \$5,000.00 for the Davidson Hill parcel number 003112000. Craig Allen seconded, motion carried.

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

- A. Pavement Bid result - Information included in packet - After a lengthy discussion, Craig Allen motion to limit the amount spent to re-claim, finish grade and pave a section of road in Westminster West not to exceed \$235,000.00. Susan Harlow seconded, motion carried. Craig Allen motion to award the low bid to Pike Industries, Susan Harlow seconded, motion carried. The end date for this project is 9/1/2021. Mr. Hodgkins said there was two years of anticipated pavement funds (125,000.00 each year) available totaling \$250,000.00. In answer to Mr. Perry's question regarding culverts, Mr. Hodgkins, said culverts in need of repair/replacement would be taken under advisement. Mr. Perry noted work be granted to contractors as local as possible. Susan Harlow agreed excepting additional cost to taxpayers.
- B. Second Letter - Tax sale notice March 25, 2021. Mr. Hodgkins said since the start of sending letters and contracts to tax payers \$206,760.73 has been collected in delinquent taxes. Susan Harlow thanked the manger for his efforts regarding collection of delinquent taxes.
- C. Local Emergency Management Plan - renewal - Information included in packet - Susan Harlow motioned to adopt the Local Emergency Management Plan as submitted. Toby Young seconded motion, motion carried.
- D. Grant received \$10,150.00 - Mitigation plan renewal bids are due March 26, 2021. Mr. Hodgkins said the posting had been done appropriately. Both the Mitigation Plan and Local Emergency Management Plan Rescue are mandated by State of VT.
- E. American Rescue Plan Act Funding - \$290,000.00 - Mr. Hodgkins stated more information on this funding would be available soon. He stated part of the \$1.9 trillion presidential package was dollars to each state. The State of VT had designated a unit of measurement in dollars to each town in the State. Westminster would receive approximately \$290,000.00 allocated for infrastructure including pavement, bridges, sidewalks and water/sewer. The second category is resiliency and to boost the economy. The third category is education.
- F. 19.1 Acre Land Purchase from Town (location north of Trail Road and south of Camp Road) Information included in packet - Mr. Hodgkins noted the offer included transfer by quit claim deed from Town to the new owner and the title will include two easements as are currently

recorded on the deed. Susan Harlow motioned to accept the offer, Toby Young seconded motion, motion carried.

**7. Manager's Report:**

1. The Town road crew will join a program to mentor a local student, Nicholas Streeter. The student will sign a contract to include River Valley Technical School, his parents and teachers. The student will work limited hours during the school year and during the summer with road crew members. The Town hopes the program will lead to long term employment.
2. An emergency health order has been received for the William Lyons property. In conjunction with the Town road crew and fire department the contamination will be burned and cleaned to proper standards.

**8. Boards and Commissions** - Request from Conservation Commission - Information included in packet. Tatiana Schreiber requested, on behalf of the Conservation Commission, \$300.00 to produce and print a booklet about treating problematic plants by non-chemical means. \$50.00 of the request is fee for the Conservation Commission to become a members of VT Association of Conservation Commissions. A commission providing educational programs to better advocate for natural resources for conservation. Susan Harlow motioned to allocate \$300.00 to Conservation Commission, Toby Young seconded, motion carried. Ms. Schreiber noted the local commission is recruiting local members.

**9. Other Business:** In response to a Town Clerk dog registration late fee question - Susan Harlow motioned to waive fees from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Craig Allen seconded, motion carried.

Susan Harlow requested an update on the broadband initiative.

Nate Stoddard questioned information regarding gravel purchase. Mr. Hodgkins said Roger Pelton has approached the Town with an option to purchase and price. He added the product and price were very good. Sand is obtained from another source. As the sand has stone included, the product adheres well to roads.

Jason Perry thanked the road crew for repair of pot holes on Town roads.

**10. Date of Next Meeting** - April 14, 2021

**11. Adjournment** - Susan Harlow motioned to adjourn, Toby Young seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

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Susan Harlow (Clerk)

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Date