

WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

Wednesday, May 25, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Westminster, VT Town Hall and remote through FACT TV

Selectboard Present: Jason Perry (Chair), Kevin Hughes (Vice Chair), Katrina Hamilton (Clerk) and Craig Allen

Staff Present: Alison Bigwood (Interim Town Manager/Zoning Administrator), Charles (Chuck) Lawrence (Road Foreman), Millie Barry (Clerk) and by Zoom, Pauline O'Brien (Town Clerk)

Others Present: Nancy Dalzell, Cole Streeeter, Fran Renaud, Paul Banik, Lucas Decamp, Paul Guido, Yvette Hendler and 1 person from FACT TV - By Zoom, Alice Caggiano

1. **Call to Order:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
Information to access a future meeting using a remote connection is available on the FACT TV Facebook page, the Town of Westminster website or by contacting the Westminster Town Hall
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
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3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** May 11, 2022 - Craig Allen moved to accept the minutes as printed, Katrina Hamilton seconded, motion carried by 4-0 voice vote.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
5. **Unfinished Business:**
 - A. Cemetery Commission Update - Ms. Bigwood relayed Norm Wright was the Westminster West cemetery sexton and Chris Potter was the second Westminster sexton. Mr. Allen motioned to appoint a three board cemetery commission of Jason Perry, Katrina Hamilton and Kevin Hughes with two sextons working for the commission. Kevin Hughes seconded motion, motion carried by 4-0 voice vote.
 - B. Conflict of Interest Policy - adjustments if any/or accept - (Information included in packet) - Mr. Hughes requested to review this item and discuss the information at the next scheduled meeting. He requested anyone with an interest, contact him for the Conflict of Interest Policy. The Chair agreed to table the item to the next meeting.
 - C. Selectboard Member Open Seat Appointment - Executive Session - The Chair said it was the opinion of the Board to elect the member during the next local election versus appointing someone at the present time. Mr. Hughes suggested residents/taxpayers may not be happy with the Board choice and as there was a present quorum/working Board, to let residents/taxpayers vote for the person in the next election. A letter will be written to the interested candidates encouraging them to run for the open seat in the next election if they so choose.

6. New Business (Discussion/Action)

- A. Second Token Holder - Specific minutes required for Mascoma Bank - The Board agreed Craig Allen will be removed as a signer of checks for Westminster Accounts and will be removed as a Mascoma Bank 'token holder'. Alison Bigwood, Westminster Assistant Treasurer will be the holder of one Mascoma Bank token for the Town of Westminster accounts/checks, Willis (Chip) Stearns will be the second Mascoma 'token holder' for the Town of Westminster accounts/checks.

- B. Painting of Post Office: Cole Streeter confirmed the exterior of post office had been cleaned, sanded and one coat of paint applied last fall. The second coat of paint was applied this spring completing the job.

- C. Paving 2022 - The Board agreed large paving projects will be delayed until the next fiscal year. Heavy maintenance will be completed on roads requiring work. The Chair relayed at the present time paving mix was high, it was late in the season to solicit bids and contractors were busy.

- D. Cemetery Wall - pursue further or hold off - Information included in packet - A quote from Weed Precast of approximately \$52,000.00 was for block material alone. The Chair mentioned there had been discussions to repair the wall using ARPA (American Rescue Plan ACT) funds. A committee and additional information would be required to submit the project to the ARPA committee. Mr. Allen suggested discussing further and for the Board to visit the site before a future meeting. He believed there were townspeople wanting to repair the stone, not change the look of the present wall. Mr. Lawrence said the wall, falling in places, did not impact the Town road. This item will be tabled to a future meeting.

- E. Accepting Resignations: Pauline O'Brien rescinded her resignation submitted earlier as a member of the ARPA Committee due to the committee changing the meeting day. Mr. Allen motioned to accept the resignation from Bobbi Kilburn as vice chair of the ARPA committee, Mr. Hughes seconded, and motion carried by voice vote 4-0. Mr. Hughes motioned to accept the resignation of Cynthia Stoddard, Chair of the WEDC (Westminster Economic Development Committee) **name change of committee noted in minutes of April 13, 2022.** Mr. Hughes seconded, motion carried by voice vote 4-0. Mr. Hughes moved to accept the resignation of Christopher Hackett, vice chair from the WEDC Committee, Mr. Allen seconded the motion, motion carried by 4-0 voice vote.

- F. Town Forrest Fire Warden: Mr. Hughes motioned to re-appoint Cole Streeter as Town Forest Fire Warden. Mr. Allen seconded the motion, the motion carried by 4-0 voice vote. Mr. Streeter noted the fire warden was a State of VT position and had nothing to do with the Town fire department.

- G. Employee Raises - open discussion and executive session (if necessary) - Mr. Allen asked

how the Town of Westminster road crew employees pay rate compared to other Towns. Mr. Lawrence stated the road crew compensation was behind other Towns. He continued, the Board discussed, at budget review time, adding a step raise and cost of living increase to wages and to re-visit in six months. Mr. Perry believed the money had been budgeted to increase wages. Pauline O'Brien said she would research her departments compensation rate versus other Town rates before July 1, 2022. This item will be tabled to a future meeting. Mr. Allen said in the past, cost of living increases had been given across the board. Other increases were usually determined by individual departments.

H. Executive Session - This item was miss-lettered on meeting agenda as (I). The Chair noted the executive session was not required.

7. Boards, Committees and Commissions:

Paul Banik, speaking as Chairman of the ARPA committee said the committee believed the best method to submit a proposal for ARPA funds, was a committee head, department head etc. to approach the ARPA committee. For example, opposing views could be presented for the cemetery wall discussed previously in the meeting. Mr. Allen said there could be three possible proposals regarding the wall: to eliminate the present wall/slope the bank, to replace with other material or repair the present wall. Mr. Banik will discuss the wall with Chris Potter and Mr. Allen will request a Woodstock company, (specializing in stone walls) look at the wall. Mr. Banik continued the ARPA meeting May 24 was 'low key'. Those present discussed the reasoning there did not seem to be more interest by taxpayers/residents in ARPA funds. Mr. Banik has been approached by residents of Kissell Hill (Coolidge Street) with a problem of water infrastructure. He believed this system was owned and maintained by Bellows Falls. Also, the Gageville (North Westminster) water system infrastructure was a problem and also owned and maintained by Bellows Falls. Mr. Banik did not believe the water systems qualified for ARPA funds and suggested residents contact the Prudential Committee for further information. Nancy Dalzell inquired if there was information posted or available regarding ARPA funds, use, availability etc. Mr. Banik said the committee was in place to answer questions, minutes were kept for the meetings and he believed no one was interested in being a clerk for the committee. Mr. Hughes motioned to approve funds to place an article (composed by Paul Banik) for the upcoming *Westminster Gazette* regarding ARPA fund specifics. Mr. Allen seconded, motion carried 4-0.

Mr. Banik said Linda Fawcett had approached the committee with paperwork for a chlorinator for the Westminster Aqueduct Society. He added the Town did not own the aqueduct system. In another contact, SEVCA's (Southeastern VT Community Action) director had approached the committee inquiring about funds for the replacement of their present building.

Mr. Banik reiterated they were very interested in more community participation. Meetings are warned and held mid-month on Wednesday.

Mr. Hughes motioned to approve 10 complete sets (information included in packet) of fire gear for the fire/rescue department of \$3,434.00 each totaling \$34,350.00 as per quote presented by Fire Tech & Safety of New England, 85 Carando Drive, Springfield, MA 01104 itemized under

invoice 45337 to be taken from ARPA funds. Mr. Allen seconded, motion carried 4-0 by voice vote. Mr. Streeter said three sets of fire gear, approved last year were recently received

- 8. Other Business** - Paul Guido addressed the board regarding the existence of two salvage/junk areas on Morse Brook Road on the end of Morse Brook closest to the Town Garage. He read from ordinances, adding his opinion the areas impacted local property values. He requested the Board enforce the ordinance(s) as written, to cease and desist adding he believed the ordinance required an eight foot fence for a salvage area. Individual members will review the areas and requested Guido write an official complaint.

In another matter: Millie Barry mentioned the Westminster Pool area on Morse Brook had been improved/enhanced with assistance/donated monies from the Dascomb Fund. Lucas Decamp stated the pool hosted a fishing derby for the first time in 20 years during the past weekend.

In another matter: Mr. Hughes said it was a statutory obligation for the Selectboard to review ALL funds the Town is responsible for. Mr. Hughes requested a copy of all accounts to review dollars in these accounts biannually and vote acceptance of information. Ms. Bigwood noted she would have the information at the next meeting.

In another matter: Lucas Decamp questioned the process to request a special Town Meeting for replacement of the Town Garage. Mr. Hughes suggested all existing information available, be collected and presented to the Board for discussion at the June 8, 2022 meeting to begin the process. Mr. Decamp added the present structure was outdated, not adequate for the Town, requiring thousands of tax dollars to repair/maintain.

In another matter: Ms. Bigwood said the addition to the present recycling center building was under the square footage requiring a zoning permit. The area is being constructed for urine collection/fertilizer, is certified by Windham Solid Waste and completely 'no touch' to eliminate any hazard.

In another matter: Ms. Bigwood questioned if the Board would consider one meeting per month during the summer months. Mr. Allen said in the past, the Board had eliminated one or two meetings in summer. This item will be discussed at the next meeting.

- 9. Date of Next Meeting:** June 8 2022

- 10. Adjournment:** At 7:40 p.m. Kevin Hughes motioned to adjourn, Ms. Hamilton seconded, the motion passed 4-0 by voice vote and the meeting adjourned.

Clerk

Date