

## WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

*Wednesday, June 22, 2022*

### Westminster, VT Town and remote through FACT TV

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

**Staff Present:** Alison Bigwood (Interim Town Manager/Zoning Administrator), Charles (Chuck) Lawrence (Road Foreman)

**Others Present:** Mark Anderson, Windham County Sherriff Department., Christopher Potter, Dan Crocker and others unidentified in the remote recording.

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 calling the Westminster Town Hall.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda: None**
3. **Acceptance of Minutes: June 8, 2022** - Kevin Hughes moved to accept the minutes of June 8, 2022, Craig Allen seconded, motion carried by 3-0 voice vote. Katrina Hamilton abstained from the vote as she composed the minutes.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:**
  - A. Mark Anderson - Contracts - 2021/2022 and 2023 (Contracts provided to board) - Mr. Anderson spoke to the Board regarding the 2021-2022 and 2023 Regional Animal Control Program Contract. He indicated his office had provided animal control service as per contract approved at the Westminster Town Meeting. The actual 2021/2022 contract being presented was recently received from his legal counsel. The 2022-2023 Animal Control Contract provides coverage from July 2022 to July 2023. The 2023 law enforcement contract reflects Westminster's reduced funding for Windham County Sheriff Department Coverage to \$60,000.00. The policing relationship with Putney, Westminster currently shares, will change due to Westminster's decrease in funding. Jason Perry asked if staffing in the sheriff's department had improved. Mr. Anderson indicated the patrol side of staff was fully staffed. He noted the need for seasonal help. Mr. Perry questioned the physical presence of the sheriff's department in Town. Mr. Anderson said he could provide patrol information and the record of tickets issued. He did not believe actual presence of the department in Westminster was an issue. Mr. Hughes questioned major accidents/speeding/safety issues on School Street and Route 5 in the last five years. Mr. Anderson said he had no basis to quote actual information without researching actual data. Mr. Allen questioned a report the Sheriff provided (in the past) to the town manager showing patrol time and date. Sheriff Anderson said logs are generated electronically and can be generated as a paper copy. He will provide crash and speed data on School Street and Route 5 and a report showing where incidents in Town are happening.

**5. Unfinished Business (Discussion/Action) -**

**A. Conflict of Interest Policy - Tabled**

**B. Cemetery Wall Update - Christopher Potter -** Mr. Potter provided information to the Board including pictures of the current wall and tomb. He stated he did not believe anyone had been in the tomb for 60 years. He indicated the current blocks were granite and said he was willing to compose an article for the Town website and the Westminster Gazette to solicit community input about the wall. He believed there are three options for the wall, decorative blocks, replacing the stone wall and repair of the areas falling. He questioned traffic control during construction and the Town crew involvement in any part of the work or would the entire project be contracted out. Also, would the Town consider selling the present block, to defray costs if new material is used? Things to consider were: style and appearance, cost to the taxpayer, longevity, durability, and construction time. Mr. Allen questioned if one section could be done at a time, Mr. Potter believed doing a section at a time was an option. Mr. Lawrence suggested buying all material at one time if the repair is done in sections.

**C. Route 121 Bridge Update -** Mr. Perry stated he and Mr. Lawrence met with the State engineers, contractor, and project manager. Mr. Perry said there was substantial structural rot (rust/deterioration) in the steel and the proposed current plan is now not an option. Discussions include deck removal, to rehabilitate current steel that is very labor intensive, as abutments appear to be good. They are currently estimating a closure time of 12-16 months and will provide the Town with build options during the decision process. Mr. Perry said the current cost discussed was about \$12,000,000.00 and this amount was NOT a quotable dollar amount. Mr. Perry said the iron had been ordered and received for the deck. The Chair read from the State inspection reports (in part) - The 2014 inspection report indicated the deck would need replacing in the near future. In 2016, the inspection report indicated the bridge should be fully replaced within 10 years. Bridge deck is showing signs of progressive deterioration and is not recommended for salvage. In 2020, the report states the bridge is in fair condition. Mr. Perry said, at the present time, the project is in a 'holding pattern' and the bridge will remain open until further notice. The State/contractor will let the Town know next steps and options. The Town's portion of the project is 2.5% (two and one half percent) of total cost.

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

**A. End of Year Financial/Projections/Actuals -** Alison Bigwood said the Board had seen the budget. There is another payroll as of the 30<sup>th</sup> and the report was not the actual. Her estimate was about another \$25,000.00 to be paid out. She added the Highway Department looked good. She said they had paid too much to the Westminster and High schools and the refund check was in the mail. She added the Town was required to go over budget to pay out the prior Town Manager and NEMRC (New England Municipal Resource Center) and the good news was, the Town did not owe anyone any money. Ms. Bigwood said there were reimbursements coming in. She also noted as the Westminster Village Trustees have no meeting minutes and no budget, they are essentially ineligible to receive ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. The Town will most likely be required to give back the first round of village funds, about \$41,000.00 and would not receive ARPA funds in the second round.

This pertains to the village portion only.

**B. Highway Garage Fuel Tank Replacements - Approve purchase of new above ground tanks -** Mr. Perry apologized that information was not included in the Board packet. He noted Jason Benson and Chuck Lawrence solicited three prices for fuel tanks. The money will be available in 2023 to replace the tanks. The current diesel tank is 8,000 gallons and the new tank will be 3,000 gallons. The current gas tank is 3,000 and the new tank will be 1,000, both tanks will be above ground and could be moved, if necessary at a later date. Mr. Perry said the first phase would be to purchase the tanks, to get them in and installed, the second phase would be to remove the old tanks. Mr. Allen questioned the status of insurance regulations and above ground tanks. Mr. Lawrence answered the tanks were double walled and state approved. Mr. Lawrence said he contacted VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns) a year ago when beginning the research process. Mr. Allen suggested sending the specific tank information to the insurance company before moving forward. Mr. Allen motioned to approve spending up to \$30,000.00 to replace the in-ground fuel tanks pending approval from the insurance company. Kevin Hughes seconded the motion, the motion carried 4-0.

**C. Town Manager's Report:** - Alison Bigwood stated she provided the Chair with a list of unlicensed dogs. There were 266 unlicensed dogs as of May 30, 2022, notices were sent to owners and the number is down to 192 as of June 21, 2022.

Also, Sullivan and Powers requires the Selectboard to sign off for confirmation of services and Sullivan Powers also signs confirmation of services.

Also, requiring a signature is a letter of intent to participate in the fiscal year 2023 Municipal Road Grant and Aid Program.

Also, the annual financial plan for Town and Highways required a signature.

Ms. Bigwood stated trash tags would be in the mail by the beginning of next week.

**D. Executive Session - Not required**

**7. Boards, Committees and Commissions:** None

**8. Other Business:** Dan Crocker talked about the back part of his land on Windmill Hill Road. To meet Current Use requirements he requested written permission from the Selectboard to add fill/gravel/culvert to about 600' to improve a class four road for forestry use. Mr. Crocker said Chuck Lawrence had visited the site and Mr. Hughes confirmed the road work done was adequate. Mr. Lawrence read from the Class 4 road policy stating, "the work shall be done in strict accordance with specifications established by the road commissioner in conformance with the ordinance." Craig Allen motioned to give permission for road repair work on a class 4 road. according to Dan Crocker's written request. Kevin Hughes seconded, the motion carried 4-0 by voice vote. In addition, Mr. Crocker will request permission from Mark Lund to cut trees leaning over the class 4 road.

**In another matter:** Approval of Juneteenth Day (Federal Holiday) to the personal policy: Kevin Hughes moved to add Juneteenth to the list of holidays for personnel of Town of Westminster. Katrina Hamilton seconded, motion carried 4-0 voice vote. Kevin Hughes motioned to add a floating holiday in the current year for the Town highway crew in observance of Juneteenth, Katrina Hamilton seconded, and motion carried 4-0.

Kevin Hughes motioned to adjourn at approximately 7:31 p.m. Katrina Hamilton seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

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Clerk

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Date

