

## WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

Wednesday, December 14, 2022 - 6:30 p.m.

In person at Westminister, VT Town Hall and remote by FACT TV

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

**Staff Present:** Ken Fay (Town Manager), Chuck Lawrence (Road Foreman) – By Zoom: Pauline O’Brien and Nate Stoddard

**Others Present:** David Major, 1 person from FACT TV

**1. Call to Order:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. (delayed start due to technical difficulties).

Information to access a future meeting using a remote connection is available on the FACT TV Facebook page, Town of Westminister website or by calling the Westminister Town Hall.

**2. Adjustments to Agenda:** Kevin Hughes moved to go to executive session after other business on agenda and to invite the assistant town manager (Alison Bigwood) to discuss a contractual matter. Craig Allen seconded; motion carried 5-0 by voice vote.

**3. Acceptance of Minutes:** December 1, 2022 – Katrina Hamilton motioned to accept the minutes of December 1, 2022; Craig Allen seconded; motion passed 5-0 by voice vote.

**4. Communications and Public Comments:** None

**5. Unfinished Business:** Discussion/Action –

A. Investment policy – Mr. Hughes said he would have something in writing for the December 28, 2022 meeting. Hughes noted the Board was reviewing any and all policies and would adopt an investment policy statement to govern the financial accounts the Board is required under statute to be a fiduciary for. This item will be tabled to December 28, 2022.

**6. New Business:** Discussion/Action

A. Budget Discussion – Information included in packet and provided to the Board. Craig Allen questioned numbers in the miscellaneous revenue lines. The Manager will research the numbers in this item. Fay said the fiscal year 2024 expenditure budget was preliminary with improvement needed in numbers. The Board and Fay discussed selectmen’s training expense and agreed to cover five potential training seminars and to increase legal counsel services to \$15,000.00. Discussed were items budgeted in finance

training, executive department office equipment, treasurer salary, contracted services, and legal fees. Also, travel, meetings, and training amounts in the zoning department to be discussed in 12/14/22 executive session. Fay said a single audit was required when an entity received over \$750,000.00 in federal monies. The audit was difficult and he believed the town had never had a single audit. He added an audit review and single audit do not go together. The board agreed to keep the sheriff department budget line as is. Fay said the Rockingham town manager had contacted him regarding ambulance services. Mr. Allen said Golden Cross (over several years) had not increased their rate. Fay noted that Rescue Inc. in Brattleboro was a not-for-profit entity. He will research the present Westminster contract with Golden Cross. Mr. Lawrence said there was no actual road paving done in the last year, but other paving repairs had been done questioning how paving was coded. The manager will research how retreatment is coded.

Also discussed was the Town fuel tank removal/replacement at the highway garage during 2022/2023 and to remove \$78,000.00 line item in 2023 preliminary budget. The board and Mr. Fay discussed health and welfare services, and why there were separate lines for the senior center, Westminster Activities Commission and Westminster West library. Collection and disposal of waste budget items are to be determined. The board discussed the trailer (located in post office lot), disposing of the contents of the trailer, and returning the trailer to the original owner.

Pauline O'Brien said she increased supplies/expenses by 25% believing the increase was conservative. She felt justified requesting an increase in wages as the clerk's office was the only department producing substantial revenue from the clerks' general fees.

In the highway department preliminary budget chloride was increased by \$5,000.00 and the board and Lawrence discussed the exchange of plowing with Putney. Also discussed was tracking highway expenses including vehicle repair and maintenance. Mr. Lawrence said he was using a computer program to track and code expenses as money is spent on vehicles and equipment.

In another item the manager questioned why benefits did not track salaries. He said there was one line item for all employee benefits, but wage totals are broken out separately.

The board and manager discussed a letter included in the packet from Chad Hewitt (Sullivan, Powers & Company) regarding FEMA (Federal Emergency Management) funds not yet received that included federal money for culvert replacement at the intersection of School Street and Kurn Hattin Road. Ms. Hamilton said she understood from her contacts with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) monies had been authorized to the State to release fire department funds. The monies have not yet been received by the Town. The budget will be discussed at the next meeting.

#### B. Town Manager Report –

1. There is an audit scheduled for the first week of January 2023. If the manager needs more time, he will reschedule the audit.
2. The town offers employees a 457 savings plans people are not aware of. Mr. Fay is working with Empower to make employees aware of the plan.

#### C. Road Foreman's Report – Mr. Perry apologized he did not have the full foreman's report at the last meeting.

1. Mr. Lawrence said beginning December 27, 2022 there would be crane set up on Route 121 for approximately 2 weeks to work on the I-91 bridge. There will be access around the crane for

fire/emergency service and all other traffic will be routed over Back Westminster Road. The information regarding the road closure will be posted on the Westminster town website.

2. The town (highway department) has applied for a Better Roads Grant, category B, to repair catch basins in North Westminster. Mr. Lawrence said he hoped to pave from the Route 121 bridge to Bellows Falls when the bridge is closed if all infrastructure work is completed. Also, he hoped to pave Church Avenue and Oak Hill Road in the coming year. He said it was possible the town would be eligible for a Town Highway and Structures Grant to help with paving costs.

3. Work was recently completed on Route 121 road shoulders in the vicinity of Moore's business to help with drainage.

4. The new truck was returned to Viking for hydraulic issues and AIG for oil leaks. This work was done at no charge.

5. \$93,000.00 has been received for work on Piggery Road. This project has been completed and the paperwork has been submitted.

6. One of the two recent hires did not start work in an introductory highway department position. There are two part-time people providing help and flexibility in the schedule when needed. Both part time people have CDL licenses and other limited experience.

D. Executive Session: Motion made earlier in the meeting -

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

**8. Other Business:** None

**9. Date of Next Meeting** – Wednesday, December 28, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

The Board moved to executive session at 8:03 p.m.

The Board reconvened regular session at 8:31 p.m.

Kevin Hughes motioned to adopt the employment contract for Alison Bigwood as Zoning Administrator and Assistant Town Manager as defined in the employment contract signed and adopted by the board on 12/14/22. Motion seconded by Mr. Allen, passed 5-0 by voice vote.

The contract will be sent to Larry for revision.

**10. Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn made by Craig Allen, second by Katrina Hamilton, passed by 5-0 voice vote at 8:40 p.m.

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Clerk

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Date

