

## WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

*Wednesday, December 13, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.*

### Westminster, VT Town Hall and remote by Zoom

**Selectboard Present:** Katrina Hamilton (chair), Jason Perry, Dan Crocker (clerk), Stephen Major – arrival at 6:35 p.m., (vice chair) and Kevin Hughes

**Staff Present:** Louis Bourdeaux (town manager), Chuck (Charles) Lawrence (road foreman) Millie Barry (recording clerk)

**Others Present:** David Major

1. **Call to Order:** Katrina Hamilton, chair of the board called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Information to access a future meeting using a remote connection is available on the Town of Westminster website or by contacting the Westminster Town Hall.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** November 29, 2023 – Kevin Hughes motioned to approve the minutes of November 29, 2023, Dan Crocker seconded; motion carried by 4-0 voice vote.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** None
5. **Unfinished Business** (Discussion/Action) –
  - A. Budget Discussion – Information included in packet –

Mr. Bourdeaux noted there was a new VT Child Care Contribution (withholding tax). The amount is (.0044% of payroll). The State mandating of the .0044%, .0011% can be paid by the employee. Mr. Bourdeaux noted the addition of \$1,000.00 to municipal buildings maintenance for groundskeeping/planting to improve the appearance of the town hall. The board discussed the requirement of replacing/repairing ‘Goldies’ Road bridge, ‘Butler’s Pantry’ bridge and the Route 121 bridge in 2025/2026. Stephen Major motioned to increase the amount transferred to bridge fund from \$15,000.00 to \$25,000.00. Jason Perry seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote. Mr. Lawrence said the town had 20 miles of asphalt and to mill and pave one mile of road cost \$147,000.00. Lawrence suggested creating a budget line for crack filling/sealing/chip sealing to preserve asphalt for an additional 10 years. Stephen Major motioned to create a line item of \$20,000.00 for asphalt maintenance, Dan Crocker seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote. Also discussed was the increase to small tools FY (fiscal year) 2024 \$1,200.00 to FY 2025 \$1,700.00 for chainsaw replacement. Mr. Lawrence said large truck warranties had changed and the costs have increased. He believed it was important to trade equipment when the vehicle warranty was up.

In answer to Mr. Major’s question, Mr. Bourdeaux noted there was a projected

increase for highway department insurance through VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns). Mr. Major noted increased amounts throughout the budget might not be as accurate as possible with the opportunity to correct amounts to put more dollars toward pavement retreatment if there were savings. In reviewing the budget to clarify items for town meeting purposes, David Major (town meeting moderator) questioned budgeted and actual amounts of delinquent property taxes, budget and actual amounts for rental of the post office, health insurance budget and actual amounts, finance officer budget and actual amounts.

**6. New Business:** (Discussion/Action) –

- A. Sarah Waldo – Westminster West Cemetery Planting – tabled
- B. ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds Discussion - tabled
- C. Water and Sewer – Fire District #5 – North Westminster – Katrina Hamilton noted the board voted Monday, 12/11/2023 to begin the process to dissolve Fire District #5 for the Village of Bellows Falls to take over the administration of sewer lines in North Westminster. Jason Perry motioned to authorize the town manager to facilitate the process to dissolve Fire District #5 with the town attorney. Dan Crocker seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.
- D. Green Up Day Coordinator (Susan Harlow Resigned) – Ms. Hamilton noted guidelines for the position as: receiving information from the SOV (State of VT) office and Green Up bags, placing article in the *Westminster Gazette*, posting information on social media outlets, post posters in Westminster, distribute Green Up bags in town, coordinate with the town highway foreman and to sit at the Westminster Center School the day of the event to distribute bags. Green Up day is typically the first Saturday in May. The volunteer position will be posted on the town website and Facebook page.
- E. Town Managers Report:
  - The manager attended the 12/4 DRB (Develop Review Board) meeting and met with State legislators on 12/7/2023 at the Rockingham Library.
  - Auditors from Sullivan and Powers Company performed a review audit. The draft report is expected soon.
  - The contract binder in the town manager’s office has been organized.
  - The town manager’s article was written and submitted and the highway department article was reviewed and edited for the *Westminster Gazette*.
  - The town hall was closed from 11:45 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. December 15, 2023 for staff to attend the Kurn Hattin holiday visitors’ day.Dan Crocker motioned to approve the town manager’s report, Kevin Hughes

seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.

F. Road Foreman's Report:

- Rubber cutting edges have been ordered and will be installed on the Morse Brook Road plow as well as the West Road plow to preserve gravel on 'soft' roads.
- Highway crew continues to grade/smooth up mud/dirt as the roads freeze and thaw.
- In the past week, the highway crew picked up over 50 tires on Morse Brook Road and Henwood Hill Road. Dan Crocker suggested contacting Ruggiero as the cost to dispose of 30 tires was \$350.00. Mr. Bourdeaux suggested an ordinance with fines and possibly placing trail cameras in areas of town where tires are being dumped. Kevin Hughes noted the cost of legal fees for an opinion on legally placing trail camera versus the cost to dispose of tires, suggesting a contact to the town attorney and fines being the amount of the crime. Kevin Hughes moved to authorize a contact to the town attorney for an opinion of what the town can and cannot do to stop illegal dumping. Jason Perry seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.
- Information from Marc Pickering and Meghan Brunk, VTRANS (VT Agency of Transportation) the Fullam Brook culvert repair will be managed as a State grant. Mr. Lawrence said the State recommended hiring Everett Hammond for a scope of work at a cost of \$9,800.00 for a base map, preliminary design, and stream permit. Hammond's fees will be included in the total cost of the project. When the project is complete paperwork will be submitted for reimbursement of all work. Kevin Hughes motioned to hire Everett Hammond for engineering work of the Fullam Brook culvert, Jason Perry seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote. Mr. Lawrence believed the total cost of the project could be about \$800,000.00. Kevin Hughes confirmed the project must be done following State specifications and would be reimbursed (in approximately eight months) by the State at approximately 90% of the cost. Stephen Major motioned to approve the Road Foreman's report, Kevin Huges seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.

G. Executive Session – None

**7. Boards, Committees and Commissions:** Per Kevin Hughes Mr. Bourdeaux will assume his temporary position on the Solid Waste committee.

Stephen Major noted the Planning Commission did not meet Monday, December 11, 2023 as the meeting was not warned.

**8. Other Business:**

Mr. Lawrence suggested using monies from the Emergency Contingency Fund for repairs to the Fullam Brook Culvert. The board approved the suggestion.

**9. Date of Next Meeting** – Wednesday, December 27, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

**10. Adjournment:** At 7:59 p.m. Jason Perry moved to adjourn the meeting, Dan Crocker seconded; motion carried by 5-0 voice vote.

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Clerk Date