

WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Remote and in person at Westminster, VT Town Hall

Selectboard Present: Craig Allen (chair), Real Bazin (vice chair), Charles (Chuck) Lawrence and Jason Perry (clerk). Stephen Major was absent

Staff Present: Millie Barry (clerk), Lou Bordeaux (town manager)

Others Present: – Chris Potter, Norm Wright, Willis (Chip) Stearns, Gary Cobb, K. Sheldon Beebe, and Arthur Dufresne

1. Call to Order: Craig Allen called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Information to access a future meeting using a remote connection, when available, is on the Town of Westminster website or by contacting the Westminster Town Hall.

2. Adjustments to Agenda: None

3. Acceptance of Minutes: May 27, 2025 – Real Bazin moved to accept the minutes of May 27, 2025 as printed, Chuck Lawrence seconded, motion carried by voice vote, (Allen, Bazin, Lawrence, Perry).

4. Communications and Public Comments: None

5. Unfinished Business: (Discussion/Action) –

- A. Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Report – Chip Stearns – Westminster financial balance sheets included in Board packet – Mr. Stearns noted the first page: General Fund – Current year fund balance (\$100,090.39) telling the Board thus far, this year, revenue to expense the Town had spent more than brought in in actual dollars. The good news was the Town started with \$290,000.00, meaning the Town had \$190,000.00 in surplus fund balance. Highway current year fund balance \$188,168.21; the fund started with \$340,440.16, \$528,000.00 in surplus in highway at present. Contributions to resurfacing equipment and bridge projects were all funded. Contingency reserve fund contains \$150,000.00 for the moment of need. The auditors consider the contingency reserve additional surplus to town government. Mr. Stearns continued, the equipment fund contained \$186,166.00 for future equipment purchase, and Bridge rehabilitation reserve was \$323,364.93. Also retreatment fund \$62,086.38, reappraisal fund \$232,914.78 available toward a townwide reappraisal. Town hall capital improvement fund contained \$42,368.96, restoration of records, specifically by statute for preservation of records, has grown during the past year by \$4,000.00. Town garage fund remains at \$22,165.72, and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), monies, originally from 2023 storm, will zero out at the end of the year as the monies were added to resurfacing. Mr. Stearns continued reviewing balances with minimal or zero balances, excepting ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) fund balance of \$17,000.10 committed to Westminster West Hears House repair/renovation and \$189,185.00 that the

Town could lend for a Community Improvement loan. This fund has remained dormant for several years. Public Funds, primarily cemetery funds and investments managed by the trustees of Public Funds, are intended for the management and growth of assets to maintain cemeteries. Mr. Stearns noted the Town had no long-term debt obligations, adding this fact was extremely rare for a town. Craig Allen requested the list of delinquent taxes owed. Mr. Stearns said the list was public knowledge and the list would be emailed to the Board 6/11/2025.

- B. Grout Avenue Engineering - Lou Bordeaux said he and Ben Masure met with Phil Savoy and there were complications with information. After the meeting, Ben and the Manager decided to move to Chris Rivet, Dubois & King, Inc., for further engineering work on Grout Avenue. Mr. Allen said the item would remain on the Board agenda until there was a solution.
- C. Trespass Policy – Mr. Allen noted his difficulty locating the policy on the website to review, suggesting a website front-page post for current items of interest. Chuck Lawrence questioned whether proposed policies could be separated from actual approved policies. Mr. Bordeaux relayed that legal counsel said the policy established benchmarks for certain types of behavior, primarily for public safety, encompassing elected and appointed officials. This is a policy (not an ordinance) and does not contain civil fines. Real Bazin motioned to vote on the trespass policy as written, Jason Perry seconded, trespass policy approved by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen), Lawrence voted nay. Arthur Dufresne suggested the website contain a comment section. Mr. Bordeaux said he would look into a better SPAM-fighting system, as past comment sections on the website were filled with SPAM.

6. New Business (Discussion/Action) –

- A. Cemetery Commission updates - Chris Potter addressed the Board, believing there are serious questions regarding cemetery finances. Chris, Mr. Wright, and other Commission members have looked at the balance sheets and are puzzled about the monies and balances. In addition, cemetery funds are governed by cemetery rules. These rules are required to be followed in the way they were originally written. If funds were designated in 1800 for Westminster West, these funds cannot be used for the New Westminster cemetery. Also, monies for corner posts are delegated to a specific fund/checking account; this fund is about the only fund that is understandable. Mr. Potter said funds designated for a certain purpose (an individual investment) could not be used; only the interest on the investment could be spent. There is an SOV (State of VT) penalty of \$100.00 for incorrectly spending funds. Mr. Bordeaux believed the information on the initial investments was buried in the Town Clerk's vault, and he continues to investigate the issue. Mr. Potter continued Westminster West cemetery needed the majority of work, mostly for stone repair. Norm Wright said two years ago that the Town highway crew filled and allocated an area in Westminster West for the potential of 40 additional grave sites, and by closing a road and a gate at the cemetery, there was the potential of 40 additional grave sites. There are three unmarked grave sites that the State of Vermont requires the Town to mark. He also noted that trees located on the west side of the cemetery were on private property (hanging over the

cemetery), were dying and would seriously damage old gravestones if trees/branches were to fall. Mr. Wright said the property owners were not interested in removing the trees. Mr. Allen suggested research about the liability if a tree(s) fell on cemetery stones. Mr. Potter proposed increasing the price of a half grave to \$600.00, \$200.00 for corner posts and \$800.00 for full grave, \$200.00 for corner posts. Mr. Potter also suggested researching multiple grave sites purchased years ago that were not used. If contact could be made to the owner or relative, to possibly buy back the graves (for the original purchase price). Also suggested was to offer bids for mowing/lawn maintenance on one or more cemeteries, as opposed to requiring a bid for all cemeteries. Jason Perry motioned to increase the price of a full lot to \$800.00, \$200.00 for corner posts, and \$600.00 for one-half lot, \$200.00 for corner posts, effective July 1, 2025. Real Bazin seconded the motion, carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Lawrence). Mr. Allen requested that the increased price for cemetery lots be posted on the front page of the Town website. Chuck Lawrence motioned for the Westminster Cemetery Commission to approve the sale of half lots. Jason Perry seconded, motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Lawrence). Jason Perry moved to accept the resignation of Norm Wright as Westminster West Cemetery commissioner, to thank Mr. Wright for his service, and appoint Chris Harlow as the Westminster West Cemetery Commissioner. Real Bazin seconded, motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Lawrence). The Commission will work on rules for all cemeteries. Craig Allen requested Mr. Bordeaux begin the process to repair stones in the Westminster West Cemetery.

B. Cemetery Deed – Jason Perry motioned to approve the sale of one burial in the New Westminster Cemetery Section E Row 2 Grave 67 to Sharon Charuhas for \$310.00. Real Bazin seconded, motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Lawrence).

C. Local Emergency Management Plan – Mr. Bordeaux said he had been notified by the SOV, the local emergency management plan update was overdue. Jason Perry motioned to approve The Local Emergency Management Plan as presented and approved by the SOV. Real Bazin seconded; motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Lawrence). Mr. Bordeaux said the Town needed an Emergency Management Director. The job description and information is on the front page of the Town website.

D. Town Manager's Report –

- Grout Avenue engineering discussed earlier in meeting.
- Dump truck request for bid was issued 5/28/2025. Bids are due on June 23 at 2:00 p.m.
- Manager's meeting on 5/29/25 discussion was about housing, budgeting and human resources. S.127 passed by the House of Representatives and VT Senate on 5/30. This is an act relating to housing and housing development.
- Met with Lachlan Francis to explore next steps for the Town Plan project.
- Completed LEMP (local emergency management plan), filed and approved by the SOV
- New Deep Dive added to the website
- Attended VLCT webinar on grant funding 6/3/2025.
- Cemetery research has been done back to 2009.

E. Executive Session (if needed) –

7. Other Business:

- Mr. Allen mentioned that a round-table discussion was held at the Westminster Fire Station and sponsored by the Windham Regional Commission. The discussion was on Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP), reducing stormwater erosion and sediment.
- Real Bazin said the Compass School would be closing. He added his belief that the building could be changed to housing and suggested the Selectboard explore the possibilities. Mr. Perry believed the Compass School was not on town sewer, Craig Allen suggested investigating zoning.
- Jason Perry noted the washed area on Henwood Hill and suggested contacting Michelle Bos-Lun regarding her previous offer of land to widen that section of Henwood Hill. Mr. Allen requested Mr. Bordeaux add this item to an upcoming Select Board agenda.
- Mr. Dufresne thanked the Cemetery Commission for protecting the history of the Town.
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8. Executive Session – Real Bazin motioned to move to executive session for a contractual matter, Chuck Larence seconded, motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Lawrence).

9. Date of Next Meeting: June 27, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

The Board moved to executive session at 8:10 p.m.

The Board reconvened regular session at 8:27 p.m. No action was taken.

10. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:29p.m.

Clerk

Date

Minutes composed by Millie Barry