

## 9WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD MEETING

*Tuesday, December 9, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.*

Remote and in person at Westminster, VT Town Hall

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

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

**Others Present:** – Suzanne Booth, Jane Smith, Anne Nordstrom, John Ewald, Laura Sibilgia, others unidentified and 1 person from FACTV

1. **Call to Order:** Craig Allen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.  
Information to access a future meeting using a remote connection, when available, can be found on the Town of Westminster website or by contacting Westminster Town Hall. This meeting was recorded by FACTV.
2. **Adjustments to Agenda:** None
3. **Acceptance of Minutes:** November 18, 2025 – Real Bazin moved to accept the minutes of November 18, 2025, Jason Perry seconded, motion carried by voice vote, (Perry, Allen, Bazin). Stephen Major arrived at 6:33 p.m.
4. **Communications and Public Comments:** Craig Allen noted the dedication of the Westminster Fire Station Christmas tree was well attended. The event was organized by Diane Bazin, and the tree was donated by Stacey and Tim Allen.  
**Also,** Mr. Allen said Chuck Lawrence was involved in a workers compensation accident resulting in a concussion. Mr. Lawrence is undergoing tests and recuperating.  
**Also,** John Ewald questioned Real Bazin and Stephen Major regarding their plan to run for re-election in March. Mr. Bazin said he planned to run again. Stephen Major noted a separate Tuesday evening conflict; he was unsure about his plan.
5. **Unfinished Business:** (Discussion/Action)
  - A. Hearse Shed renovation – Information included in packet - Lou Bordeaux said Tim Lillis intends to have the building watertight by December 31, 2025. Mr. Allen confirmed the Board and Mr. Lillis were on course with their previous agreement.
  - B. North Westminster Community House – Information included in the packet – John Ewald requested feedback from the Board about the plan. Craig Allen said, the information was presented very well, and personally, if people were interested, he would like to pursue it. Stephen Major noted, he agreed, would like to see concrete plans for use to make the project worthwhile. Real Bazin questioned the cost to make the building compliant with the SOV Fire Marshall. John Ewald stated, the plan was the project would not cost the Town any dollars relying on donations and volunteers. Fire Marshall requirements are a handicap ramp and bathroom, install exit lights, remove the stage curtain, close the downstairs area and install sheet rock. Mr. Ewald believed the building would be approved for use by the Fire Marshall with this list completed. He went on to say his estimate was about \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00 for building to be compliant and able for use. He continued, noting his

belief contractors would donate time and material to help with the first phase. Mr. Bazin believed the person limit in the building was 27. Mr. Ewald stated the number was 47. Mr. Ewald stated tabling the article for one year was a parliamentary error. The article should have been tabled indefinitely. **Note: Clerk researched the 2025 Town Meeting article and motion. The motion, approved by the voters, was to table the article for one year.**

Stephen Major noted if an organized plan was presented for the use of the building, including steps to complete a plan, there could be broader support for activity in the building. Mr. Major said the concern was the building could be an albatross that required maintenance with no potential use.

Jason Perry said he believed the plan as written sounded good, but he did not believe young people's use of the building was realistic. Also, the estimated cost of \$25-30,000.00 was low even with contractor assistance.

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

- A.** Laura Sibilila – BDCC (Brattleboro Credit Corporation) Funding Request – Information provided to the Board. Ms. Sibilila said their student programs, Reality Fair and Workforce programs were available to all local students and they offered other programs to support local businesses. Ms. Sibilila said she believed their request was not in the context of charity but infrastructure expansion, initial capacity and coordination for the Town. They request an article be included in the Town Meeting warning without a signed voter petition. Stephen Major questioned the amount of the request in contrast to other organization requests, organizations more visible to the Town. Ms. Sibilila asked the Board to consider approving and write an article for the Town Meeting warning or approve an amount to include in the budget that compares to the value they receive from BDCC. Mr. Allen said the Board would discuss the request before the budget was finalized and the Manager would let BDCC know the Board decision.
- B.** Anne Nordstrom: Sojourns Health – Town Meeting Article – Representative from Sojourns presented a copy of a petition they are circulating to Westminster voters. Lou Bordeaux read an email from Rachael Cohen, Westminster Lister regarding the portions of the property, per the State of VT Tax department, that could be included in the request. Ms. Nordstrom said Sojourns was a non-profit organization operating in the Westminster Community 25 years. In the last 15 years they have been offering primary care. 30 people are employed at Sojourns and 13 people serve on the Board of Directors. Ms. Nordstrom said there was a dollar value assigned for the entire Sojourns property with the property broken into 5 pieces. They are requesting half of the pieces be exempt for five years. At present, they pay \$21,000.00 and are asking for 78% of the value of the property for tax relief of about \$16,000.00. Solar panels on the project would not be exempt. They are sales tax exempt, not property tax exempt. Ms. Nordstrom said there were three other organizations in Westminster with tax exempt status for five years, the Westminster Fire Department, Westminster Aqueduct and Westminster Recreation department. Suzanne Booth, nurse practitioner, said there was a need, due to the closure of the Rockingham health clinic, to provide community, school-based health service to access health care. This service would require more staff.

- C. FY 2027 Budget – Second draft – Information included in packet – Board and Mr. Bordeaux reviewed changes. Mr. Bordeaux said after researching Newfane’s highway budget, he found their equipment, bridge and retreatment expenses are outside of the highway budget and considered capital expenses. John Ewald will research specifics about the Dummerston highway budget.**
- In discussing budgeted amounts and breakdown of sand and salt, the Board agreed the amount used depended on winter conditions. Jason Perry noted if the Town ran low on sand and sand pits were depleted, Pike is making a ledge product that was available if needed.
- Mr. Bordeaux said the SOV had delayed work on the Route 121 bridge indefinitely due to lack of State funds, and the bridge fund currently has \$323,000.00 balance. Jason Perry noted the Town owned the Butler’s Pantry Bridge (Westminster West) and this bridge would need work soon.
- Mr. Bazin confirmed estimated receipt of a paving grant was \$175,000.00, the budget contained \$200,000.00, and retreatment fund contains \$62,000.00. The Board agreed totals of these items were sufficient to repave Route 121 bridge beginning at west end. Mr. Bordeaux said he and Ben Masure have agreed replacement of the grader will be in the range of 15 years of use compared to 10.
- Mr. Bordeaux noted the Capital Improvement line of \$20,000.00, questioning if the Board wanted to move money into a capital account. The Board discussed improvements required at the USPS building as well as the highway garage. The Board agreed to not ‘earmark the money’ for a specific project.
- The Board agreed to reduce the salt/sand budget line to \$100,000.00.
- The Board agreed to eliminate funding ACT 64 budget line of \$10,000.00.
- The Board discussed using surplus of \$200,000.00 to reduce property taxes.
- The Board requested projected surplus amount update, and delinquent property tax amount. Mr. Bordeaux noted there will be a Westminster property tax sale in the spring of 2026.
- D. Cemetery Deed – Jason Perry motioned to approve the sale of one burial plot in the Westminster West Cemetery in Section A-17 bounded on the North by Empty, on the West by Empty, on the South by Raine Kane and on the West by a stone wall in the amount of \$1,010.00 to Francis Church and Joanne Merrill. Real Bazin seconded, motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Major).**
- E. Town Manager’s Report –**
- The Commissioner of the VT Tax Department predicted in a letter to the VT Speaker of the House a potential 12% average increase to VT property taxes next year. Mr. Bordeaux said the letter was on the Westminster website.
  - Meetings attended with Bob Spencer and Alex Lacy from Windham Solid Waste District 11/19/2025. The District will be working with BFUHS on recycling projects and plans to coordinate a home composting workshop in the spring of 2026. Discussed at a Manager’s meeting in Windsor were advantages of outsourcing some projects, use of AI, and better options to monitor road conditions.

F. Executive Session - Jason Perry motioned the Board move to executive session, being that premature knowledge would clearly place the Municipality of the Town Westminster or the public body, a person or persons involved at a substantial disadvantage as outlined in 1 VSA 313, Real Bazin seconded, motion carried by voice vote (Perry, Bazin, Allen, Major).

7. **Board Committees and Commissions:** None

8. **Other Business:**

Mr. Bazin talked about a house fire in Westminster West December 5, 2025. As the private road to the house was unplowed, accessing the site with fire and emergency vehicles took about 40 minutes. The road conditions were difficult to navigate due to the steep grade and the road being unmaintained in winter conditions. The fire department will publish an article in the *Westminster Gazette* to document the Westminster Fire Department is not responsible for loss of property in the event private roads and driveways are not maintained. **Also,** Noted was trash was not collected in various areas of Town the week of 12/1/2025 due to a Ruggiero truck breakdown.

**Also,** Mr. Ewald suggested more information regarding the budget be included in the Town Report for informational purposes before the actual meeting. As an example, a detailed report about delinquent taxes.

**Also,** Mr. Ewald noted he was circulating a petition for the March Town Meeting warning to change Westminster's Town form of government from Town Manager administered to an administrative form of government.

9. **Next Meeting:** December 16, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

**The Board moved to executive session at 8:14 p.m.**

**At 8:40pm, Jason Perry motioned to end Executive session. Real Bazin seconded. Vote to return to Open Session passed unanimously.**

**With no decisions made, the meeting was adjourned at 8:42pm.**

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Clerk

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Date

Minutes composed by Millie Barry